

Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Ordinary Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 1st March 2022 at 7.30pm at Widford Village Hall



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

Seven members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm

ACTION

22.018 To receive and approve apologies for absence

1. Councillors: Cllr Michael Ripsher (away); **Approved**
2. Others: Cllr Eric Buckmaster, PCSO Leon DeBruyn, Gilda Deterding

22.019 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

1. Interests

As noted on the agenda: Cllr Babs Edwards: an interest and a dispensation in respect of Playing Field matters, her husband being Treasurer of the PFMC. Cllr Mike Allen has an interest and a dispensation in re Playing Field matters, being a trustee.

Cllr Ian Collins declared a DPI in respect of the Closed Churchyard Maintenance Contract for which his wife was applying

2. Dispensation requests: None

22.020 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11th January 2022 were a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

Clerk/MA

22.021 Police report

1. The Chairman read the following report from PCSO Leon De Bruyn, sent on 2nd February:

There are no crimes to report back to you with for Widford for January 2022. However, East Herts and other surrounding areas have seen an increase in residential burglaries over the past 2-3 weeks. Suspects have gained entry at the rear of the property.

Please encourage residents to secure their properties and take the necessary crime prevention measures needed such as the use of light timers, external lights and CCTV etc. I am happy to be contacted should anyone seek any crime prevention advice.

Leon De Bruyn

Police Community Support Officer, East Herts Rural

2. **Drive safe**

The Drive safe scheme was explained by Cllr Babs Edwards having received information from PCSO Leo De Bruyn. 10 people are required to request the scheme and volunteers are needed to operate it with one named lead person. Suitable locations also have to be identified – it was agreed to ask PCSO De Bruyn to help with this. A parishioner present said they would volunteer. It was agreed to appeal for volunteers on the village facebook site and in the Magazine

22.022 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman said parishioners need to be encouraged to report all incidents and speeding to the police via the online form. If the reporting procedure isn't followed the police will not be aware and therefore no action can be taken. This information to be added in the Magazine.

MA

22.023 Reports by County and District Councillor Eric Buckmaster

It was agreed to defer this until later and to the report in full as an Appendix to the Minutes.

Clerk

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22.024 Planning

1. New Applications:

3/22/0146/ARPN Doe Shed, Priory Farm: RECONSULTATION. Convert agricultural building into 1 dwelling. **RESOLVED: To resend the previous objection.**

CLERK

2. Decision Notices. For information only, the following were noted:

- 3/21/2818/HH 9 Daintrees:** Replace existing rear extension. **GRANTED**
 - 3/22/0146/ARPN Doe Shed:** Convert agricultural building into 1 dwelling. **RECONSULTED**
 - 3/21/2770/VAR The Green Man:** *variation to condition* *Awaited*
 - 3/21/3144/HH & 3086/LBC Westbury, Bell Lane:** Demolish side extension and replace with new extension. *WITHDRAWN*
 - 3/21/2668/FUL: Ash View Stables:** Additional capacity on existing site. *Awaited*
 - 3/21/1720/HH 4 Nether Street:** Outbuilding to rear. *Awaited*
 - 3/21/1180/HH & 1181/LBC Chestnut Tree Cottage:** Erection of garden room *Awaited*
 - E/21/0288/ENF 30 Benningfield Road:** Enforcement investigation. *Awaited*
- Clerk to chase outcome*

CLERK

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

1. Other planning matters

- 1. Late planning applications: None
- 2. Concerns about development in Benningfield Road. No update yet from EHC.

22.025 Finance

1. Report of the Council's accounts to 31st January 2022

Finance Summary	£
Opening cashbook balance 1st January	39,219.31
Plus: income to 31 January	149.00
Minus: expenditure to 31 January	<u>771.12</u>
Balance available to Council at 31 January (cashbook balance)	38,597.19
Plus unrepresented cheques/payments	<u>0.00</u>
Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement at 31 January	<u>39,219.31</u>

RESOLVED: that the Accounts Statement to 31st January 2022 be approved.

2. Bank reconciliation

Copies of the bank statement were presented. **RESOLVED: to agree the bank reconciliation as presented.**

3. Performance vs budget to 31st January 2021

The Clerk's detailed report on the financial performance vs budget to 31st January was received. There were no untoward transactions to note.

RESOLVED: that the financial performance report to 31st January 2022 be accepted as presented.

