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NEWPORT PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at 7.30pm on
Monday, 5th July, 2021 at Church House**

<u>Present:</u>	Cllr H. Bowman	(HB)	(Chairman)
	Cllr D. Alexander	(DA)	
	Cllr S. Ayles	(SAy)	
	Cllr R. Bengé	(RB)	
	Cllr S. Burton	(SB)	
	Cllr J. Emanuel	(JE)	

In attendance:

Mrs C. Griffin

Parish Clerk

Mrs E. Edwards

Responsible Financial Officer

5 members of the public

21/492 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr S. Amos (private commitment), Cllr A. Sampson (self isolating) and Cllr S. Naik (self isolating), Dist Cllr N. Hargreaves and Cty Cllr R. Gooding.

21/493 To receive any 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary' interests relating to items on the Agenda

The following non-pecuniary interests were declared:
SAy in 499; HB in 494, 496 and 500; JE in 499 and 500.

21/ 494 Chairman's comments

The Chairman advised:

- One of our CSC's will be starting a Master's Degree in September, but will continue to work as a CSC.
- Would the Planning Working Group please ensure that responses are circulated to all members of the PC before they are submitted to UDC.
- Another Appeal (Five Acres) has been dismissed. Thank you to everyone involved.
- The Neighbourhood Plan has now been approved and carries weight. Thank you to all involved and especially Dist Cllr Neil Hargreaves for all his hard work on this.
- A complaint was recently sent to the Clerk by a resident which was aggressive, contained loaded statements and the contents were untrue.

Everyone has the right to complain but it should not be on behalf of other people. If any emails received are rude or offensive they will be ignored.

21/495 Public participation session (To discuss questions sent to the Clerk, by email from members of the public)

Residents present raised the following points:

- I have spoken to UDC and Uttlesford Norse regarding a housing issue but nobody listens.

The Chairman said this is a matter for UDC ,not the PC. JE will raise with the Housing Department at UDC.

- Some residents have asked if the triangular area in Cherry Garden Lane as you come through from Barnard Close could be used as gardens.

This will be investigated.

- If Trivselhus are considering putting a playground on the Common, are they aware that it floods?
- Has it been agreed that the pipe will go across the Common, because it will also need to go over land belonging to the Village Hall.

The trial holes will be discussed later in the meeting but they are not connected to the proposed playground on the Common.

- ECC representatives have visited the ford at the bottom of School Lane, what is going on?
- The lines at the junction of School Lane/Bury Water Lane need reinstating.

The Clerk will contact ECC regarding the area near the ford and report the lines on the ECC website.

- Is there any news on the raised pedestrian crossing in Bury Water Lane?

There was an LHP meeting earlier today. The Clerk will contact Cty Cllr R. Gooding.

- Youngsters on motor bikes, which are very noisy and probably not taxed and insured, come down to the ford and turn round and go back again.

These should be reported to the Police on 101 or essex.police.uk or crimestoppers-uk.org

21/496 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 20th May 2021

It was resolved that the Chairman should sign the minutes as approved.

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: SB

All agreed

21/497 To receive the Clerk's report

The following report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Updates at the meeting in bold.

CURAT - The group have arranged a second session of balsam bashing on Saturday 3 July. 9am start at Saffron Walden finish at 12 30. There has been substantial new growth of balsam in the Audley End 'loop' which they need to tackle. Equipment provided. They need only 4 volunteers if you are interested.

Flower Containers - The flower boxes in the High Street have been cleared and the two in Cambridge Road have been tidied by our Village Caretakers. I have liaised with the Caretaker and Sarah. A resident has also offered to assist and our Caretaker will liaise with him. **Everyone involved is liaising with the Caretaker on this.**

Central Refuges - Details were forwarded to ECC Highways some time ago and the lighting team have informed me that all the problems reported with the lighting have now been resolved.

There have been other reports to ECC regarding drains, potholes and public rights of way. ECC visited the drain on the pavement to the Primary School very quickly as this was of serious concern.

