

Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Ordinary Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 2nd March 2021 at 7.30pm via Zoom
under Coronavirus legislation



PRESENT: Cllr Mike Allen (MA) Chair; Cllr Babs Edwards (BE); Cllr Michael Ripsher (MPR);
Cllr Mark Rome (MR); Cllr Ian Collins (IC)

2 members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm

ACTION

21.019 Apologies for absence

1. Councillors: None (all present)
2. Others: None

21.020 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

1. Interests

Cllr Babs Edwards: as noted on the agenda, a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Playing Field matters, her husband being Treasurer of the PFMC. Cllr Mike Allen noted an interest as a trustee of the Playing Field Committee. Both Cllr Edwards and Cllr Allen have dispensations in respect of these interests.

2. Dispensation requests: None

21.021 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 12th January 2021 were a true and accurate record.

MA/Clerk

21.022 Police report

In PCSO Leon De Bruyn's absence, the Chairman read the following report he had submitted:

There has been 1 report for Widford for the month of February 21. CCTV at a residential property in Widford has been damaged and police enquiries are currently still ongoing.

The local Rural SNT Team have been conducted several rural operations focusing on Hare coursing, poaching and off-road scrambler bikes in addition to patrols for Covid breaches.

Please let me know if there is anything from the PC meeting this month that requires police attention.

21.023 Chairman's announcements

Mr Taylor-Young is keen to get new arrangements started for the village archive. Again, an appeal for anyone to get involved to help move it forward. Mr Taylor-Young is willing to fund it. There had been suggestions that it might be possible to add an extension to the village hall. It is understood that archivist Helen Giles might be interested in getting involved. It was suggested that Hunsdon's website might give an indication of what could be achieved digitally. Clarification would also be needed about the expectations for storing and viewing the actual items and how these would be maintained as a vibrant exhibition rather than just left to gather dust. Cllr Mark Rome said he would be prepared to have an initial conversation about the project to get the ball rolling, but said he was unable to commit a lot of time to what will be a time-consuming project. The Chairman agreed to give Cllr Rome contact details so that he can ascertain how he might be able to help.

MA/MR

21.024 Reports by County and District Councillor Eric Buckmaster

Cllr Buckmaster hoped to join the meeting following an EHDC commitment. Report deferred until then.

The report is reproduced in full in the Appendix.

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21.025 Planning

1. New Applications:

3/21/0354/VAR Land off Ware Rd, Abbotts Lane: Variation to 3/18/1957/FUL
RESOLVED: No objections Clerk

3/21/0325/HH Phoenix Farm, Howletts Rd: Single storey rear orangery extension
RESOLVED: No objections Clerk

2. Decision Notices. The following were noted:

3/21/0040/FUL Land adj to Wayside *Decision awaited*

3/20/2616/HH The Old Rectory: Replacement extension. *Decision awaited*

3/20/2617/LBC The Old Rectory: Replacement extension. *Decision awaited*

3. Other planning matters, including items received too late for the agenda

1. Late planning applications

None

2. Parish Council response to Luton Airport’s application for Variation to Planning Consent conditions: Response noted.

3. Notice of licensing applications. The following were noted, no action required:

21/0074/PL Ems Coffee, Ware

21/0066 PLV Tesco Hertford

21/0070/PL Cost Cutter Ware

21/0059/PLV Rush Green Service Station

21.026 Finance

1. Report of the Council’s accounts 1st January to 23rd February 2021

Finance Summary	£
Opening bank balance 1 January	36,818.61
Plus: income to 23 February	0.00
Minus: expenditure to 23 February	1,894.84
Minus late presented payments	<u>0.00</u>
Balance available to Council at 23 February (cashbook balance)	34,923.77
Plus unrepresented cheques/payments	<u>0.00</u>
Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement at 23 February	<u>34,923.77</u>

RESOLVED: that the Accounts Statement to 23rd February 2021 be approved.