4. List of payments.

RESOLVED: to approve the list of payments as presented by the Clerk
All expenditure made under the General Power of Competence.

Clerk

		Gross	VAT incl
Jo English	Litterpicking February: 11 of 12	125.00	
Clerk	SLCC Annual Membership (1/4 th)	67.50	
Clerk	Salary February	400.17	
HMRC	PAYE February	100.20	
Clerk	Expenses January-February	17.75	
Widford Village Hall	Hall hire 2021 x 2 (Sept and Nov)	27.00	
Widford Village Hall	Hall hire 2022 x 7	94.50	
QGC expenditure	To be reimbursed via HCC grant	TBC	
Recoverable VAT included			NIL

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5. Queen's Green Canopy (QGC)

RESOLVED: To pay QGC related costs to allotmenters against invoices/receipts – all to be covered by HCC agreed grant.

BE/Clerk

6. QEII Jubilee Grant availability from EHC

The grant availability was noted. The Parish Council Chairman to liaise with the Village Hall and Playing Field Committees to seek a grant as required.

MA

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

- HCC: Appeal for residents to complete a food waste survey
- Clarion Housing: request re tree responsibility on Bell Lane
- Further complaints re parking on Benningfield Green (22.029)

22.027 Village Reports

1. Village Hall

Village Hall Chairman Greg Prowse presented a proposal for the future of the Village Hall. The proposal is to sell the Village Hall site to a developer, with the proceeds going towards building a community recreation building on the playing field. The deeds allow it and the Charity Commission agree it's possible in principle. The Village Hall is about a hundred years old, is difficult to heat, does not have the ceiling height for indoor sports, has no parking facility and needs a new roof (approx. £30k). The potential perceived advantages were explained. The ties that some parishioners feel to the current Village Hall are completely understood and the opinions and feelings of the Playing Field Committee are recognised and would be discussed. Mr Prowse said he had been working on this for some years and wanted to know if there is parish support for the venture. Subject to agreement with the Playing Field Committee, he therefore asked that the Parish Council organise a village referendum to gauge parishioners' opinion and suggested a 2/3rds electorate approval be the threshold for proceeding. If the referendum result was favourable, then a task force should be set up to take the project forward.

2. Playing Field

1. **Report:** The PFMC is due to meet on 8th March.

MA

2. **Biffa grant.** Update: Ongoing, with hopefully a decision shortly.

MA

3. Allotments

All working well and allotments tenants have agreed to be involved in the Queen's Green Canopy tree planting.

BE

4. Closed Churchyard.

1. New maintenance contractor. Having declared a DPI, Cllr Ian Collins left the room.

RESOLVED: That Sharon Collins be awarded the Maintenance contract.

2. Tree safety report: The Clerk is awaiting a report/ quote from David Jarrett. It was agreed that the Chairman will give the Clerk the contact details of the EHC arborist so that a second report/quote can be obtained.

Clerk

MA

5. Village Archive.

Cllr Mark Rome is doing ongoing work on this project

MR

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

1. Footpaths and PRoW.

1. FP1: No update on PRoW replacing the stile with a suitable bollard. MA to progress.

MA

2. FP18: Safety of Lilley Bridge. The bridge is structurally safe. The PRoW officer will continue to monitor its status.

3. Highways and footways

1. Verges, gutters and overgrown footways: Recent storms created new issues. The Chairman appealed in the magazine for problems to be immediately reported to HCC.

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3. Other parish matters and concerns

Common Land at the River Ash/ Pegs Lane. Christopher Taylor-Young liaising with Cllr Ian Collins to see what can be done to stack the logs in order to provide a habitat for wildlife. IC

22.029 Benningfield Green

It was agreed that reports with dated and timed photographs of infringements are necessary in order to validate complaints and to make any enforcement possible with a review of the licence being the ultimate sanction. It was agreed that Cllr Babs Edwards would co-ordinate any evidence. BE

22.030 Queen's Green Canopy

Arrangements ongoing. The school has expressed interest in having a few trees. IC

22.031 Urgent matters received too late for inclusion on this agenda:

None raised.

The Chairman took the opportunity to read extracts of Cllr Eric Buckmaster's report. The Report is reproduced in the Appendix at the end of these Minutes. Clerk

Suspension of Meeting for Public Comments at 8.58pm:

No issues raised by the public present.

