

# Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Ordinary Parish Council Meeting  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 7.15pm in Widford Village Hall



**PRESENT:** Cllr Mike Allen (MA); Cllr Ian Collins (IC); Cllr Babs Edwards (BE);  
Cllr Michael Ripsher (MPR)

Four members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm

**ACTION**

**22.045 To receive and approve apologies for absence**

1. Councillors: Cllr Mark Rome (work) **Approved**
2. Others: Cllr Eric Buckmaster, PCSO Leon DeBruyn

**22.046 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 awarded to his wife.

2. **Dispensations: Granted: A dispensation for the remainder of the electoral term for Cllr Ian Collins in respect of his wife having the Closed Churchyard maintenance contract.**

**22.047 Approval of Minutes**

**RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 were a true and accurate record.** The Chairman signed the Minutes.

**Clerk/MA**

**22.048 Police report**

1. The Chairman read the following report from PCSO Leon De Bruyn, sent on 5<sup>th</sup> May:
  - Attempted Burglary – unknown Suspects have gained entry to a property in Medcalf Hill, Widford, but have left the area quickly when approached by the home owner who had returned home.
  - Criminal damage – damage has been caused on a building site on Ware Road in Widford. Suspects have entered the building site and caused damage before being alerted by on-site security, who have in turn reported the incident to police. Local police units have attended the report, however Suspects have made off in an unknown direction and by means unknown.

Other News:

- This month, the local SNT team will be visiting schools in the local area on the ‘pop-in’ visits to educate and inform on the roles of rural police officers.
- If you have any ideas to where police could hold other community events, then please do email me with suggestions. Thank you.

*Leon De Bruyn*

*Police Community Support Officer, East Herts Rural*

The Clerk was asked to follow up with PCSO De Bruyn whether any notices had been put on cars parked dangerously at the Benningfield Road/Ware Road junction as requested at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Electorate in April.

**Clerk**

**2. Drive safe**

Cllr Babs Edwards said the petition for volunteers is underway. So far, four parishioners have signed up and another 6 are required before the scheme can move forward.

**BE/MR**

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## 22.049 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman thanked councillors for their input during the last year and for electing again to be Parish Council Chairman.

Residents of Bourne Lane/Woodland Road are concerned about cars being parked on the road (they should be in the field). Councillors were asked to take photos as evidence if they saw this when passing so it could be reported.

MA/ALL

The verge towards the church is in a bad state and helpers have agreed to clean it up.

MA

The allotments water pump stopped working and new ones have been purchased for about £100. It was agreed the cost would be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts.

MA

## 22.050 Reports by County and District Councillor Eric Buckmaster

In Cllr Buckmaster's absence, it was agreed to include the report in full as an Appendix to the Minutes.

Clerk

## 22.051 Planning

### 1. New Applications:

None

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

**3/21/3144/HH & 3086/LBC Westbury, Bell Lane:** Demolish side extension and replace with new extension.

WITHDRAWN

**3/22/0146/ARPN Doe Shed:** Convert agricultural building into 1 dwelling. **RECONSULTED**

GRANTED

**3/22/0097/LBC Widford JMI School:** Replacement windows, doors and cladding

GRANTED

**3/21/2770/VAR The Green Man:** *variation to condition*

GRANTED

**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*

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

#### 1. Other planning matters

1. Late planning applications: None

## 22.052 Finance

### 1. Report of the Council's accounts

#### Finance Summary to year-end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

Opening cashbook balance 1<sup>st</sup> March

£

**37,894.37**

Plus: income to 31 March

0.00

Minus: expenditure to 31 March

941.53

**Balance available to Council at 31 March (cashbook balance)**

**36,952.84**

Plus unrepresented cheques/payments

0.00

**Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement at 31 March**

**36,952.84**

**RESOLVED: that the Accounts Statement to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 be approved.**

### 2. Bank reconciliations

Copies of the bank statement were presented. **RESOLVED: to agree the bank reconciliation as presented.** Cllr Ian Collins signed the reconciliation sheet

### 3. Performance vs budget at year-end, 31 March 2022

The Clerk's detailed report on the financial performance vs budget to 31<sup>st</sup> March was received. There were no untoward transactions to note. Income for the year totalled £16,799 against a budget of £16,590 (1.3% over budget). Expenditure for the year totalled £14,301 against a budget of £16,980 (15.8% under budget).