2. Bank reconciliation

RESOLVED: to agree the bank reconciliation as presented.

3. Performance vs budget to 23 February

The Clerk’s detailed report on the financial performance vs budget to 23rd February 2021 was received. Apart from £600 for tree safety work on Benningfield Green, there was no untoward expenditure, currently standing at £14,404 net against the total budget of £18,214; Income included an unanticipated New Homes Bonus of £9,333, the income to date standing at £25,916 against the total budget of £16,725.

RESOLVED: that the financial performance report to 23rd February 2021 be accepted as presented.

4. List of payments for approval

RESOLVED: to approve the list of payments as presented by the Clerk:

Clerk

All expenditure made under the General Power of Competence.

23/1	Mrs J English	Litterpick January 10 of 12	125.00	S/O
26/1	Clerk	Salary January	400.37	bacs
26/1	HMRC	PAYE January	100.00	bacs
12/2	JT Handyman	Benningfield Green benches	201.80	bacs
23/2	Clerk reimburse	SLCC membership (1/4 th)	65.75	bacs
22/2	Mrs J English	Litterpick February 11 of 12	125.00	S/O
23/2	Clerk	Salary February	400.17	bacs

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23/2	HMRC	PAYE February	100.20	bac
	Clerk	Expenses January-March	16.50	
	David Newton	Erect notice board (estimate)	100.00	
	TP Jones & Co	Running payroll Jan-March	58.50	
	Mrs J English	Litterpick March 12 of 12	125.00	S/O
	Clerk	Salary March (estimate)	400.17	
	HMRC	PAYE March (estimate)	100.20	
	Unity Trust Bank	Quarterly Service charge	18.00	
		Recoverable VAT included	9.75	

5. It was noted that the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Service had sent a letter of thanks for the donation and had also made another donation request.

21.027 Correspondence

The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the Agenda:

- Essex & Herts Air Ambulance thank you letter and donation request (21.026.4)
- EHC Democratic Services re Boundaries Commission Zoom meeting, 7pm, 24 March (21.031)
- Widford Playing Field: request for PC to pay the 10% grant balance required by Biffa (21.028.2.1)
- Hunsdon Neighbourhood Plan Group: notice of Reg 14 consultation (21.031.2)
- HEGNPG: re NP endorsement for EHC to go to referendum (21.031.3)
- Woodland Creation: Offer of free trees for planting woodland

21.028 Village Reports

1. Village Hall and archive. Considered earlier under Chairman's Announcements

MA

2. Playing Field: Play Area.

A request had been received asking the Parish Council to consider paying the 10% Biffa Play Area grant balance (£7.5k). It was noted that the Section 106 money (yet to be paid) is to be used for the carpark. The grant request to Biffa is for up to £75,000 to refurbish the Children's Play Area and fencing. Biffa's grant condition requires the PFMC to pay 10% of the total grant. It was noted that no money will change hands until the grant application has been agreed and accepted. The Clerk presented the council with a report on the impact of this on the budget and confirmed that it can be taken from the New Homes Bonus being held without detrimentally affecting the 2021/22 budget.

Clerk

RESOLVED: that the Parish Council will pay the 10% grant balance, up to £7,500, from the 2020/21 New Homes Bonus.

3. Allotments. The remaining work in setting up the new system and filling the tanks will be done as soon as the weather improves.

BE

4. Closed Churchyard. There was nothing to report. For the benefit of new members, the Clerk explained the Parish Council's obligations and duties in maintaining the Closed Churchyard. Caroline Parrott will continue with the maintenance contract.

Clerk

21.029 Highways, Public Rights of Way, and other Parish matters

1. Footpaths and PRoW.

It was reported that the handrail to the footpath steps that exit the Closed Churchyard to the North is loose or wobbly. The Closed Churchyard is the responsibility of the Parish Council but it is not clear whether the handrail responsibility falls to the Parish Council or to Public Rights of Way. The Clerk to clarify responsibility with the Public Rights of Way Officer to ensure the safety of the public using the footpath.