Cllr Michel Ripsher had sent a message raising ongoing concerns about the mess outside Ash View being created by the contractor. The contractor has been spoken to again and has given further assurances that all issues will be addressed and the area fully reinstated once the work has been completed.

Meeting restored to order at 9.02pm

22.032 Items for future agendas

- To consider a Neighbourhood Plan as and when appropriate

22.033 Date of next Meetings at the Village Hall

1. Tuesday 5th April, 7.30pm: The Annual Meeting of the Parish (*NOT a Council meeting*) Clerk/MA
2. Tuesday 10th May 7pm: Annual Parish Council meeting. Clerk/MA

***To be followed at approximately 7.30pm by the
May Ordinary Parish Council Meeting***

Clerk

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.02pm.

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

APPENDIX

District and County Councillor Report, February 2022

Planning at East Herts On 22nd February East Herts Council Development Management Committee met to determine the Central and Eastern River Crossing plans connected with the proposed Harlow and Gilston Garden Town developments. The Neighbourhood Plan Group, residents and I made verbal representations. Members unanimously agreed the Central crossing. Three members voted against the Eastern crossing but the majority were in favour. The meeting commenced at 5:30pm and concluded at 12:15am. This was following a full day at County Council including agreeing the budget and precept for 2022/3

The Harlow DMC is due to meet on 23rd Feb to determine the same applications

Strategy to establish 1.8 million new trees in Hertfordshire recommended by councillors Hertfordshire County Councillors today (Thursday 3 February) recommended the adoption of the county council's first Tree and Woodland Strategy. The strategy sets out the council's

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approach to improve tree and woodland management in Hertfordshire, as well as outlining ambitions to establish 1.8 million new trees in the county by 2030.

The establishment of 1.8m new trees will support the council's target to improve nature across the county by 20% by 2050 as outlined in its Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy. In addition, the 1.8m new trees will also play a role in improving air quality and reducing carbon in the atmosphere.

The strategy also outlines ways the county council will improve the management of existing trees and woodlands in Hertfordshire to ensure that they remain as healthy as possible while providing maximum benefits to landowners, wildlife, and residents.

The strategy also includes plans to allow residents and businesses to play their part in establishing and enhancing trees and woodlands in their local communities through grant schemes and volunteering opportunities.

Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for The Environment said:

"This strategy clearly sets out our approach to increasing the number of trees across Hertfordshire, while also better conserving and protecting our existing trees and woodlands. This approach will play a vital role in our work to tackle climate change and its effects locally."

"There are also a number of added benefits, the most obvious being the positive impacts on our residents physical and mental health. The ambitions in the Tree and Woodland Strategy will be pivotal in our efforts to make Hertfordshire a cleaner, greener, healthier county."

Trading Standards Rogues and Scams team update for December 2021 and January 2022

In December the team joined up with the Police's RPU (Roads Policing Unit) as part of a partnership initiative aiming to reduce road casualties and disrupt criminality and provide a rich source of criminal intelligence. Partner agencies represented included HMRC, Environment Agency, and DVSA. In what turned out to be a crisp morning, police officers were deployed to the road network to identify and stop motorists suspected of crime, and other offences of interest to police and partner agencies. Once directed to a designated check site police and partners exercised their legal powers to conduct enquires on the vehicle, motorist and passengers as required, and as legislation allows. The team spoke to a number of businesses on the day, including driveway/landscaping, roofing, scaffolding and gardening companies, handing out guidance on the law and gaining valuable intelligence.

This year's National Consumer Week campaign theme was about misleading environmental and energy efficiency claims. Increasingly many of us are taking steps to be 'greener', eg making our homes more energy efficient, and installing energy technologies like solar panels. This awareness-raising week aimed to increase consumer confidence to make the best 'eco-friendly' decisions, and avoid 'green scams', examples being fraudsters pretending to offer government grants, pressure selling of goods and services that might not be appropriate for the consumer and making misleading claims.

Residents have their say about our new Health and Wellbeing strategy

Hertfordshire's Health and Wellbeing strategy aims to improve the health of our residents. We are renewing the strategy for 2022-26 so that it reflects current health needs in the county, and we need your help to make sure that we are focusing on the right things.

