

# Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Parish Council Meeting  
Tuesday 7th March 2017 at 8.45pm in the Village Hall



**PRESENT:** Cllr Jill Buck, Chairman (JB); Cllr Carol Blackett (CB); Cllr Barbara Edwards (BE); Cllr Glen Parcell (GP); Cllr Paul Riddle (PR)

C Cllr R Beeching and fourteen other members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.45pm following the Annual Meeting of the Parish

**ACTION**

## 17.017 Apologies for absence

1. Councillors: None (all present)
2. Others: Carmel Holland, James Downing, Christopher Taylor-Young, District Cllr R Brunton

## 17.018 Declarations of Interest

1. Cllr P Riddle: non-pecuniary regarding planning application for 1 Hillside (lives nearby).
2. a) and b) Written requests for dispensations: None

17.019 (i) **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 10th January 2017:** It was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the 10th January 2017 Parish Council Meeting were a true and accurate record.** The Chairman signed the Minutes.

**JB/Clerk**

(ii) **The Clerk's notes of the 12th January Neighbourhood Plan public meeting** were received.

17.020 **Police report.** Given earlier in the evening by Sgt Duncan Wallace at the Annual Meeting of the Parish. (But see comments under 17.028.2.1 below)

17.021 **Chairman's announcements:** None

## 17.022 Planning

### 1. New Applications

**3/17/0233/OUT 1 Hillside:** Outline application for 3 dwellings. It was **RESOLVED to send a detailed letter of objection to this application, to include road and traffic safety concerns, and conservation and ecological issues.**

**Clerk**

### 2. Decision Notices

**3/17/0068/FUL Coal Yard:** Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 5 No. detached dwellings and 2-storey office building (B1) **DECISION AWAITED**

**3/17/0002/FUL & 0003/LBC Widfordbury Farm, Ware Road:** Alterations to enable change of use to B1 office, residential, and B1 light industrial; demolition of sheds. **DECISION AWAITED**

**3/16/1164/FUL Land South of Martlets:** Erection of 1no 5 bedroomed dwelling, 5no 4 bedroomed dwellings, 5no 3 bedroomed dwellings, 5no 2 bedroomed dwellings and 2no 1 bedroomed dwellings, and associated works. **GRANTED SUBJECT TO s106 AGREEMENT**

**3/16/2693/FUL Greenacres:** Erection of 1no. 2-bedroomed dwelling with access from Ware Road. **GRANTED**

**3/16/2504/FUL Wilmoor:** Construction of 2no detached 3-bedroom houses and 4no 4-bedroom detached houses, plus garages etc. **GRANTED**

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

**E/16/0332/ENF; 3/16/0324/HH 22 Benningfield Road.** Compliance enforcement report: **Investigation completed, breach remedied; compliance now satisfactory.** **CASE CLOSED**

(ii) **Consideration of late planning applications:** The Parish Council was asked to comment on the developer's proposed name of The Willows for the 6 new houses adjacent to Wilmoor. Members of the public were invited to give their opinion. The majority felt it was not an appropriate name, but there was no consensus for a suitable alternative. Therefore, it was agreed to make no comment.

**Clerk**

- (iii) **South Paw.** New large static caravans at South Paw Farm. Planning Enforcement are checking for breaches of condition. No report or further information has been received.
- (iv) **South Paw.** Rubbish reported to have been dumped at South Paw Farm. No update or further information received.
- (v) **Priory Farm wall.** Planning enforcement are checking the re-pointing of Priory Farm flint wall. No report received.
- (vi) **Martlets.** No update received, including for the s106 request
- (vii) **Housing White Paper.** Receipt of HAPTC LAIS 1396 (the government's housing White Paper) was noted.

**17.023 Report by County Cllr Roger Beeching and District Cllr Robert Brunton.**

CC Beeching gave a full report at the Annual Meeting of the Parish earlier in the evening. No report was received from the absent DC Brunton.

**17.024 Neighbourhood Plan**

- (i) Notes of the 12th January public meeting are on the website, as is the requested list of relevant policies extracted from other Neighbourhood Plans; these have also been emailed to those who have requested to be kept informed.
- (ii) The next public meeting will be on Thursday 6th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. It will be addressed by Lorraine Hart, an independent Neighbourhood Plan consultant, and the aforementioned extracted policies considered.

