



GREAT HORKESLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of Great Horkesley Parish Council

held at 7:30pm on Tuesday 25th February 2020

Members Present: Councillors Mead (Chairman)

Arnold, Duckworth, Flores and Williams

1 member of the public

1. **The Chairman** opened the meeting and welcomed those present, including one resident.
2. **Absences:** Cllrs Baker, Ewing, Taverner and Wescomb-Cross were unable to attend the meeting and had offered apologies; no decision was taken as to whether the various reasons given were acceptable to the Council.
3. **Declarations of interest:** No interests were declared by members present.
4. **Have your say:** The resident reported that a house close to where he lived had been burgled shortly before a nearby streetlamp had been repaired after a long delay. He invited the Council to make a representation to the Highway Authority to the effect that attending to defective street lamps more promptly could help to reduce burglary.
5. **Minutes of meeting on held on 21st January: It was agreed** that the circulated draft minutes were an accurate record of the last meeting and should be adopted as a true record.
6. **Great British Spring Clean:** Following discussion **it was agreed** that various organisations in the village, including the Scouts, Guides and Youth Club, should be contacted to invite them to participate in a Spring Clean of the village as per a scheme promoted in the Daily Mail. This would need to be under the supervision of the leaders of those organisations to avoid safeguarding issues. It was pointed out that CBC would provide bags and equipment to support Spring Cleans. It was also pointed out that if the Council itself decided during each autumn to promote a Spring Clean in the village there would be more time to promote the event and hopefully get a better turnout of volunteers.
7. **Village Warden**
 - a. Members noted appreciatively the schedule of work carried out by the Warden that had been circulated with the meeting papers. Various members reported that residents had been complimentary about the impact of employing the warden.
 - b. **It was agreed** that the clerk would arrange a site meeting between members and the warden so that the feasibility of using volunteers to clear vegetation from the footway on the A134 could be investigated.

8. Planning

- a. **200203:** It was agreed that the Council had no comment to make on residential density within the Chesterwell development.
- b. **200270:** The proposal to change the illuminated sign on the eastern flank of the dentists' surgery was discussed at length. It was explained that the present recently-erected sign was too large to fall within the 'permitted development' rules so permission was being sought retrospectively. **It was agreed** that in a residential area it was not appropriate for the sign to be lit throughout the night and that planners would be asked to limit its hours of operation to the opening hours of the surgery. A view was also expressed that given the nuisance caused by visitors to the surgery parking cars on verges and footways, it would be preferable not to allow the signage at all.
- c. **Applications 200284 and 200382** had been notified too late for inclusion on the meeting agenda but in discussion members considered that there would have no need to comment on them anyway.
- d. **Response to consultation by CBC:** The Council had been asked to comment on three draft supplementary planning documents produced by CBC. **It was agreed** that members would study the documents and make representations as individuals if they felt this appropriate. Cllr Arnold pointed out that one of the documents covered village social housing, a topic that Cllr Taverner had asked to be placed on the meeting agenda. **It was agreed** that the deadline of 5th March would be pointed out to Cllr Taverner.

9. **GHPC Facebook page:** Following discussion **it was agreed** that the Council should have its own Facebook page, to be set up and supervised by Cllrs Duckworth and Wescomb-Cross. It should be visible to all residents i.e. an open group which everyone could follow. It was also agreed that to generate interest in the page the clerk, chairman and vice-chairman should have the ability to post to it and it would cover village hall matters as well as mainstream parish council business and relevant news from CBC and ECC.

10. **Village Social Housing:** In the absence of Cllr Taverner, Cllr Arnold explained that social housing provided within major developments would be allocated tenants from across the Borough by Colchester Borough Homes ; if the parish council wanted to create housing for people with local connections it would need to use the Rural Exception scheme under which a small undesignated site probably adjacent to the village housing envelope could be sold to the Rural Housing Trust and then affordable homes for rent built on it.

The first step would be for there to be a village-wide Housing Needs survey, which could be carried out as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process which the group formed to oppose the Bloor Homes development were keen to carry out. The Rural Community Council for Essex could provide courses and advice on both subjects.

It was agreed in principle that establishing an area of village social housing in Great Horkesley would be appropriate. Cllr Arnold was asked to obtain further information and report back to a future meeting.

