



GREAT HORKESLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3 OCTOBER 2022 IN THE NEW VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM

Those present:

Cllr M Mead (Chairman)
Cllr C Arnold (Vice Chairman)
Cllr G Baker
Cllr M Sudbery
Cllr L Taverner
Colchester Borough Cllr Darius Laws
Neil Baxter (Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group)
+ 3 members of the public

22/65 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending the meeting.

22/66 Apologies and Reasons for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Williams.

22/67 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Mead declared a prejudicial interest in respect of item 22/72 (d).

22/68 Minutes of Previous Meetings

- (a) The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council which took place on Monday 5 September 2022 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.
- (b) The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council which took place on Monday 26 September 2022 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

22/69 Have Your Say – Public Open Forum

3 residents of Great Horkesley attended the meeting to express their disappointment that it had been stated the Parish Council presumed that the concerns of Ivy Lodge Road residents had been met in the revised Planning Application 213363, due to no residents attending the Extraordinary Meeting held on 29 June 2022. The residents confirmed that they were no happier with the revised application than they were with the original application and asked for more support from the Parish Council. The residents and Parish Clerk will continue to communicate regarding any updates to the application.

All members of the public left the meeting.

22/78 Housing Needs Survey

The Chairman brought this item on the agenda forward for discussion, as Mr Neil Baxter from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) had been invited to attend the meeting to discuss it.

Mr Baxter confirmed that the NPSG had gone out to the market to research and obtain quotes from a number of companies that produce housing needs surveys. It was found that the larger, more well-known, companies quoted prices 15-20% higher and were slow to respond. For due diligence, the two best quotes – from RCCE and CNB Housing Insights – were then looked at in more detail. The NPSG concluded that although the quote from RCCE was approximately £2,000 cheaper, they would not be able to meet all the needs of the NPSG. CNB Housing Insights therefore offered a superior service and would give the best value for money. References for CNB Housing Insights were then requested and received.

Data from the most recent 2021 census will be used to produce the survey. The draft survey will be forwarded to all councillors in due course. The NPSG applied for, and the Parish Council subsequently received, a grant to cover the cost of the housing needs survey (item 22/51 (c)). The Chairman thanked the NPSG for their hard work.

It was resolved that three quotations for the production of a housing needs survey do not need to be obtained by the Clerk (in accordance with paragraph 11.1 (h) of the Financial Regulations of Great Horkesley Parish Council) as the NPSG had already carried out their own tendering process.

It was unanimously agreed to appoint CNB Housing Insights as the provider of the housing needs survey for Great Horkesley, as recommended by the NPSG.

It was unanimously agreed to release funds of £2,926.80 from the Neighbourhood Planning reserves, to pay the initial invoice from CNB Housing Insights.

Mr Baxter left the meeting.

22/70 Correspondence

It was noted that a resident has complained about an overgrowing hedge running along Spartan Close/Gala Close (off Braeburn Road). On advice from the Vice-Chairman, the resident has been advised how they can find out who owns the land and is responsible for the upkeep of the hedge as it is on private property.

22/71 Reports from Members and Officers of Other Authorities

Colchester Borough Cllr Laws reported:

Colchester Borough Council are currently forecasting a major budget deficit of £3.6m for the 2024/25 financial year. Therefore, CBC will again be considering using wheelie bins for waste collection and charging fees for garden waste collections. They are also looking into shared service opportunities (such as legal and HR services) and may consider moving to only holding elections once every four years, which is already the practise of the neighbouring districts of Babergh, Braintree, Maldon and Tendring. Cllr Arnold asked that the subsequent impact of the change on Parish

Council election costs should be considered by Colchester Borough Council before a decision was made.

Cllr Laws advised that a member of the Community Neighbourhood Services team has agreed to attend a site visit to look at the footpath along the A134. This is arranged for Tuesday 18th October at 8.30am.

Cllr Laws may be able to put some of his locality budget towards purchasing a horse chestnut tree for the Jubilee Green to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II.

Cllr Arnold reported that he had received an email from County Cllr Barber with a detailed update on the flooding under the A12 bridge. Essex Highways are planning to proceed with intervention prior to the seasonal rains and hope to attend site in November to undertake additional investigations.

Cllr Laws left the meeting.

22/72 Finance

- (a) The Statement of Accounts as at 30 September 2022 was noted.
- (b) **It was unanimously agreed** to approve payments for August and September 2022 in accordance with the 2022-23 budget.
- (c) It was noted that PKF Littlejohn LLP have completed their review of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for Great Horkesley Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2022 and the external auditor report and certificate have been received. The 'Notice of Conclusion of Audit' has been published on the Council's website and notice boards by 30 September 2022 as required.
- (d) Cllr Mead explained that the Funraisers, who produce the Great Horkesley Village News, are struggling to cover the printing costs of approximately £1,000 each quarter. They have increased advertising prices but may need to find another source of income.