The Rangers - Changes have been made to this service and I have now been instructed to send requests to ECC.

CCTV - A training session was held after the last meeting. A policy is now being drafted for approval at the next meeting

Reynolds Court - I contacted UD C regarding the possibility of planting some trees on the verge. The verge belongs to ECC and they requested that it was reinstated as grass. Following the meeting at The Grange I have contacted UDC regarding the possibility of a meeting at Reynolds Court and I am awaiting a reply. The two items to raise are (a) Defibrillator (following request from the Tennis Court Committee) and (b) Drop off bay although I have not heard from the residents group on this. The Chairman of the Tennis Committee, who has now changed, have been advised that I have been in touch with Reynolds Court. **UDC have advised that Uttlesfordnorse are drawing up a plan for a drop off bay.**

The Common - A local farmer has kindly offered to spray the hogweed and the Chairman has contacted him regarding the uneven surface which it is hoped can be attended to before the Fete in August.

Oil Seepage - Following the informal meeting on 28th June, I contacted the Environment Agency again to check that it is the right time to get the tanker back. I subsequently received a call from the garage informing me that they have excavated all around the drain and when they fill it in they will put in a membrane plus chemicals which will form a permanent barrier but this will not be done before the tanker comes back. They offered to show members of the Council the excavations if they still had concerns.

The Environment Agency had said the week before that with recent rain having pushed accumulated oil into the river, they thought this is the right time to get the clearance done. The garage continues their work to remove oil at source and have measures in place to prevent its future ingress into the drain. I have checked with them again and will forward the last email;

I have therefore arranged for the tanker to come back next Thursday, 8th July at 8.00am.

Local Highways Panel - The next meeting is on 5th July and I notice there are two items listed under "Schemes awaiting funding" (1) Extension of 20mph speed limit in the vicinity of the Academy, Bury Water Lane and School Lane and (2) Speed limit assessment. I have phoned ECC re the assessment.

Hercules Bridge - ECC have advised that it will be necessary to close Hercules Bridge on Debden Road, for investigation works from Monday 16 August to Friday 27 August 2021. These works are necessary due to inconsistent findings in relation to the utility apparatus within the carriageway. No vehicles will be able to pass over the structure until the works are complete due to the restricted working area, however pedestrian access will be possible. Appropriate diversion routes will be in place during the road closure, including a separate diversion route for Heavy Goods Vehicles. Access to nearby residential properties will be maintained from either side of the bridge. I informed all residents of Debden Road and Premier garage and a letter should now have been sent to nearby residents/businesses to give them advance warning of the works and the team are in contact with the local fire station to ensure disruption to their services is kept to a minimum.

Dixies crossing - I contacted Network Rail regarding the sounding of the horns at Dixies crossing and have now received a reply advising that the whistle boards are still in place at Dixies and Elephant level crossings. This is because these crossings are temporarily closed – even though Network Rail are hoping to soon have powers to make these closures permanent. They don't remove whistle boards from crossings which are only temporarily closed. Train drivers are briefed on the location of whistle boards. This means they're looking out for them as they pass a location where whistle boards are present. This prevents them from missing the boards and ensures they sound their horn at the correct time. Removing the whistle boards to prevent drivers from sounding their horns, even just as a temporary measure, would require drivers to be re-briefed to make them aware that the boards have been removed. They would then need to be re-briefed again if we were to reinstall the boards should the crossing reopen. Doing this could create confusion and, should the boards be reinstated, result in a driver failing to sound their horn on the approach to the crossing.

Parking on Pavements - Following the last meeting Sandra contacted our CSC and a government bill has only been passed through one stage in parliament and still has a long way to go.

Giant Hogweed - This is again causing problems in different areas of the village. I have been in touch with the landowners and they have confirmed it is being dealt with

Salmon Field - A member of the Salmon family met with a representative from Hastoe Housing regarding the placing of a memorial seat at the far end of the development and this should be in place soon.