PR/JP/  
Clerk

**17.025 Finance**

1. The report of the Council's finances for 1 Jan to – 28 Feb was received (Appendix A)

Finance Summary from 1 January to 28 February	£
<b>Opening bank balance 1 January</b>	<b>8,756.66</b>
Plus: income to 28 February	12.00
Minus: expenditure to 28 February	<u>2,218.53</u>
	6,550.13
Minus previous months' cheques cashed in period	<u>230.40</u>
<b>Balance available to Council 28 February (cashbook balance)</b>	<b>6,319.73</b>
Plus: un-presented cheques as at 28 February	<u>420.76</u>
<b>Bank balance reconciled with bank statement, 28 February 2017</b>	<b><u>6,740.49</u></b>

Reconciliation of the Accounts to the bank statement was noted and it was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Accounts Statement be accepted.**

The bank statement and accounts reconciliation were signed as correct by non-signatory parish councillor Glen Parcell.

**Financial position, budget vs actual.** A budget vs actual financial report up to 28 February, and the projected balance at 31 March, was received and it was **RESOLVED to accept the budget report as presented.**

**2. List of payments.** It was unanimously **RESOLVED to approve all the payments as listed**

Clerk

Date	Payee	Item	£	Chq	Power
12/1	CZ Print	N/Plan flyers	20.00	1059	NP(G)R 2012; LA 2011
29/1	Clerk	Salary January	255.00	1060	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
18/2	D Jarrett	Churchyard sycamore (balance)	144.00	1061	LGA 1972 s215; OSA 1906 s9 & s10
18/2	J English	<u>Litterpick to 18/2</u>	105.76	1062	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
18/2	JB Gardening	Install dog bin FP18	60.00	1063	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
27/2	Clerk	Salary February	255.00	1064	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
7/3	Clerk	Travel/phone exp January/February	31.96	1065	LGA 1972 s112(1), (2A) & s151; LA 2011 s41
7/3	Clerk Petty Cash	Petty cash Jan/Feb	41.02	1066	LGA 1972 s111
7/3	J English	<u>Litterpick to 18/3</u>	105.76	1067	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
7/3	J English	<u>Litterpick to 31/3</u>	52.88	1068	OSA 1906 s9 & s10
7/3	EHDC	Dog bin contract	391.92	1069	OSA 1906 s10b

7/3	CommuniCorp	Clerks Update renewal	100.00	1070	LGA 1972 s111
7/3	GM Fencing	Allotments fence	1025.00	1071	SHAA 1908 s26(1)
7/3	Clerk reimburse	Microsoft licence	40.00	1072	LGA 1972 s111
7/3	Clerk reimburse	Hazard stakes	15.56	1073	LGA 1972 s215
7/3	Clerk reimburse	Refreshments	9.30	1074	LGA 1972 s111
		<b>VAT included</b>	<b>91.02</b>		

Cheques for 7th March were signed at the end of the meeting.

### 3. Banking standing orders for 2017/18

(i) **Litterpicking.** It was unanimously **RESOLVED to increase and pay £116.00 per month by s/o to Mrs J English for the 12 months, April 2017 to March 2018**

Clerk

(ii) **Closed Churchyard maintenance.** It was unanimously **RESOLVED to make an increased payment of £240.00 by s/o on the first of May, July, September and November to Caroline Parrott for the year April 2017 to March 2018.**

Clerk

### 4. Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2017/18.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED to appoint Steve Vine of Accountancy & Book-Keeping Services as the Internal Auditor for the 2016/17 audit.**

Clerk

### 5. Standing Orders for 2017/18.

The External Auditor appointment and audit arrangements for 2017/18 onwards were noted.