11. Highways

- a. **Cllr Arnold** reported that he had been asked by an EADT journalist to comment on a proposal to transfer the lorry route between Sudbury and the A12 from the A131 to the A134. The proposal had come from Halstead Town Council and apparently had the back of local Essex and Suffolk county members. His investigation had revealed that it had no official status – no highway officers had been involved – and county members

along the A134 were now protesting to their A131 counterparts. He recommended that a member of the parish councillor should attend a public meeting in Halstead at the end of March at which the matter would be discussed.

- b. **Cllr Arnold** further reported that he had accompanied County Councillor Anne Brown on a trip around the village to inspect various sites on which works by the highway authority were due. These included
- i. The replacement bus shelter at the corner of Boxted Church Road, which for which ECC officers were saying they could not provide because third party land was needed;
 - ii. Flooding at the eastern end of School Lane, which he believed was due to a section of ditch having been inadvertently removed some years ago;
 - iii. Pavements in Keelers Way and on Nayland Road between the Tile House Chase and Coach Road junctions, which Cllr Brown would put forward for repair and resurfacing;
 - iv. Surface water on the footway between Green Lane and Chesterwell;
 - v. The pole supporting a 'village gate' sign which had rusted though, leaving the large sign free to swing in the wind but which highway officers had refused to treat as urgent.

12. **VE Day Anniversary celebration: It was confirmed** that the parish council had received a grant of £200 from CBC to help cover costs. The village hall and its grounds would be made available for the event. Organisation of the event was now gathering speed, with the school, church and youth club all expected to participate.

13. **Provision of GHPC documents: It was agreed** that when the clerk was asked to supply printed copies of documents which the Council held in digital form, there would be a charge of 50p per A4 sheet to cover the cost of the paper, ink and the clerk's time.

14. **The Clerk's report** as circulated with the meeting papers was discussed and noted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

15. Financial matters

- a. The Council noted without debate the transactions set out in appendix B to the meeting agenda.
- b. No approvals were sought for matters not covered under the Clerk's delegated powers.
- c. The Council approved repayments of hall hire retainers as set out in confidential appendix C to the meeting agenda.
- d. The Council noted without debate the transactions relating to the village hall which were set out in appendix D to the meeting agenda as published on the GHPC website.
- e. **Cllr Flores** reported that he had investigated three options for continuing to maintain the parish council website after 31st March when the present service would end. Of the three, he recommended engaging Hugh Frostick to set up a new website that was fit-for-purpose and transfer to it such information as the Council decided should be kept. Depending on the choices the Council made, the initial cost would be between £200 and £330 and the annual charge would be £270 per year. This would cover

training and on-call costs. Whilst the other two service providers were on the face of it marginally cheaper, neither would provide the same level of service.

It was agreed that Hugh Frostick would be engaged to provide the Council's new website, subject to Cllr Flores confirming that the reported costs were accurate.

f. **Budgetary control:** The report of spending and income at the end of December, as circulated with the meeting papers, was noted without comment and duly signed by the Chairman.

g. **EALC Donation. It was agreed** that the Council could not make a donation to the retiring EALC Chief Executive from public funds but the Chairman and Vice-Chairman both stated that they would make personal contributions.

h. **Future water and electricity contracts:** (Item deferred)

16. Village Hall car park: The chairman reported that installation of the new gates was complete and although it had been necessary for the Council to fund the unexpected installation of new gate posts, the old ones having been found to be rotten, the extra cost would be covered by the recovery of VAT in due course. **It was agreed** that new locks would be purchased for the gates and Cllr Arnold would find the design for the warning signs which could now be displayed in the car park to deter casual parking.

17. Training: **It was agreed** that the cost of Cllr Wescomb-Cross attending the EALC Grants Funding and Free Money course would be met by the Council.

18. Future meetings and business

a. **The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 17th March 2020.**

b. In order to facilitate maximum attendance by members, the date of the **Annual Parish Council meeting** was changed to Tuesday 12th May 2020.

c. **It was agreed** that the **Annual Parish Meeting** would take place on Wednesday 29th April 2020; the clerk would consult absent members and a decision would be made at the March meeting.

d. Other than the need to consider planning a Village Spring Clean at the September 2020 meeting, no new business was identified.

Duly approved at the parish council meeting held on the 8 April 2020

Chairman's signature.....