

WETHERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held at Wethersfield Village Hall on Wednesday, 10th January 2018 commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr J Barker (Chairman)
Cllr A Bowers (Vice Chairman)
Cllr K Daniel
Cllr N Godley
Cllr D Martin
Cllr Mrs E Newell
Cllr B Vincent

In Attendance: 6 Members of the Public
Cllr G Butland (Essex County Council)
Cllr P Schwier (Braintree District Council)
Mrs A Lucas (Clerk)

17/161 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Tattersley.

17/ 162 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Bowers, Godley and Martin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10 as they are Trustees of Wethersfield Village Hall.

17/163 MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

(i) Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th November 2017

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th November 2017 were approved. Cllr Bowers proposed the approval of the minutes; they were seconded by Cllr Daniel, agreed by the Council unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

(ii) Minutes of the Parish Council Personnel Sub-Committee Meeting held on 21st November 2017

The minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 21st November 2017 were approved. Cllr Godley proposed the approval of the minutes; they were seconded by Cllr Vincent, agreed by the Council unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

17/164 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

- A question was raised about ACV's (Assets of Community Value) particularly in relation to the shop and post office in Wethersfield. Cllr Vincent briefly explained the process and the Chairman said it would be discussed later in the meeting (Agenda Item 8).
- Cllr Graham Butland gave an update on highway issues:

He has received assurances that Bovingdon Road will be re-opened at the end of February 2018.

There will be a site inspection on 19th January at Beazley End and Codham, where a 30mph speed limit has been requested. Cllr Butland has also asked the LHP if Blackmore End, where an extension to the 30mph has been requested, could be visited at the same time although this has not been confirmed. There will be representation from the Parish Council at this meeting.

The footpath from Nortofts Farm to the Petches Bridge junction is also actively being investigated.

17/165 REPORT FROM THE CLERK

The following update on matters arising, together with correspondence received.

Section 106: Blackmore End Playing Field access improvements

Details of quotations have now been received and sent to Braintree District Council. A response is awaited.

Section 106: Beazley End - various

A response from BDC is awaited for approval to repair or replace two benches, purchase new planters and compost and refurbish the existing notice board in Beazley End.

30mph Speed Limit in Beazley End and Codham

Cllr Daniel sent a letter to Essex Highways on 28th November as agreed at the November meeting. On 4th December it was confirmed that Essex Highways would not support the request for a 30mph speed limit. If further surveys are requested in the summer months they will require Cllr Graham Butland's support. A Beazley End resident has subsequently written to Essex Highways expressing his disappointment and stating that, in his opinion, the survey had incomplete and flawed analysis and lacked consideration of the views of residents. On 3rd January Cllr Daniel requested a site meeting with Essex Highways and Cllr Butland.

Extension of 30mph Speed Limit at either end of Blackmore End

There is nothing further to report on this.

Footpath from Nortofts Farm to Petches Bridge junction

Cllr Butland has been approached again to see if he can assist with the restoration of this footpath following complaints from numerous residents. Note: this path is in the Parish of Finchingfield.

Wethersfield Village Hall Club: Water Leak

Wethersfield Village Hall Club has been asked to provide at least two quotations for consideration by the Parish Council. These are still awaited.

Footpath near the Fire Station

The Chairman has trimmed this path back. It will require further cutting back in the spring with a petrol hedge trimmer.

Dirty Road Sign on Braintree Road

The sign which was reported at the last meeting has been cleaned.

Christmas Tree Switch on

This event was again a great success with just under £1,200 being raised for improvements to Wethersfield Village Hall.

Courses

Cllrs Daniel, Godley and the clerk are attending a Data Protection Regulation Briefing on 25th January 2018 at EALC.

Correspondence Received:

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| (i) | HeadsUp which offers advice, support and mentoring to people with common mental health issues such as anxiety or depression have sent some promotional literature. Details are on the community website. |
| (ii) | Notification was received on 20 th November 2017 that PKF Littlejohn LLP will be the external auditor for the 2017/18 financial year. |
| (iii) | Details of a survey regarding DaRT services in Mid and North Essex have been received. The survey closed on 22 nd December and a link was put on the website. |
| (iv) | Essex Energy Switch runs until 23 rd February 2018. Details and a link are on the website. |
| (v) | ECC is promoting a new campaign which has recently been launched by Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board to empower victims of domestic abuse for those aged 55 and over. Posters are available from the clerk if anybody is able to display them. |
| (vi) | A poster and details publicising ECC's Fostering in Essex campaign have been received and placed on the website. |
| (vii) | An email from Braintree District Council dated 12 th December has been received and circulated confirming the tax base which will be used to calculate the 2018/19 B and D rate for this parish is £533.71. It was also confirmed that Wethersfield's allocation of the Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus is £428.00. |
| (viii) | The Parish Council has received a letter of thanks dated 29 th December 2017 for the grant of £1,400 which was awarded to Blackmore End Playing Field. |

17/166 RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR

The Chairman accepted the resignation of Mr R Burdge with regret.