## 17.026 Correspondence

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

- CPRE: Annual Rural Living Award Scheme – entry closing date 26<sup>th</sup> May
- Parishioners: further complaints re Benningfield Road parking (17.028.2.1)
- Parishioners: complaints re mess made by Gigaclear (17.029)
- Parishioners and EH Planning: re concerns over large static caravans being delivered in Pegs Lane (17.022.3.2)
- Vandalism damage reported at the allotments (17.027.2.1)
- Parishioner request to take over licenced allotments paddock (17.033)
- Parishioner: Complaint re dumping of rubbish at South Paw Farm (17.22.3.4)
- Parishioner: Private funding of solar speed sign by Ashbourne Manor (17.028.2.2)
- HAPTC: LAIS 1396: Housing White Paper (17.022.3 (vii) )
- East Herts: New leadership team structure
- Solicitor re Village Hall title (17.027.1.2)

## 17.027 Village Reports

### 1. Village Hall

#### 1. Report by Cllr Paul Riddle:

- Cllr Carol Blackett has agreed to be appointed as the Parish Council's representative on the VHMC from the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May.
- Finances: There is approx. £1k in the current account and £6.5k on deposit.
- Two upcoming events will feature the Beatniks and a Comedy Night.
- The feasibility study is still considering moving the stage to one side of the Hall rather than at the end to create a more inclusive atmosphere for the audience.

Clerk

#### 2. The Land Registry Title change application was noted and it was **RESOLVED to approve the sale of a small piece of land to the owners of 9 Bell Lane, subject to the Parish Council's requirement that all legal conditions set out in paragraphs 1 and 21 of the 1959 Deed be met and that no legal costs accrue to the parish.**

Clerk

### 2. Allotments

#### 1. Report by Cllr Babs Edwards.

- The year has been made difficult by numerous incidents with neighbouring horses. The tenants have been very patient throughout this taxing period.
- Someone has been found who is willing to maintain the general parts of the allotment at a very reasonable cost. Details to follow.
- The Working Group AGM will be on 28th March at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

BE/JB

BE  
BE/JB

- The chestnut paling fence has been erected and the funding grant from East Herts will be applied for. Clerk
- 2. Income has fallen due to a decrease in the number of tenants. The proposed May rent increase for 2017/18 will not now take place, but instead a £5 maintenance supplement will be paid by tenants. However, notice is served that there will be a rent increase for 2018/19. Clerk/BE
- 3. **Licence request.** see Agenda item 17.033 below.

### 3. Playing Field

1. **Report** by Cllr Glen Parcell.
  - There is currently over £6k in the reserve account. The Magazine has donated £150. No significant expenditure is anticipated this year. The future intentions of the Ware football team are unclear at present.
  - No issues have been reported related to bad language or parking by visitors and football supporters.
  - The phone mast is not going to happen; a different location has been selected.
  - The water has been capped off so that the supply only serves the neighbour's horses. The electricity supply may also be cut off because it is not used.
  - A H&S risk assessment will be undertaken at the play area and should be available for the next Parish Council meeting.
  - Consideration is being given to how the Playing Field facility could be better utilized. GP
  - The AGM will be held in early May. PFMC
2. **Dog Bin cleaning contract.** It was agreed to leave the arrangement as is for the present. The Parish Council has paid for the provision and installation of the bin and has paid the annual cleaning fee for 2016/17. This may be reviewed next year. Clerk

### 4. Closed Churchyard

1. **Diseased sycamore tree.** Tree surgery to make the tree safe has now been completed.
2. **Risk caused by leaning Wiseman family monument.** A quote has been obtained from Hugh McAlpine (stone mason) for re-setting the monument. A second opinion has been sought. Advice from the Council's Insurer, Zurich, is that until the safety risk is resolved, the monument area must be roped off with hazard tape. This will be done immediately. The Clerk advised that under Section 215 of the 1972 Local Government Act, the Parish Council's responsibility is for the maintenance of the Closed Churchyard. This includes its duty to regard the safety of visitors and workers there by mitigating identified risks. Since no Wiseman family connections have been identified at present, the Parish Council will have to decide whether to spend over £1,100 of public funds to straighten the monument or whether to have it laid flat – which will still be an expensive option. Zurich has indicated that permanently taping off the area could be an inexpensive - if unattractive - solution. It is understood that many years ago, the Wiseman family left with the PCC some money in trust for the maintenance of the monument. The Parish Council will make every effort to work with the PCC and the church authorities to satisfactorily resolve this issue. Clerk/JB
3. **FP16 gate.** At the suggestion of the Public Rights of Way Officer, Parish Paths Partnership (P3) have been contacted regarding possible funding for improving the safety of the gate where FP16 exits the churchyard northwards. Clerk