The strategy is underpinned by five core values:

- ✓ Be community-focused
- ✓ Make evidence-based decisions
- ✓ Communicate clearly
- ✓ Build strong partnerships
- ✓ Provide early help

We have chosen three ambitions to help everyone live healthy and independent lives.

These are the things that we feel are most important for us to achieve.

- Strong communities
- Healthy and fulfilling lives
- Effective, joined up health and care services

Hertfordshire County Council has recently submitted its bid for government funding to support the introduction of over 20 electric buses in Stevenage.

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The Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme is a central government initiative to help local transport authorities introduce zero emission buses, together with the infrastructure needed to support them. The county council, in partnership with bus operator Arriva, were successful with their initial proposal and have now submitted their final business plan. A decision on whether the plan has been successful should be known by March 2022. The ZEBRA scheme funding would see a total of 27 of Stevenage's ageing diesel bus fleet replaced with new electric ones, which should be in service by 2024.

Sexual Health support for young people

Young people (aged 13+) can access support with relationships and sexual health from HCC Services for Young People (SfYP) at Access Point Projects across Hertfordshire.

These are available for both drop-ins and appointments, and young people can access support for a range of issues including sexual health. Trained staff can provide young people with condoms, pregnancy testing and the new dual tests (chlamydia and gonorrhoea) as part of a free and confidential service.

Young people can also access support and advice via SfYP's sexual health text service on 07860 057369. Young people are able to find out where they can find services locally as well as get free condoms and dual testing via post.

Dual testing is a simple and effective way for young people to undertake STI testing with results text to their phone within 7-10 days.

For more information on SfYP's sexual health services, please visit www.servicesforyoungpeople.org

Hertfordshire Dementia Strategy 2022-2027 | Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire County Council, East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group are developing Hertfordshire's Dementia Strategy for 2022-2027. The strategy is being Co-produced with the support of carers and individuals with dementia, and our statutory, voluntary, and independent sector partners, and will be signed off in 2022 by the County Council and the two Clinical Commissioning Groups.

We want to ensure that the voices of people with dementia, and their carers, shape how we use our resources most effectively to enable good quality of life for people with dementia, and to ensure that our services and communities are accessible to everyone.

We want to know what you think is important in ensuring that people with dementia and their carers and family receive the right support

Hertfordshire Mental Health Strategy 2022-2027

We're developing a strategy to make sure every adult in Hertfordshire gets the help they need to enjoy good mental health and wellbeing.

The strategy will set out how health, social care, housing, public health and voluntary sector services will work together to help everyone in our community achieve this.

Consultation start: 21 December 2021; Consultation end: 31 March 2022 (4pm)

We'd like your views on the following draft priorities and themes. We developed these through workshops and focus groups with service users, carers, and health and care system partners.

- Do you think they're the right things to focus on at this time?
- Is there anything missing?
- What feedback do you have about mental health services in Hertfordshire?

After the 12 week consultation period, we'll develop a detailed action plan setting out how we will work together to achieve these objectives. If you'd like to stay involved, [Have your say on the draft mental health strategy](#)

Hunsdon Skips

Following visits we have written to the operators and advised that the structure requires planning permission. We have requested that they advise us of their intentions by 4th March 2022. They will let me know when we receive a response.

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East Herts Projects

Hartham Leisure Centre Work continues on the refurbishment of the pool and is anticipated to open in the Spring. A temporary Gym has been set up and demolition and construction of the new extension should commence by the end of March.

Budgets Both East Herts and HCC have been going through very extensive budget examinations with officers and members towards arriving at balanced budgets during extremely difficult times of cost escalation owing to the impact of covid. Inflation currently seems to be running at around 6 percent and is affecting councils of all sizes across the country. My portfolio at County is looking to increase resource/ support for Sustainable Hertfordshire as well as Countryside Rights of way and in the Lead Local Flood Authority. We are also looking for significant capital investment in Waste Disposal infrastructure and Recycling Centres, In other areas a substantial sum will be put in place to support Adult and Children's social care, support for Domestic Abuse Services and greater emphasis on Prevention Services to support individuals and families. Also to increase wages of care workers.

Storm Eunice

By 5 pm on the day Hertfordshire County Council's highways team have received over 300 reports of fallen trees or other tree related faults and Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have received more than 100 calls to unsafe structures and fallen trees.

Eric Buckmaster

District and County Councillor Report

February 2022

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