



GREAT HORKESLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes

**Minutes of the meeting of Great Horkesley Parish Council
held at 7:30pm on Tuesday 19th November 2019
Members Present: Councillors Mead (Chairman)
Arnold, Baker and Williams
Five members of the public and Cllr Nigel Chapman, CBC**

1. Chairman's opening remarks

Cllr Mead welcomed those present to the meeting, including those present who had applied to be co-opted onto the Council.

2. Apologies and reasons for absence.

Cllr Flores was unable to attend the meeting for personal reasons and had sent apologies.

3. Declarations for interest

No councillors declared an interest in respect of any item on the agenda.

4. Public open forum

A member of the public queried whether the minute from the last meeting relating to a question asked as to whether the Council had been surprised to learn of the proposed 160-house development on Coach Road was correct. Cllr Arnold explained that the minute referred to the answer given to a similar question asked by two Coach Road residents at the September meeting, namely that there had been signs for some months that a development proposal was being worked up.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 15th October 2019 were approved.

6. Co-option of new members

The Chairman reported that he had met Liz Taverner and Martin Ewing to discuss their expressions of interest in becoming members of the Council. Cllr Arnold reported that he had had similar discussions with Teri Duckworth and Caroline Wescomb-Cross. All four had then submitted CVs which had been circulated to members with the agenda.

It having been confirmed that they were village residents, Cllr Arnold proposed that the Council should exercise its power to adopt them as full members of the Council for the remainder of the electoral cycle, i.e. until May 2023. Proposal seconded by Cllr Baker and **agreed unanimously.**

The new councillors were asked to sign declarations of acceptance of office and advised to submit formal declarations of interest as soon as possible.

It was also agreed that there should be an informal gathering of all councillors to enable the newcomers to settle in more quickly and familiarise themselves with work the Council was already undertaking; it was felt unlikely that this would happen until the New Year.

Finally, Cllr Arnold suggested that all members might like to think before the next meeting about whether a highways committee should be formed to carry forward the work which he was currently undertaking alone with the result that it received less attention than he felt it should.

At this point Cllr Williams left the meeting.

7. Planning applications

a. 192695: 1, Blackbrook Road, Great Horkesley

The Council decided that no representation need be made.

b. Fen Cottage appeal: Cllr Arnold (as ward councillor) agreed to check that residents of property adjacent to the site had been made aware of the appeal.

c. Hospytts appeal: No action to be taken by the Council.

d. No applications had been lodged since the agenda was published.

8. Councillor reports

Cllr Arnold referred to the need for a speedy decision on the Locality Budget bid for equipment to support the work of the Village Warden. The clerk explained that the delay was due to the difficulty in getting estimates for the cost of the magnetic signs to be fixed to the warden's vehicle; she expected to overcome this shortly.

9. Highways

a. A134 resurfacing Cllr Arnold reported that he had accompanied County Cllr Anne Brown and three senior highway authority officers on an inspection of the A134 throughout the parish. While due to increasingly heavy rain throughout the inspection it had become progressively harder to see faults in the surface, it was clear that the officers were very well acquainted with the various problems. He could confirm that:

- the surface met the skid resistance requirement throughout its length;
- the holes in the 40 mph section of the road would be filled shortly;
- it was not possible to apply any further dressing to the surface until warmer weather arrived in late spring 2020;
- when the warmer weather did arrive it was likely that the aggregate would bed down into the binder and a smoother, quieter surface would result;

- by waiting until spring 2020 before agreeing further works with the contractor the highway authority was giving a chance for winter weather to expose further faults;
- the cost of all the remedial work so far undertaken and into the future was being met by the contractor.

Cllr Arnold further reported that before their visit Cllr Brown had shown the officers a number of offensive emails she had been sent by residents which had led her to suggest that the offer to arrange a public meeting in the village should be withdrawn. She suggested instead that parish councillors and a few residents should be invited to a private meeting. Three residents were suggested by parish councillors as possible invitees. Cllr Arnold said he was keen that a commuter-cyclist should attend because the new surface was particularly unpleasant for cyclists, an issue to which he felt the highway authority was not giving enough weight.

b. Footway between Green Lane and Chesterwell. The clerk confirmed that after she had applied pressure at a higher level, the highway authority had now agreed that temporary traffic signals could be installed to enable nettles to be safely removed from the footway and the bottom of the embankment. A quotation was now awaited from the contractor already selected.

c. Barnfield Road/Brick Kiln Lane alleyway. Cllr Baker reported that he was having difficulty getting the forms of evidence from nearby residents but would continue to work on this. Cllr Arnold agreed that he would complete one.

10. Village Warden

The Council noted with satisfaction the report circulated with the meeting papers in which the work undertaken by the Warden was set out. The Chairman remarked that the cost of employing the Warden was likely to be higher than anticipated simply because of the scale of the backlog. Whilst this extra cost could be charged to balances for the current year, it was likely that there would need to be a considerable increase in the precept from April 2020. Members generally agreed that the work had to be done and since there would be a general benefit in the village, it was appropriate that the cost should be met by residents when the time came.

11. Village development

a. Land around Great Horkesley Manor The Chairman reported that he had attended the Planning Committee meeting in the Town Hall on 14th November. Cllr Arnold and a number of scout leaders also attended as did four Ivy Lodge Road residents, one of whom expressed concerns about various aspects of the proposed development. The Planning Committee resolved to grant outline planning consent for the development subject to the completion of a satisfactory §106 Agreement. [The draft minute of the proceedings will be posted on the GHPC website.]