Clerk

Clerk's note: PRoW subsequently confirmed this is their responsibility and they will attend to it.

2. Highways and footways

1. Bus shelter repair: Handyman Jon Tyler to be asked to look at making the repair.

BE

2. Verges, gutters and overgrown footways: Ongoing with HCC. Photos to be taken of problems when they are seen and reported on the HCC Highways Fault line.

ALL

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3. TRO15914 Temporary road closure notification of Medcalf Hill was noted.

3. Other parish matters and concerns

1. Virtual Parish Council meetings held under the Coronavirus Act, 2020: The Clerk reported that the 2020 Act allowing parish councils to hold its meetings virtually, including the Annual Meeting of the Parish, expires on 7th May. It is not known at this time whether the government will extend the Act or what legislation will be in place after that date. The Clerk will keep the Parish Council informed.

Clerk

21.030 Benningfield Green

1. New notice board

This has been delivered; David Newton will arrange to collect it from the Chairman and install it on the Green as soon as convenient.

2. Parking on the Green

It was noted that a car and a van are often parked on the Green in contravention of the licence conditions. The Clerk was asked to write to the residents concerned reminding them that the licence gives permission to pass and repass, but not to park.

Clerk

3. Tree maintenance and bird boxes

Tree maintenance is complete; the bird boxes will be attended to by a parishioner.

It was also noted that the benches have now been repaired.

21.031 Consultations

1. EHC Democratic Services Boundaries Commission Electoral Review Zoom meeting 24th March, 7pm: NOTED. The Chairman and Clerk will attend.
2. Hunsdon Area Neighbourhood Plan Reg 14 Consultation (closes 22nd March): NOTED
3. HEGNPG examiner's endorsement for EHC to go to referendum: NOTED

MA/Clerk

21.032 Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman explained that it is a two to three year process that takes a group to achieve it. It requires village support and parishioners to be involved. Notwithstanding the exploration of this two or three years ago, it was agreed to put something out to residents to see what level of interest there is. The Chairman to discuss with the Clerk.

MA/Clerk

21.033 Urgent matters received too late for inclusion on this agenda: None raised.

The meeting was suspended at 9.10pm for parishioners' comments

It was reported that a lot of dog poo is being left around the village and that last year it prevented a field being mowed for health reasons. Could a note be put in the magazine reminding dog walkers it is their responsibility to bag dog poo and put it in the dog bins or take it home. The Chairman said the Parish Council will support all moves to try and stop this practice.

The meeting was resumed at 9.15pm

21.034 Items for future agendas: None raised

21.035 Date of next meetings: Tuesday 4th May 2021: Virtual meeting via Zoom

1. 7.00pm: Annual Meeting of the Parish (NOT a Council Meeting). Followed by
2. Approx. 7.30pm: Annual Parish Council Meeting. Followed by
3. Approx. 8.00pm: Ordinary May Parish Council meeting

Clerk/MA

Clerk/MA

Clerk/MA

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

Signed.....Dated.....

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APPENDIX: Agenda item 21.024

21.024 County Councillor report March 2021

Major Consultations

Planning Gilston Village 7– Planning Application Documents

GILSTON AREA – VILLAGE 7

LAND SITED TO NORTH OF THE A414 AND TO THE EAST AND WEST OF CHURCH LANE, BOUND BY HUNSDON HOUSE TO THE NORTH, OPEN FARMLAND AND EASTWICK VILLAGE TO THE EAST, BY THE A414 TO THE SOUTH, BY A PUBLIC FOOTPATH (HUNSDON FOOTPATH 001) AND LORD'S WOOD TO THE WEST AND NORTH-WEST AND LOCATED TO THE NORTH-WEST OF HARLOW IN ESSEX, WITHIN HERTFORDSHIRE AND THE DISTRICT OF EAST HERTFORDSHIRE OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION ON BEHALF OF BRIGGENS ESTATE 1 LTD, POST-SUBMISSION AMENDMENTS TO OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION REF. 3/19/2124/OUT