**RESOLVED: that the financial performance report to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 be accepted as presented.**

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## 4. List of payments.

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

Clerk

*All expenditure made under the General Power of Competence.*

		Gross	VAT incl
Sharon Collins	Test payment for closed churchyard	1.00	
Jo English	Litterpicking April: 1 of 12	125.00	
Robert J Edwards	Tree work allotments	480.00	
Clerk	Salary April	407.25	
HMRC	PAYE April	101.80	
Sharon Collins	Closed Churchyard maintenance 1 of 4	310.00	
HAPTC	Annual membership subscription	346.04	
Zurich Municipal	Annual insurance	393.88	
CPRE	Annual membership	36.00	
CommuniCorp	Subscription: Local Councils Update	100.00	
Clerk	Expenses April-May	24.50	
TEEC	Annual fee for Planning Tracker	28.80	4.80
Widford Playing Field	Annual grant	1,000.00	
Jo English	Litterpicking May: 2 of 12	125.00	
Clerk reimbursement	Annual Parish Meeting refreshments	7.10	
Clerk reimbursement	Office stationery	8.00	
Accountancy Services	Annual Internal Audit, AGAR 2021/22	100.00	
Clerk reimbursement	Printer ink	79.58	13.27
Clerk	Salary May	407.25	
HMRC	PAYE May	101.80	
<b>Recoverable VAT included</b>			<b>£18.07</b>

It was further agreed to make the following expenditure:

**4.2. Parish Council Notice Board header:** The Chairman to send the Clerk details and invoice.

MA/Clerk

**4.3 Jubilee bench for Nether Street location:** from recycled material with a plaque, subject to approval of Elwood Bench example that is to be circulated by the Clerk.

Clerk

## 5. Widford Playing Field grant

Following an application for the grant it was RESOLVED: *To make a grant of £1,000 to Widford Playing Field for fiscal year 2022/23.*

Clerk

## 6. Audit: Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2021/22

**1. RESOLVED: That the Parish Council meets the criteria to qualify as an exempt authority.**

Clerk

**2. Certificate of Exemption:** The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and Chairman signed the Certificate of Exemption.

RFO/MA

**3. RESOLVED: To approve the Internal Auditor's signed Report.**

Clerk

**4. RESOLVED: To approve Section 1 The Annual Governance Statement.**

The Clerk and Chairman signed The Annual Governance Statement.

Clerk  
Clerk/MA

**5. Section 2 Accounting Statements** as signed and presented by the RFO were considered.

**6. RESOLVED: To approve the Section 2 Accounting Statements as presented.**

The Chairman signed the Section 2 Accounting Statements.

MA

**7. RESOLVED: To set the 30-working day period for the Exercise of Public Rights as 13th June to 22 July.**

Clerk

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

- Widford Playing Field: request for annual grant ( 22.052.5)
- Parishioner: re condition of Common Land at foot of Pegs Lane

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## 22.054 Village Reports

### 1. Village Hall

Cllr Michael Ripsher reported that the finances are in good shape. More pub nights are planned, the next one being on 3<sup>rd</sup> June with a Jubilee theme. The last pub night attracted an attendance of 30-40 people.

MPR

### 2. Playing Field

1. **Report:** No update report because the PFMC has not met yet. The equine boot sale on 15<sup>th</sup> May went very well.

MA

2. **Biffa grant.** Update: Still being pursued.

MA

### 3. Allotments

All working well.

BE

### 4. Closed Churchyard.

1. A report on hedge maintenance is awaited from David Jarrett for confirmation of cost, timing and recommended action.

Clerk

### 5. Village Archive.

No update report.

MR

## 22.055 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

The FP is becoming very overgrown and Cllr Ian Collins agreed to trim the hedge as a one-off expedient to make it safe, especially for school children.

IC

2. FP18: Fallen tree: Although the tree is in the allotments boundary, Nicholas Maddex removed the tree, for which the PC is grateful.