Cllr Arnold, who had also addressed the committee, reported that he had attended a private meeting earlier on 14th November between scout and guide leaders from the village and CBC planning and community development officers. The purpose had been to explore options for owning and managing the new Scout and Guide HQ to be provided as part of the development. The favoured option was for the freehold to be passed to the parish council but for the scouts and guides to have responsibility for all management, probably under a long lease. There would be a need to protect general community access to the building which might be achieved by appointing a parish council representative to the management committee. However, Cllr Arnold stressed that at this stage none of this was a formal proposal and that the Parish Council could expect to be directly involved in discussions at a later stage.

b. **Bloor Homes' proposal for a 160-house development on Coach Road.** Several councillors had been amongst the estimated 200 people who had attended the residents' meeting in the village hall on 11th November. Cllr Arnold (as ward councillor) had outlined the relevant planning process for about half an hour and then taken some seventy minutes of questions from those present. At the end of the meeting a number of residents formed a committee to lead the opposition to the application; Cllr Arnold declined to serve on the committee but stated that his experience was at their disposal.

12. Review of GHPC Policies and Procedures

Item deferred to the next meeting to enable new members to familiarise themselves with the documents.

13. Clerk's report

The Council noted the clerk's report as circulated with the meeting papers; a copy is appended to these minutes for ease of reference.

14. Financial matters

- a. **The Council noted** without comment payments authorised at the last meeting, those made under the Clerk's delegated powers since the last meeting and any receipts, all as set out in Appendix B to the agenda.
- b. There were no invoices in respect of goods or services not covered under delegated powers to consider.
- c. **The Council approved** refunds of hall hire retainers falling due before the next meeting, as set out in appendix C to the agenda (*sent to members only*);
- d. **It was agreed** that the Council would participate in the Christmas Tree due to take place in All Saints' Church at the start of Advent. A budget of £20 was agreed.
- e. **The Council noted** without comment the schedule of Village Hall financial payments and receipts as set out in Appendix D to the agenda.
- f. **It was agreed** that Cllr Mead should sign off the budgetary control report which had been circulated in a revised format.

It was also agreed that the format of the spreadsheets did not lend itself to being easily understood and that a comprehensive revision should be undertaken when resources permitted; this work was felt to be desirable rather than urgent.

- g. In the absence of Cllr Flores, it was agreed to defer consideration of where the new website should be hosted to a future meeting.

15. Village Hall

The chairman reported that Renzland Wrought Iron had been asked to quote for provision of a gate for the village hall car park; a site visit had taken place and a quotation provided. Members felt that if the Council was to pay for the work, standing orders regarding the need to obtain more than one quotation should be followed. However, the Chairman reported that the Funraisers had agreed to pay for the work, the cost of which therefore needed to appear on the Council's books only to enable VAT to be reclaimed, the car park being Council property. This would enable the work to be carried out without further delay.

16. Training

The clerk reported that as agreed she had attended the employment law course run by the Society of Local Council Clerks. Cllr Arnold reported that he had been unable to attend an EALC course on the same topic because of having to make an unexpected visit to hospital. The clerk said she would attempt to recover the fee paid for the course from EALC.

New members were encouraged to avail themselves of the courses for new councillors run by the EALC.

17. Future business

New members were advised that in order for the Council to make decisions about any matter, the intention to do so must appear on the meeting agenda which had to be published at least three clear working days before the relevant meeting.

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the council would take place on Tuesday 17th December as previously agreed.

It was agreed that a meeting of the Finance Working Group would take place at 0930h in the village hall on Wednesday 11th December; all members were welcome to attend.

- 18. (Item withdrawn because no members of the public were present)**

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

- 19. It was agreed** that the chairman should visit the occupier of the relevant house and ask that the problem identified by the Village Warden be rectified.

Appendix: Clerk's report

Parish Council Meeting 19 November 2019

1. Reported To Essex County Council
 - Slurry grabber required in Boxted church Road as parts flood when there is heavy rainfall.
 - Street Light No:1 permanently on in Ivy Lodge road near the junction with A134.
 - Plastic drain cover missing in Ivy Lodge Road.
2. The keep left sign has now been replaced on the A134 refuge just before the mini roundabout at Blackbrook.
3. I contacted the Colchester Borough Council manager of the Zone Wardens for replacement road signs for Coach Road at the junction with London Road.
4. Colchester Woodland project: Colchester Borough Council is to plant trees on the open space.
5. Reported to UK Power Network that branches of a willow tree were hanging close to power lines this is in Boxted Church Road. The manager went out the following day and cut back the branches.
6. Attended the Society of Local Council Clerks Employment and networking event on the 14 November 2019.
7. Barclays bank are to cut the interest rate in January 2020 down from 0.2% down to 0.1%.

Appendix B: Financial Payments & Receipts

| Account Dates: 15 October 2019 – 11 November 2019 | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| ID | TO/FROM | DETAILS | REF: | PAYMENTS/ RECEIPTS |
| 69 | Contractor | Bus Shelters | 2549 | £60.00 |
| 70 | Essex pension Fund | Contributions | Bacs | £468.17 |
| 71 | HMRC | Tax & NI contributions | Bacs | £354.00 |
| 72 | Society of Local Council Clerks | Employment Networking Event | Bacs | £12.00 |
| 73 | Clerk | Salary & Expenses | Bacs | Left Blank |
| 74 | Village Warden | Various Work completed | Bacs | £607.50 |
| 75 | EE | Mobile phone | DD | £13.88 |
| 76 | Colchester Borough Council | Electric for parish lights | Bacs | £154.40 |
| 77 | Amazon | 2 x Locks | Debit Card | £24.54 |
| 78 | Amazon | Telescopic Mop VW | Debit Card | £12.99 |

Duly approved at the parish council meeting held on the 17 December 2019

Chairman's signature.....