A notice generated by Braintree District Council is on the website and notice boards and, assuming an election is not called, the vacancy will be followed by an advertisement seeking to co-op a new councillor.

17/167 CO-OPTION

There is one vacancy in the Blackmore End ward. No candidates were present to observe the meeting, although there has been an expression of interest from a Beazley End resident.

17/168 WETHERSFIELD VILLAGE STORE AND POST OFFICE

It was agreed that during the next month the possibility of making the post office an ACV (Asset of Community Value) would be investigated and it will be the subject of a motion to be included on next month's agenda.

17/169 DOG CHASE, WETHERSFIELD

The motion to request that Essex Highways block off the lower (High Street) end of Dog Chase to traffic and make it a no through road was agreed. The motion was proposed by Cllr Bowers, seconded by Cllr Godley and carried unanimously.

A letter confirming this will be sent to Cllr Butland.

Action: AB and clerk

17/170 WETHERSFIELD VILLAGE HALL

- (i) The motion to approve the signing of a lease granted to Wethersfield Village Hall CIO which enables the CIO, as an independent charitable body, to manage Wethersfield Village Hall for a minimum of the next seven years on behalf of the Parishioners of Wethersfield was approved. The motion was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Vincent and carried unanimously.

The lease was then signed and witnessed.

Cllr Mrs Newell confirmed that one copy will be held on behalf of the Parish Council by Holmes & Hills solicitors and the second copy will be given to the CIO.

- (ii) Cllr Godley confirmed that a majority of the Trustees of the CIO had agreed not to pursue the suggestion made at the last meeting to secure larger funding to carry out major improvements to the village hall. (see minute ref: 17/143).
- (iii) The motion to appoint Cllr Godley as the Parish Council's representative on the Village Hall CIO to serve for 2018 was approved. The motion was proposed by Cllr Bowers, seconded by Cllr Martin and carried unanimously.

17/171 BROADBAND IN WETHERSFIELD

Cllr Bowers confirmed that superfast broadband is now available in Wethersfield. This matter will be removed as a regular agenda item.

17/172 WETHERSFIELD COMMUNITY WEBSITE

- (i) Mr Richard Burdge has agreed to continue to run the website until it can be handed over to a new webmaster. Enquiries are being made locally to find a volunteer.

It was stressed that a formal launch needs to take place as soon as possible as all stakeholders are now using the site regularly.

- (ii) It was agreed that a set of Rules and Regulations for users of the website need to be drawn up. This task will be given to the new webmaster, once appointed.

17/173 DATA PROTECTION POLICY

As Cllrs Daniel, Godley and the clerk are attending a Briefing on GDPR, this matter will be deferred until February's meeting.

17/174 DISLODGED KERBSTONE ON THE CORNER OF LOWER GREEN ROAD AND SYERS GREEN, BLACKMORE END

After making some enquiries, Cllr Vincent has established this is not a highways issue as the kerbstone was originally installed by local residents. Cllr Vincent agreed to deal with this matter.

Action: BV

17/175 GULLY IN SLIP ROAD ALONGSIDE THE GREEN

As a response has still not been received from Essex County Council, Cllr Godley agreed to contact them again.

Action: NG

17/176 LITTER PICKING IN BEAZLEY END

The motion to extend the existing litter picking route in February, April, June, August, October and December each year to include Beazley End and Codham, but stopping at the parish boundary, for an additional £25 per extended route was approved. This motion was proposed by Cllr Daniel, seconded by Cllr Vincent and unanimously agreed.

17/177 TREES IN WETHERSFIELD

- (i) The Chairman agreed to ask "Brambles" to inspect the willow tree near The Old Coach House to see if they can suggest a course of action.

Action: JB

- (ii) The motion to appoint “Brambles” to undertake work on the trees on The Green, as recommended by Braintree District Council, and to remove the lower branches of the fir tree near the telephone box for the inclusive price of £780 was approved. This motion was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Godley and unanimously agreed.

17/178 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE, CODE OF CONDUCT AND STANDING ORDERS

A draft will be produced before the next meeting.

Action: JB and clerk

17/179 EVENTS POLICY FOR USE OF THE GREEN

A draft document was circulated prior to the meeting and it was agreed to restrict the total number of events to four per calendar year (this includes the Christmas Tree Light Switch On). Applications for hiring The Green must be made by residents of the parish only. The policy will be adjusted and re-circulated.