Description of Development

The Application seeks planning permission for the following description of development, which has been amended from the original description to reflect the changes made post-submission: "Outline planning application for development including demolition of existing structures, refurbishment and change of use of existing Grade II Listed Brickhouse Farm Barn and structures and erection of a residential led mixed use development comprising: up to 1,500 residential market and affordable homes; a mixed use local village centre; retail, business, commercial and community uses; primary school, early years and nursery facilities; leisure and sports facilities including a football hub; provision for 8 no. pitches for Gypsies & Travellers; open spaces, ecological areas, woodlands and public realm; pedestrian, cycle and vehicular accesses and network within the site; associated drainage, utilities, energy and waste facilities and infrastructure; works to and realignment of the existing highway; other supporting works, facilities and infrastructure; together with associated temporary enabling works or structures. With all matters reserved apart from detailed works to the A414 Church Lane junction (phased development)." ("the Proposed Development").

Christmas holiday free school meal scheme success as over 20,000 Hertfordshire children receive food vouchers

Our support for Hertfordshire families entitled to free school meals during the Christmas holidays was a great success with supermarket vouchers downloaded for over 20,000 children and young people.

The scheme, which is funded from the Government's COVID-19 Winter Grant Scheme (WSG), provided eligible families with a £30 digital supermarket voucher per entitled child to cover the two-week Christmas holiday period.

In addition to this support, we also encouraged families and individuals who were struggling to pay for food and other essential household bills to contact HertsHelp, where they could access further help over the festive period and advice to provide ongoing support.

Council tax increase to fund Hertfordshire's largest ever police force given overwhelming public support

Hertfordshire is to have its largest ever police force following overwhelming public support for an increase in the council tax.

Police and Crime Commissioner David Lloyd has decided to increase the policing precept by £1.25 per month for an average Band D council tax property. The additional £5.2m raised will be used to put a record number of officers on the front-line, in addition to funding more help for victims. Despite the increase, the policing element of the council tax remains the fifth lowest in the country.

The precept increase will pay for 77 extra officers, on top of the 90 who will be recruited as part of the government uplift. These 167 new officers increase the ranks to 2,267 in the forthcoming financial year.

The previous record for officer numbers in Hertfordshire was 2,202 in 2007. The final tally at the end of the uplift is planned to be even higher with 2,314 officers in post by April 2023. The extra money will also be used to fund a joint Prevention First initiative with the Constabulary. Other priorities include additional money being put into the county's award-winning victim care service Beacon and a new £258,000 Safeguarding Hub to provide wrap-around care for

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medium-risk domestic violence victims. The increase means the annual precept for an average (Band D) property will go from £198 to £213. Households will pay more or less than the average depending on their house banding, Band A will pay £10, while Band H will pay £30 extra.

Hertfordshire Archive and Local Studies celebrate LGBTQ+ history month with virtual exhibition. In recognition of LGBTQ+ History Month in February, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies is celebrating with an online exhibition looking at the lives of some LGBTQ+ people from Hertfordshire's past. The exhibition includes documents and artefacts from an ancient Roman Emperor, to a cross-dressing highwayman, to a "female husband". **One of the areas explored by the exhibition is legislation and its significant impact on the lives of LGBTQ+ people throughout history.** For example same-sex relationships were first officially legislated against under Henry VIII, and it took over 400 years for men to legally be allowed to have relationships with other men. For centuries, those caught could be executed. Now, in 2021, UK couples of all genders and sexual orientations can marry.

Part of the exhibition focuses on the discovery of a person's identity; a rector from Essendon had to flee the county after accusations of gross indecency, and Oscar Wilde was sent to prison for his same-sex relationships.