Cllr Mead left the room and the Vice-Chairman Cllr Arnold proceeded to chair the meeting.

Following discussion, **it was unanimously agreed** that the Parish Council will continue to support the Funraisers until the end of the 2022/23 financial year. The Funraisers will need to apply for a grant from the Parish Council (providing details of accounts including income and expenditure, as all applicants are required to do) for 2023/24.

Cllr Mead returned to the room and continued to chair the meeting.

22/73 Planning Applications

- (a) The following applications were considered and there were no objections:
222137 Thorncroft, Nayland Road (expires 11/10/2022)
Single storey side extension and addition of patio
It was agreed to comment on application 222137 stating that the Parish Council does not object to the application, however it has been noticed that a fence has

been put up on the property boundary that would have required permission. Members were unanimous that had an application for the fence been made, they would have resolved that hedging should be planted in front of it to reduce the adverse visual impact of the fence alone.

222463 **12 Malvern Way** **(expires 18/10/2022)**
Single storey front extension

(b) It was noted that decisions have been made for the following applications:

221968 **9 Blackbrook Road** **Approve Conditional**
Flat roof side and rear extension

221162 **Highlands, School Lane** **Approve Conditional**
Construction works to reinstate fire damaged Grade II listed dwelling

221161 **Highlands, School Lane** **Approve Conditional**
Construction works to reinstate fire damaged Grade II listed dwelling

(c) The following applications were received after publication of the agenda but prior to this meeting and, after consideration, no objections or comments were raised:

222413 **27 Braeburn Road** **(expires 20/10/2022)**
Installation of velux windows to create bedroom and store within roof

222394 **Bucks, London Road** **(expires 19/10/2022)**
New garden shed

22/74 Highways

(a) The Chairman reminded members that at the beginning of the year he reported having been approached by a former village resident, now working as a professional electrician and trading as Electrical Testing Ltd, who offered to upgrade all the village lighting to low-energy LED fittings. This would be at no cost to the Parish Council because the electrician would then encourage other villages to pay to have their lighting upgraded to achieve lower running costs and greater reliability, using Great Horkesley as an example. No further details were then available so a formal proposal would be brought to a future meeting.

The formal proposal had come in September but with such a short deadline that it had been impossible to convene a meeting to put it to members. Given that there would have been an obvious loss to the village were the proposal not accepted, after consulting the Chairman and Vice-chairman the Clerk agreed that Electrical Testing Ltd should undertake the work (using delegated powers in accordance with Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972). In the event, 15 streetlights had been replaced, including some which were the property of the highway authority, their permission having been obtained.

It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk's action had been appropriate, and the work was retrospectively approved.

The Clerk is to contact Colchester Borough Council to ask that the cost to the Parish Council of running streetlights in Great Horkesley is reduced. It is cheaper to run streetlights with LEDs and this would encourage other parishes to follow suit.

It was noted that the bases of some streetlights along Coach Road are corroded, and the Clerk is to contact Electrical Testing Ltd to see if this is something they would be able to fix.

(b) No other highways matters were reported.

Cllr Sudbery left the meeting.

22/75 Village Hall

- (a) The new Village Hall Caretaker started on 1 October 2022 and will look to fix the defective guttering and redecorate where necessary.
- (b) There were no other items to discuss regarding the village hall.

22/76 Website & IT

- (a) It was noted that the domain name greathorkesley-pc.gov.uk has been renewed for another year at the cost of £60 +VAT.
- (b) It was noted that fees for the Council's Google Workspace account have increased from £1.59 per month to £2.30 per month from September 2022.

22/77 Public Spaces and Maintenance & Repairs

- (a) **It was unanimously agreed** that the noticeboards owned by the Parish Council at the Old Village Hall and on Blackbrook Road are no longer required to be updated, so the Clerk is to put a notice referring residents to look at the Parish Council website or one of the other noticeboards for up-to-date information. The noticeboards at the New Village Hall and near the Half Butt are to continue being used and updated regularly.
The noticeboard outside the primary school is run down and not fit for purpose, yet it is an area where many residents congregate most weekdays, so the Clerk is to obtain quotes for a replacement and research any possible grants.
- (b) It was noted that the salt has been delivered and there is now approximately 2 tonnes of salt bags now in reserve at Bishop William Ward C of E Primary School car park.

22/79 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report for September 2022 was noted and there were no questions.

22/80 Village Warden

The work carried out by the Village Warden in September 2022 was noted.

22/81 Date of Next Meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday 7 November 2022 at 7.30pm in the New Village Hall, Tile House Lane. Cllr Arnold reported that he would be unable to attend the meeting and offered apologies.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be on Tuesday 18 October 2022 at 10.30am in the New Village Hall, Tile House Lane.