Action: JB and clerk

17/180 PLANNING

- (i) **Update on applications listed in minutes dated 15th November 2017:**

17/00098/TPOCON	St Georges House, High Street, Wethersfield, CM7 4BY Application to carry out work on trees affected by the Conservation Area.	APPLICATION GRANTED
17/00184/TPOCON	1 Sims Cottage, Braintree Road, Wethersfield, CM7 4BX To carry out work on trees affected by the Conservation Area.	APPLICATION GRANTED
17/00257/TPOCON	Woodland, Braintree Road, Wethersfield, Essex Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area.	APPLICATION GRANTED
17/00285/TPOCON	1 Sims Cottage, Braintree Road, Wethersfield, CM7 4BX Application to carry out work on trees affected by the Conservation Area.	APPLICATION GRANTED
17/01781/FUL	OS Field 5185 Land at Heddingham Road, Wethersfield, Essex Erection of new agricultural barn for the purposes of storing grain, straw and other agricultural activities.	APPLICATION GRANTED

17/01927/FUL	The Old Brewery, Braintree Road, Wethersfield CM7 4BU Extension into a basement, minor internal alterations and minor external alterations to the existing building and approved extensions.	APPLICATION GRANTED
17/01968/PLC	Wrights Farm, Hedingham Road, Wethersfield CM7 4EW Application for a proposed lawful development certificate – erection of extensions.	APPLICATION REFUSED
17/01983/LBC	The Manse, The Green, Wethersfield CM7 4BS Replacement front door.	PENDING DECISION (No objection email sent to BDC on 20/11/2017)
17/02055/FUL	Lower Green Farm (formerly Old Timbers), Lower Green Road, Blackmore End, Wethersfield CM7 4DU Equestrian facilities for domestic enjoyment - Erection of 3no. stables, feed, rest and storage area, minor landscaping works and construction of ménage for domestic use.	PENDING CONSIDERATION (No objection email sent to BDC on 01/12/2017)
17/01942/LBC	Lower Green Farm (formerly Old Timbers), Lower Green Road, Blackmore End, Wethersfield CM7 4DU To remove modern emulsion paint and wood stain from wooden beams to control infestation and restore to original wood.	PENDING CONSIDERATION (No objection email sent to BDC on 01/12/2017)
17/02056/AGR	Beazley End Orchard, Beazley End, Wethersfield, CM7 5JQ Prior notification of agricultural or forestry development – construction of worm beds.	PLANNING PERMISSION NOT REQUIRED
17/01908/FUL	Land Rear Of Fir Cottage, Braintree Road Wethersfield, CM7 4AG Excavation works to create a parking area dug out of wooded area to rear of Fir Cottage.	PENDING CONSIDERATION (No objection email sent to BDC on 22/12/2017)

(ii) **New applications received since the November meeting:**

Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/Z1510/W/17/3189866	Land South of Silver Street, Wethersfield, Essex Erection of 9 dwellings with associated access and landscaping.	AN APPEAL HAS BEEN MADE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE. Any representations must be received by 15/01/18 and sent directly to the Planning Inspectorate
17/02253/FUL	Land South of Silver Street, Wethersfield Essex Erection of 9 dwellings with associated access and landscaping.	PENDING CONSIDERATION (Comments to BDC required by 31/01/18)

Action to be taken on applications awaiting consideration:

- **Planning Inspectorate Reference APP/Z1510/W/17/3189866:** A letter objecting to this appeal will be sent.
- **17/02253/FUL/LBC:** A letter objecting to this application will be sent.

17/181 PERSONNEL MATTERS

- (i) No applications have been received for the position of Responsible Financial Officer, although an expression of interest has been made to a councillor who will forward the job description to the prospective candidate.
- (ii) The motion to increase the clerk's salary point 19 from the 1st April 2016 from £9.551 per hour to £9.647 per hour, an increase of £0.096 per hour, in accordance with the NALC (National Association of Local Councils) salary scales was approved. The motion was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Daniel and unanimously agreed.
- (iii) The motion to increase the clerk's salary point 19 from the 1st April 2017 from £9.647 per hour to £9.743 per hour, an increase of £0.096 per hour, in accordance with the NALC salary scales was approved. The motion was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Bowers and unanimously agreed.
- (iv) The motion to promote the clerk and increase the clerk's salary from 1st January 2018 from salary point 19 to salary point 20 within the range 18 to 22 in Scale LC1 as set out in the 2016-2018 National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service of Local Council Clerks in England and Wales. The clerk's new salary would be £10.099 per hour and this was approved. The motion was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Godley and unanimously agreed.
- (v) The motion to pay the demand from HMRC regarding the Tax and NIC which has been assessed by the Inland Revenue based on the earnings of the previous clerk was approved. The motion was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Martin and unanimously agreed.
- (vi) The motion to register Wethersfield Parish Council's Clerk with HMRC was approved. The motion was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Daniel and unanimously agreed.