There is also a reflective look at the outbreak of HIV and AIDS in the 1980s and its impact on Hertfordshire. How did local authorities try to curb the spread, and what impact that had on LGBTQ+ communities. Hertfordshire Archives asks that anyone who is comfortable sharing their own stories and memories do so under a dedicated section of the exhibition. The first LGBTQ+ collection was created in 2019. Anyone with items to donate to the archive so that they can be preserved for future generations can get in contact with hals.enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk

To view the exhibition visit <https://www.hertsmemories.org.uk/content/category/herts-history/people/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender/lgbtq-history-month-2021>

Rogue Trader Team report of January 2021

Vaccine fraud

There are now resources available for raising awareness about vaccine fraud; they can be found [here](#). The material includes a poster and guide on how to be alert to vaccine fraud.

Safeguarding

Several members of the team attended HSAB (Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board) training on cuckooing. This is when people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation. In Trading Standards we are most likely to see the practice when a property is taken over to financially abuse the occupier.

Intervention savings As we reach the end of quarter three of the financial year we have calculated our total intervention savings from October to December 2020 at £348,420; this brings our total savings since April 2020 to £875,428.

The total is worked out by the amount of rogue trader and scam interventions we have been involved in, the number of call blockers we have installed and how many Friends Against Scams and Scam Marshalls we have signed up. Savings include financial savings, healthcare savings, residential care cost savings and health related quality of life savings.

One rogue trader intervention alone amounted to a saving of £60,000 and thanks to a very successful media campaign run by ourselves and the National Trading Standards Team during Friends Against Scams Week this quarter we were able to sign up an extra 153 Friends Against Scams in Hertfordshire.

Fast-track training programme for social workers looking for new recruits in Hertfordshire

The Step Up to Social Work programme which funds graduates and career changers to retrain as the next generation of social workers is now recruiting in Hertfordshire.

The Central Eastern Regional Partnership (CERP) led by Hertfordshire County Council in collaboration with Bedford Borough Council and Luton Council, has been successful in a bid to deliver the programme for a seventh cohort.

Since its launch in 2010, hundreds of people throughout the country have completed the government programme, with 81 graduates qualifying locally. The Applications open on Monday (15 February) and close on 7 April, with the new cohort starting in January 2022. The scheme offers students a bursary of just under £20,000 to support trainees on the 14-

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month programme which leads to a rewarding career as a social worker, supporting vulnerable children and families.

Learning takes place through a combination of university study and placements, and after completing their training the new graduates join the council's Children's Services department as newly qualified social workers.

Applications are now open for the next cohort of graduates to join the scheme with funding available for 25 places across the Central Eastern Regional Partnership. Around 12 of these trainees will be placed in Hertfordshire. Applications from males, and people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are particularly welcomed.

Candidates are eligible to apply if they have a 2:1 degree (for example, with honours), or a 2:2 plus a higher degree, which can include a master's degree or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, in a discipline other than social work. They should also have the equivalent of a GCSE Grade C in maths and English, and experience of working with children, young people or families.

To find out more about the course, eligibility and how to apply, please visit:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/stepup

Holiday club to offer vital relief during the COVID-19 pandemic to Hertfordshire's most disadvantaged young people

The Easter holidays are looking brighter for disadvantaged children and young people in Hertfordshire thanks to an exciting partnership.

Hertfordshire County Council has joined forces with Herts Sports Partnership and the Hertfordshire Community Foundation to deliver healthy food and activities over the holidays.

The HAPpy (Holiday Activities Programme) is open to all children and young people in Hertfordshire but is particularly aimed at the county's most disadvantaged children.

Children and young people will be able to take part in a range of sports and cultural activities, as well as receive advice on nutrition and cooking skills to enhance their health and wellbeing, with those in receipt of free school meals eligible to attend for free.

Thanks to funding by the Department for Education, which is extending this initiative across England in 2021, existing or prospective organisers of holiday activity programmes can now access this funding to deliver daily programmes for young people.

The scheme has been further boosted with investment from Hertfordshire County Council to continue to provide free school meals for all entitled young children, during both the Easter and May school holiday periods.