### 17.028 Highways, footpaths and byways

1. **Footways and footpaths**
  1. **FP18 beside the allotments:** The overgrown hedge is being cut back. JB/Clerk
  2. **Dog Bin for FP18.** Has now been installed and is being cleaned by the EHC contactor.
  3. **Modification Order 2011,** sewage works update: Progressing, but no report.
2. **Highways:**
  1. **Benningfield Road/Green parking.** Sgt Duncan Wallace reported to the Annual Meeting of the Parish that the police cannot offer any guarantees to resolve or

even attend to many reported parking problems, although there has been a general dramatic reduction in the number reported incidents of late. Illegal parking that creates a severe danger will be dealt with when identified and as resources permit, but the Rural Policing Team does not have the manpower to deal with minor infringements and has no powers to offer alternative parking solutions. It is for residents to resolve most parking problems among themselves.

2. **Privately funded solar speed sign.** Following a request from the owner of Ashbourne Manor, it was **RESOLVED to support in principle a privately funded solar speed sign near Ashbourne Manor**

Clerk/JB

17.029 **Website and Broadband.** Report by Cllr Paul Riddle

- **Website:** All up to date.
- **Broadband:** Disruption to access caused by BT and Gigaclear contractors will be resolved in due course, but by the end the year there should be two fast broadband options in place, which is good news. Concerns have been raised about the Green not being reinstated by the contractors. Assurances have been given that this will be done once the weather improves and turf can be laid.

17.030 **Urgent matters** received too late for inclusion on this agenda:

- The condition of the footpath at Priory Farm/House of Orange was reported as presenting a H&S risk. Cllr Parcell said he would provide some photographs as evidence. However, it is very likely that the path referred to is not a Public Right of Way, but rather is a permissive footpath, in which case, access is entirely at the discretion of the land owner and no action can be taken.

17.031 **Items for future agendas.** None raised in the meeting:

At 10.10pm it was **RESOLVED to suspend the meeting for parishioners' comments**

- A parishioner expressed extreme concern about developments at South Paw Farm and wanted to know what the Parish Council was doing about it. The Chairman replied that the PC has spoken on numerous occasions to the East Herts' Planning Enforcement Officer, including making visits to the EHC offices in Hertford. Beyond making representations, the Parish Council itself has no powers to take any action.

The parishioner said there are also related concerns about developments on a neighbouring property and asked what action the community was proposing to take. The Chairman reiterated that the Parish Council can do nothing except ask for an investigation if unpermitted development is believed to be taking place, but that cannot be based simply on speculation or fears of what might happen. The parishioner said it was recognised that the PC had made every effort to bring the issues to the District Council's attention and the comments were not a criticism of the PC. However, doing nothing will result in the community getting trampled on and it was proposed that Mark Prisk MP be written to and told in no uncertain terms that what is happening is intolerable. This is what the parishioner himself would be doing.

JB/Clerk

- Mrs Jenny Miller will be organising a refresher course this year for the AED responders. She asked if someone could undertake to check the battery life once a month.

JB/PR/  
CB

**The meeting was restored to order at 10.20pm**

17.032 **Date of next meetings** (all in the Village Hall)

- Thursday 6th April, 7.30pm: Public Neighbourhood Plan Meeting
- Tuesday 2nd May, 7.15pm: Annual Parish Council Meeting, followed by the May Parish Council Ordinary Meeting

Clerk

Clerk

17.033 **Allotments Licence request**

It was **RESOLVED that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded for the following agenda item, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and members of the public duly left the room.

Consideration was given to the request by an allotment tenant to take over the lease of the paddock that is currently held by a parishioner under a grazing licence until September 2018. The terms of the licence establish that the agreement can be determined and possession resumed by the Parish Council upon one month's notice in writing to the Grazier. Although the licence agreement is for three years, September 2015 to September 2018, for certain legal reasons the Council understands that is in its interest to determine it within two years of it having been signed. It was agreed to resolve this matter at the May Parish Council Ordinary Meeting.

Clerk/all

It was **RESOLVED to give due consideration to the tenant's request once the present grazing licence has been determined and when that tenant has made good progress on managing the allotment plots of which they recently took up tenancy.**

Clerk/all

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.35pm.

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