Local Councils Liaison Forum - UDC have advised that the next forum will be on 14th September at 7.00pm. Awaiting further details.

Casual Vacancy - Following the resignation of Anthony Gerard the vacancy has been advertised. UDC will notify me on 14th July if an election has been requested. If not, the vacancy can be filled by co-option.

2020/21 Audit - Notice of Public Rights - This has been advertised for the period 14th June – 23rd July 2021.

Uttlesford Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting - 13th October, at 7.00pm. Venue to be confirmed.

Phase2planning are chasing for a reply on whether the PC will allow trial holes to be dug on the Common.

The dog bin at the back of Frambury Lane is damaged. It was agreed that this should be removed and a new one ordered which the Caretaker will fix to a concrete sign post near the entrance to the footpath.

An enquiry has been received for an Allotment. DA advised that there are no allotments available at present. Resident will be placed on waiting list.

There have been more problems with emptying the roadside bins and I have sent a list of the bins that have been missed to UDC. Household rubbish has been deposited in the bin in Bullfields. The Chairman will check the bin outside Dorringtons and speak to them again if necessary.

The CSC's have done a Knife Arch at the train station but nothing was found. People who had parked inappropriately have been spoken to. One CSC took part in a Youth Services project to engage with children and make them aware of Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Abuse.

Report from Dist Cllr N. Hargreaves

The following report had been circulated prior to the meeting. JE read the report.

The out turn for the UDC annual accounts for 2021 has been published and shows a small surplus. Council accounts should, unless there are exceptional circumstances, make neither large deficits nor large surpluses. The exceptional costs associated with covid would have been a significant problem but the extra income from the council's commercial investments has covered this. The surplus has been earmarked to add to the waste and recycling budget as the government is intending to harmonise the nation's recycling bins and the council will have costs to do this.

The Scrutiny Committee reviews cabinet decisions and major council activities, and is chaired by an Independent councillor. In his recent report to the Cabinet he was complimentary about the covid business recovery work, for which £1m is committed. An area still to be upgraded is the applications handling part of the planning department, and during covid there has been no reduction in workload. When I met with the new interim chief executive Rob Tinlin, at the top of his list is implementing the changes from an external report into the department

Judy, myself and other councillors recently toured the new bin lorry depot at Little Canfield. It will solve the very long standing problem of housing the lorries at an unsuitable location in the centre of Dunmow. The facilities being installed, including showers, a drying room, and some computer facilities for personal use, are top quality. The building will also have council meeting rooms and office space and will be part of decentralising away from everything being in Saffron Walden. However, the largest part of the site is being refitted for commercial letting, thus adding to employment and rental income.

The depot is having a truck washing machine which filters and recycles the water. As part of the access improvements Essex Highways wanted a mature oak tree removed. The answer from the UDC Finance Officer who also leads on the commercial activities was No – the oak tree stays.

All the council work has continued in parallel with delivering pandemic support to residents, supporting the vaccination programme and the many containment measures, and administering seven separate business grant schemes involving over 3000 payments totalling £36m.

JE added that:

- Rob Tinlin, who was CEO at Southend-on-Sea, has been appointed Interim Chief Executive. He will be reviewing the planning function.
- There was no evidence to take up the claims in the Vote of No Confidence called last week and it was overturned.
- The Newport Quendon & Rickling Neighbourhood Plan was approved and it is now part of the development plan.
- I have visited the depot at Little Canfield and it is vast (nine acres). The entire site has been purchased by UDC and £350,000 per year should be earned from this investment.
- I am on the UDC Planning Committee and Governance & Performance Committee.

21/498 To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's Report and approve accounts for payment, schedules circulated prior to the meeting

The payment schedule totalling £5,424.22 for 11 items was approved.

Proposed: SAy

Seconded: AS

All agreed

The VAT has been reclaimed.