### 2. Highways and footways

1. Verges, gutters and overgrown footways: The Chairman said this is being looked into.

MA

2. **TRO 19177:** Notice of temporary closure of Abbots Lane was noted.

### 3. Other parish matters and concerns

Concerns about the common land at the bottom of Pegs Lane have been dealt with. No other issues raised.

## 22.056 Benningfield Green

No further parking issues were raised. To be kept under review.

## 22.057 Queen's Green Canopy

All tree planting has been completed.

## 22.058 Urgent matters received too late for inclusion on this agenda:

Jubilee celebrations: There will be an organ recital in the church on Saturday evening, 4<sup>th</sup> June. Tea and cakes will be available in the VH on Sunday afternoon 5<sup>th</sup> June, linking with the Open Gardens day.

A Safari Supper is planned for 24<sup>th</sup> June.

### *Suspension of Meeting for Public Comments*

No matters raised by the public present

## 22.059 Items for future agendas

None raised.

## 22.060 Date of next Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July: Ordinary Parish Council Meeting, 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Clerk/MA

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There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.10pm.

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

## APPENDIX

### District and County Councillor Report, May 2022

#### County report:

**From Watford to Ware, compassion thrives in Hertfordshire** Hertfordshire residents set to welcome Ukrainian arrivals. The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 sparked the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War and in response, the UK Government put in place two schemes to help those fleeing their homeland. Since the launch of these schemes, 574 residents of the county have stepped forward and offered their homes to Ukrainian refugees and over 1,600 refugees have been matched with our residents.

To support potential sponsors, the county council has been working closely with partners as part of Hertfordshire's Strategic Migration Steering Group. The group brings together partners from the county, District and Borough councils, along with stakeholders from the health and voluntary sectors. Part of the work Hertfordshire is undertaking involves ensuring that potential sponsors are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) background check where a host is welcoming adults, and an enhanced DBS check where children will be housed. ►

Other checks include district and borough council's assessing properties.

Once we have been advised by the sponsor that their Ukrainian families have arrived, a further welfare check will be conducted by the county council to address any safeguarding needs, while further support and assistance will be offered to new arrivals with children to facilitate their transition into school life in Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire County Council has set up bespoke dual language web pages to support sponsors and Ukrainian citizens arriving in the county [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ukraine](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ukraine)

#### **Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service donates fire engine and equipment to Ukraine.**

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service donates fire engine and equipment to Ukraine: The fire engine being donated to Ukraine with the three firefighters taking it to Ukraine and the county council's executive directors. The fire and rescue service is making the donation as part of a joint mission with other fire services organised by charity Fire Aid and the National Fire Chiefs Council to support Ukrainian firefighters.

Hertfordshire will be donating a 2006 Scania P94 fire appliance, which was based at Tring until August of last year and has been used as a spare since. The service will also be donating more than 30 pieces of specialist firefighting equipment including ladders, portable pumps, hose reels, and generators.

**Hertfordshire residents invited to share their memories of Her Majesty the Queen for Platinum Jubilee exhibition and archive** Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) are inviting residents to share their photographs of jubilee street parties or royal visits for an exhibition chronicling Her Majesty's impact on the county and its residents.

As part of Hertfordshire County Council's continued Jubilee celebrations, a drop-in event entitled 'A Day to Remember' is being held on Friday 20 May from 2-4pm at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (Register Office Block, County Hall, Hertford).

Visitors will have a golden opportunity to view original documents relating to Her Majesty the Queen, including a letter from HRH Princess Elizabeth to Hertfordshire resident Lady Desborough, as well as other examples of Royal correspondence, photos and documents. There will also be a chance to add to this historic archive by sharing memories of previous jubilee celebrations and royal visits over tea and cake, in true regal style.

The documents will be used by HALS for an exhibition that will be on display at Hertford Castle on the 2 June, during the weekend of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. This will return to HALS before being rolled out to other venues throughout the county.

During May and June, HALS will also be sharing information and photographs on Herts Memories community archive website and encouraging Hertfordshire residents to share their

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own memories of previous jubilee celebrations and royal visits, as well as this year's Platinum Jubilee celebrations for posterity.