Any child or young person in receipt of free school meals will be eligible to take part in a range of sports and cultural activities, as well as receive advice on nutrition and cooking skills to enhance their health and wellbeing.

The four-hour sessions will be led by a range of organisations from across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors and will be held at various venues from schools and community halls, to parks and leisure centres, subject to COVID-19 restrictions.

The HAPpy scheme will be delivered across Hertfordshire during the Easter school holidays and in recognition of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the programme is being twin-tracked to include both face-to-face and online activities. This will ensure that all young people remain active and connected during these challenging times.

Further details of the programme can be found at: <https://sportinherts.org.uk/>

To find out how to get involved, please contact Jane Shewring at HAF@herts.ac.uk

Locality Grant awards made by Cllr Eric Buckmaster

Applicant organisation	Date applied	requested
Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Ch	01/04/2020	y 1,000
CAB/CAS	02/04/2020	500
Sawbridgeworth town Council	30/04/2020	1,000
Friends of Sawbridgeworth Neuro Centres	21/05/2020	750
Isabel Hospice	01/06/2020	500
Herts Vision Loss	02/06/2020	1000
Make Lunch Charity Sawbridgeworth	05/06/2020	500

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Red Balloon family educational boxes	05/06/2020	150
Herts Young Homeless	04/06/2020	500
Aspects	15/06/2020	500
Carers in Herts	18/06/2020	300
CHIPS	17/06/2020	150
Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club	02/06/2020	750
Hunsdon Parish Council	14/07/2020	240
Sawbridgeworth Young Peoples Recreation centre	13/10/2020	1,000
Grove Cottage BS Mencap	20/10/2020	500
Sawbridgeworth Congregational food boxes	28/10/2020	1100
Gt St Marys PCC community hall	02/11/2020	750
Widford Play area and field		350
Wareside		450
Sawbridgeworth Cricket club	22/11/2020	750
Stanstead St Margarets + Benefice	23/11/2020	500
East Herts	12/01/2021	500
Gilston Parish Council	12/01/2021	1000
St John's ambulance	19/01/2021	260
		15,000 total

East Herts Cultural Strategy. In my Wellbeing Portfolio at East Herts I am introducing a Cultural Strategy for the District. The purpose is to increase participation and access to the arts and culture for all but particularly for those in more disadvantaged circumstances. The intention is to encourage providers and volunteers to come together to share the gifts of our arts, culture, heritage and our creative industries with established and new audiences alike. We know the potential of arts, culture and creativity in enriching people's lives and we all have our part to play to ensure everyone can enjoy and be inspired by the exciting and unexpected cultural opportunities on offer. I see this as very much connecting with the Social Prescribing Service I introduced a couple of years ago and the Healthy Hubs launched just before the first lockdown as a means of accessing lifestyle support and advice.

West Road

The Construction Management Plan still not signed off. The CMP will contain agreed operations elements that are designed to minimise impact on residents. I was told by East Herts that the enforcement officer would make a site visit but I haven't heard the result of that visit. Also told that the Town Council would receive a response.

Highways Issues I have had to respond to include:

Damage to verges-reported, via Highways officers.
Stray trucks through other residential streets
40t trucks going in to 7.5t roads, asked PCSO's to put them right
Deliberately diverting surface water onto the carriageway, that was stopped
Blocking off a Right of Way. That was put right.

With regard to the road closure for utilities works I have asked Highways to investigate if they have approved licences to do so.

I have a meeting on Thursday 25th with Highways officers and Barratt Head of Planning to discuss a method of community liaison/reporting for residents and for the town council to monitor. Clearly problems need to be addressed immediately, as they occur, but I'd like any reports and minutes shared with the Town Council as a monitoring role. The draft CMP says that a fortnightly meeting between the 2 developers should take place and minutes shared with the school and I'll also say the Town Council. I'll also see if there can be an actual period meeting, again including town council members.

Eric Buckmaster, February 2021