As the PC has now switched to online banking the Chairman stated that we need to agree how the BACS payments should be approved. At present a payment schedule is circulated prior to the meeting and then agreed at the meeting. Two signatories sign the invoices and payment schedule and initial the bank statement. The RFO

pointed out that the Auditor wishes to see that the invoices have been initialled and the statement signed.

The Clerk had been advised that the required number of signatories should actually log on to the bank to authorise the payments.

The RFO will contact the Auditor to check correct procedure.

21/499 To receive reports/updates on Planning

499.1 To discuss a request from Trivselhus to dig trial pits on the Common and receive an update on the planning application.

The PC agreed that they are willing to allow Trivselhus to dig trial holes on the Common, but the ground must be reinstated properly afterwards to ensure it is safe for members of the public to use. However, if they wish to put a pipe under the Common, they must approach the Council again in order for negotiations to take place.

JE reported that she had received an email from Maria Shoesmith, Planning Officer at UDC, regarding the application. It is taking a considerable time to determine because of the lack of 40% affordable housing. Also, Terry Garner, the Case Officer who was dealing with it, has now left UDC so the application is now being assessed. The applicant has recently pointed out that that the Section 106 package places a considerable burden on them.

It is hoped the application will be determined at the UDC Planning Committee meeting in August.

499.2 To receive a report from the Planning Working Group.

To discuss the following planning applications and any additional planning applications received after the publication of the agenda, agree responses and any other planning matters:

UTT/21/1694/LB The Brown House, High Street (Comments by 18th June)

Reinstatement of timber door to replace a UPVC door and retention of change to external door, re-plastering of internal walls and ceilings, insertion of laminated floor and addition of internal door.

UTT/21/1650/FUL Land north of the Potteries, London Road (Comments by 25th June)

s73a application for the erection of 1 dwelling and garage (variation to previously approved scheme UTT/13/3297/FUL)

UTT/21/1926/HHF The Pump House, Shortgrove (Comments by 8th July)

New boundary wall and bicycle and bin store,

UTT/21/2052/HHF Willow Chase, London Road (Comments by 21st July)

Rear single storey extension and internal alterations

UTT/21/2010/FUL Debden House, Fallow Drive (Comments by 16th July)

Proposed enhancement works including the extension to the existing communal facilities area and a new craft room together with the provision of allotments

The PWG need to respond to UTT/21/2010/FUL. Initially they will look at the previous application which was refused as there were a large number of objections to this. The craft room is acceptable and the proposed extension is quite small, but the piece of land at the end of the building could prove disruptive to the private houses. It was agreed that the PC should be guided by the people who are affected by this application. It was suggested that if the hedge could be put back and the other issues dealt with this would create good will. However, it was pointed out that the application will be judged on its merits.

The Clerk reported an email received from Cllr Amos.

JE reported that there have been five Appeals already this year, Five Acres (dismissed), Glyncolan (dismissed), Coach & Horses (dismissed) land rear of the Chestnuts (allowed), land north of Sparrows End Cottages (awaiting decision) We now have to respond to the second Coach & Horses Appeal for a smaller number of houses. It was agreed that JE should contact Geoff Gardner and request his assistance with this and obtain an estimate.

21/500 To receive reports/updates on Liaison matters

To receive a report on the meeting at the Grange

The Chairman and JE reported that it was a very worthwhile meeting and the staff were very approachable. The Residential Care Home is outsourced to another company and is completely separate. They made it clear that they want to have interaction with the village. The Post Office is operating from their premises from 9.00 – 1.00pm Wednesday and Thursday.

It was suggested that perhaps members of the PC should attend the coffee morning at Church House. The Chairman advised that if the group would like us to go along we would be happy to do so.

21/501 Items for next agenda

To discuss a report on River Management.

Other items to be agreed at informal Zoom meeting.

21/502 To discuss any Urgent matters of interest to the Parish

No other matters were raised,

21/503 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 2nd August at Church House at 7.30pm.

(The next informal Zoom meeting will be held on Monday 26th July at 7.30pm)

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated: 02.08.21