HALS will also be supporting other Memories events taking place around the county in partnership with libraries.

To share your memories online, visit the Herts Memories site

at: <https://www.hertsmemories.org.uk/content/category/herts-history/topics/jubilees-and-coronations>. You can also get involved on social media using hashtag #HertsJubilee.

If any residents or local societies would like to get involved with oral history recording or reminiscence activities, please get in touch with Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies team via [hals.enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hals.enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

**Record number of street party applications for Hertfordshire**, Hertfordshire County Council have received 561 applications for street parties to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee over the extended bank holiday on 2-5 June - a record amount for Hertfordshire.

While the final number has yet to be confirmed, the number of applications is already higher than the amount applied for during The Queen's Diamond Jubilee weekend in 2012, when Hertfordshire residents requested 451 road closures for street parties, the highest number in the country. Recognising the social and community benefits of celebrating this historic event, the county council again decided to waive the usual road closure fees in hope of encouraging as many people as possible to take up the opportunity to celebrate this momentous occasion. The deadline for applications closed Thursday, 21 April.

**Celebrating Hertfordshire's residents with learning disabilities** The achievements and personalities of people with learning disabilities in Hertfordshire were celebrated at the Rumble Awards. The awards are held annually to recognise the positive influence that people with learning disabilities have on all our lives and the impact they make in Hertfordshire's communities. Held at the Rothamsted Conference Centre in Harpenden, awards were presented in categories including Good Spirit, Healthy Living and Leading Light, with Vanessa Sauvary from the Bishop's Stortford area being named as Hertfordshire's Learning Disability Personality of the Year.

The Rumble Awards are organised and hosted each year by a group of people with learning disabilities called the Pioneer Spirits, as part of a project run by Pioneer Approaches. This year's event theme was "disco" and included a dance called "Disco Boogie Fever" by the Rumbles group, as well as a song called "The Funky Train".

**Join 'Team Never Too Late' to reap the benefits of physical activity**, Hertfordshire County Council is urging residents, especially those over the age of 55, to get fighting fit by taking part in its popular 'It's Never Too Late to be Active' campaign (9 May to 29 July 2022).

The campaign, which gives participating residents a free one-week pass to their local leisure centre among other incentives, is aimed at not only addressing falling levels of activity associated with age, but also the impact of COVID-19 and the pandemic. Recent Sport England figures reveal there was a 1.3% decrease in the physical activity levels of 55 to 74-year-olds and a 2.9% decrease in 75+ year olds, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not only does inactivity impact on the health of residents but it costs our local economy over £16 million annually as a result of treating diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and strokes, which can be preventable with an active lifestyle. The campaign aims to encourage older adults (age 55+) to become more active by helping them to find new activities that they will enjoy, while supporting them to achieve their activity goals through motivational messaging and a telephone helpline. The first campaign ran in 2018 with over 3600 residents taking part, a huge 79 per cent of whom increased their levels of activity to more than 90 minutes per week. Those completing the campaign also reported a significant improvement in 'satisfaction with life', and 'feeling worthwhile and happier'.

**Leader Richard Roberts confirms changes to cabinet at Hertfordshire County Council.**

Councillor Richard Roberts, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, has announced in the attached open letter, changes to his cabinet at Hertfordshire County Council, which will take effect from 9 May 2022. As two executive members leave my cabinet this month, I offer them my heartfelt thanks. To Councillor Teresa Heritage for her long-standing contributions to both Public Health and Children's Services and to Councillor Stella Nash for her much valued year in

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Adult Social Care, during covid under the most difficult circumstances. Councillor Tony Kingsbury will move to lead the Adult Care, Health & Wellbeing portfolio and Councillor Fiona Thomson will move to lead Children, Young People & Families portfolio. 'As I welcome in this revised cabinet, we collectively commit to being vocal advocates both for the estimated 1.2 million people who call Hertfordshire home, and for the incredible output of services across the council.'

**Queen's Speech summary.** The speech made clear that the government sees its current priorities as growing and strengthening the economy, helping to ease the cost of living, and levelling up opportunity in all parts of the country.

The government has provided details of the 38 bills that they intend to bring forward over the coming session. For local government the key bill is the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The main elements of this will be to:

- create a new model of combined authority: the 'County Deal' which will provide local leaders with powers to enhance local accountability, join up services and provide transparent decision making to rejuvenate their communities, increase their ability to reflect local preferences in arrangements including directly elected leaders' titles.
- Unlocking new powers for local authorities to bring empty premises back into use and instigate rental auctions of vacant commercial properties in town centres and on high streets;
- Giving residents more of a say over changing street names and ensuring everyone can continue to benefit from al fresco dining;
- Strengthening neighbourhood planning and digitalising the system to make local plans easier to find, understand and engage with; by making it easier for local authorities to get local plans in place, we will limit speculative development.
- simplify and standardise the process for local plans so that they are produced more quickly and are easier for communities to influence;
- capture more of the financial value created by development with a locally set, non-negotiable levy to deliver the infrastructure that communities need, such as housing, schools, GPs and new roads.

Amongst the other bills, the following are of relevance to local authorities:

- a Schools Bill, which will support more schools to become academies in strong trusts, implement a direct National Funding Formula for schools, and create a duty on local authorities to provide support to home educating families;
- a Transport Bill which will support the roll out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
- a Non-Domestic Rating Bill which will create a fairer, more accurate business rates system, and supporting decarbonisation of business premises;
- a Procurement Bill that will make public procurement more accessible for new entrants such as small businesses and voluntary, charitable and social enterprises;
- a Renters Reform Bill that will give local councils tools to crack down on the minority of noncompliant landlords and poor practice;

**Hertfordshire County Council takes big step towards carbon neutral buildings.** Hertfordshire County Council has taken an important step towards its target to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 with a **wide-ranging energy efficiency programme which will reduce the amount of energy used across 112 of its sites**, while also decreasing the amount of carbon they emit.

Works have been taking place since May 2021 to install energy efficiency **measures including cavity wall insulation and double glazing to better insulate some buildings. Modern air source heat pumps have also been introduced at nine sites** to allow them to be heated without the need to burn fossil fuels.

As well as better insulation and more efficient heating, **solar panels have been installed at 92 sites** to allow the council to generate its own clean, renewable energy. Surplus electricity produced by these panels can be fed back to the grid to be used elsewhere.

The council estimates that **these measures will result in a reduction of 1,653 tonnes of carbon per year, equivalent to over 8.4 million miles driven in a typical petrol driven car, or the total annual energy usage of over 400 homes.**

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In preparation for future energy efficiency works, the **council has also commissioned 318 heat decarbonisation plans for schools**, outlining the key steps needed to make their buildings carbon neutral.

Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for The Environment said: “We have committed to becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 and reducing the amount of energy we use in our buildings will be vital in our efforts to achieve this. We also expect that these measures will reduce the economic pressures on the council caused by increasing energy costs.”

“We will continue to identify opportunities to decarbonise our buildings as set out in our Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy, as we work to deliver a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire.”

**Residents are encouraged to visit [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/sustainability](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/sustainability)** to see what else the county council is doing to tackle the climate crisis and deliver a more sustainable county.

## **District Report:**

**Hertford Theatre,** Work has commenced to develop the upgrades to the Theatre via contractor GPF Lewis. Work expected to take around 18 months. However a Christmas extravaganza will be delivered at Ware Drill Hall.

**Hartham Leisure Centre** Swimming pool due to open by end of the month following refurbishment. Work on the extension to create new studios and café has commenced

**Grange Paddocks 3G pitch** Following excavations and archaeology work has started.

**Cultural Strategy** Action Plan has been agreed by a Strategic Steering Group. A large number of activities for residents is being mapped and run by various organisations, some of them outreach to ensure accessibility and inclusion.

**Healthy Hubs** going from strength to strength with partner organisations delivering advice and activities to encourage lifestyle change.

**Dementia Friendly Action Group** Again continuing to work across partners to deliver activities and help for people and their carers living with dementia. A large number of activities available during Dementia Action Week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> May

*District and County Councillor Eric Buckmaster  
May 2022*

