

# Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Ordinary Parish Council Meeting  
Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 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**

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

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

**22.002 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.

**2. Dispensation requests: None**

**22.003 Approval of Minutes**

**RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were a true and accurate record.** The Chairman signed the Minutes.

**Clerk/MA**

**22.004 Police report**

The Chairman read the following report from PCSO Leon De Bruyn, sent on 31<sup>st</sup> December:

*There are no crimes to report for Widford for the month of December 2021.*

**22.005 Chairman's announcements**

The Chairman said he wanted to use this slot to go through some issues that have been raised by parishioners. There has been criticism that the Parish Council has not been submitting its consultee comments on some important planning applications; the Council is determined to resolve this for the future. In order to help make parishioners aware of current planning applications, we will arrange for a link to the EHDC Planning portal to be set up on the Parish Council website.

**IC/Clerk**

The old notice board outside the former Green Man will be removed. A Parish Council "label" will be added to the official notice board on Benningfield Green. Agendas will remain on the notice board until replaced by the agenda for the next meeting.

**Clerk**

**BE**

The request for any local historical items that are worthy of being shared being added to the website was noted.

It was requested that the Parish Council asks the fish & chip van owner that parks it van in Lambs Gardens to find a more appropriate place to conduct its trade.

**IC**

The Chairman asked a member of the public if the issues raised had been answered satisfactorily and was told they had, particularly with regard to planning items going on the website.

**22.006 Reports by County and District Councillor Eric Buckmaster**

The Chairman read extracts from Cllr Buckmaster's reports. It was agreed to include these in full as an Appendix to the January Council Meeting Minutes.

**Clerk**

**22.007 Planning**

**1. New Applications:**

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

**RESOLVED: No comments**

**Clerk**

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3/21/2668/FUL: Ash View Stables: Additional capacity on existing site.

**RESOLVED:** To object on the following grounds:

Clerk

1. The status of the Doe Shed as an agricultural building against which a change of use can be applied for has not been adequately proven. The insurance document submitted does not provide the necessary evidence.
2. It is outside the village boundary. District Plan 2018 Policy VILL2 (IV) limits development to within the built up area as defined on the Policies Map. Therefore this development is not permissible under District Plan 2018 Policies VILL2 (IV) and VILL2 (V).
3. It does not qualify as permitted infill as defined in District Plan 2018 Policy VILL2 (II).
4. Access is via a track which runs along the line of Public Right of Way FP7. The building is located in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. To upgrade this Footpath requires full and detailed planning consent and approval of HCC Highways for all associated works. This has not been taken into account within the application. Policy GBR2 requirements are not met within the application.
5. The property is a considerable distance from the main road and adequate access provision has not been considered for emergency vehicles etc. Again, this has not been taken into account within the application.
6. There is no indication of adequate utility connections being provided.

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

3/21/2762/ARPN Doe Shed, Priory Farm: Convert agricultural building into 1 dwelling.

**ARPN REFUSED**

3/21/1841/HH & 1842/LBC Abbotts Farm: Demolish porch and rear extension; build single storey front and rear extension to annexe. RECONSULTATION.

**GRANTED**

3/21/2818/HH 9 Daintrees: Replace existing rear extension.

*Decision Awaited*

3/21/1720/HH 4 Nether Street: Outbuilding to rear.

*Decision 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: No applications received, but it was noted that the Hunsdon Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 public consultation is open from 6<sup>th</sup> January to 17<sup>th</sup> February.

2. Concerns about development in Benningfield Road. No update from EHC.

22.008 Finance

1. Report of the Council's accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

Finance Summary

	£
Opening cashbook balance 1 November	41,285.11
Plus: income to 31 December	3.88
Minus: expenditure to 31 December	<u>2,069.68</u>
<b>Balance available to Council at 31 December (cashbook balance)</b>	<b>39,219.31</b>
Plus unrepresented cheques/payments	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement at 31 December</b>	<b><u>39,219.31</u></b>

**RESOLVED:** that the Accounts Statement to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

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

**RESOLVED:** that the financial performance report to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 be accepted as presented.

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## 4. List of payments.

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

Clerk

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

Jo English	Litterpicking December: 9 of 12	125.00	
Clerk	Salary December	400.17	
HMRC	PAYE December	100.20	
Clerk	Expenses October-December	14.00	
Unity Trust Bank	Quarterly service charge	18.00	
TP Jones & Co	Payroll services October - December	58.50	9.75
Jo English	Litterpicking January: 10 of 12	125.00	
Clerk	Salary January	400.37	
HMRC	PAYE January	100.00	
Clerk	Expenses January	12.25	
Clerk	SLCC Annual membership £69 approx		
<b>Recoverable VAT included</b>			<b>9.75</b>

## 5. Budget and precept for 2022/23

The Clerk had draft budget and precept for 2022/23 that was resolved at the November meeting was again considered. There being no new information it was **RESOLVED: That the budget be agreed as drafted and that the precept be set at £15,000.** The Chairman, Clerk and two councillors duly signed the EHDC precept form.

Clerk

## 6. Bank mandate

Noted: Cllr Ian Collins has been added to the Unity Bank mandate as an authorising signatory.

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

- EHC: re precept 2022/23 and Police CC precept proposal
- Wellers Hedleys: Advice on trustee status and leases
- HCC: for confirmation on enquiry about registered common land
- PCC: Tree safety, closed churchyard
- Parishioner: Parked cars blocking footway
- Police: request for village events in 2022
- Parishioners: Benningfield Green issues

## 22.010 Village Reports

### 1. Village Hall

The AGM was held on 10<sup>th</sup> November. Signed Minutes will be available in due course.

### 2. Playing Field

1. **Report:** The PFMC is due to meet w/c 17<sup>th</sup> January.

MA

2. **Biffa grant.** Update: Advice given by charitable trust legal expert Roger Taylor on the PF ownership status is being followed up.

MA

### 3. Allotments

Allotments members have agreed to be involved in the Queen's Green Canopy tree planting initiative.

BE

An idea was put forward whether flowers grown on the allotment could be used in something like a "Widford in Bloom" initiative.

### 4. Closed Churchyard.

Tree safety report: The PCC is meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January and will report thereafter.

Clerk

### 5. Village Archive.

A display will be set up in the Village Hall later in January to give information and to foster interest.

## 22.011 Highways, Public Rights of Way, and other Parish matters

### 1. Footpaths and PRow.

1. FP1: No update available on PRow replacing the stile with a suitable bollard.

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2. FP18: Fallen tree at Lilley Bridge. The tree has been removed. The foundations of the bridge are in poor condition, but not unsafe. Remedial work will be undertaken by HCC PRow in due course.

## 2. Highways and footways

1. Verges, gutters and overgrown footways: It was noted that the footway by Daintrees is very overgrown again and needs to be cleared. It was agreed to take photos and to report on the HCC Highways Faults website.

## 3. Other parish matters and concerns

None raised.

### 22.012 Benningfield Green

The Chair and Vice-Chair have spoken to those concerned and have made it clear that parking on the Green for a sustained period is not permitted and is a breach of the current licence. Ongoing breaches could result in the pass and repass licence being revoked.

### 22.013 Queen's Green Canopy

The trees have been ordered and the £350 grant is to be applied for. A quote to be obtained for a memorial plaque that will hopefully be covered by the grant.

IC

### 22.014 Neighbourhood Plan

No progress. It was agreed that the Chairman will talk to Hunsdon to understand what costs were incurred. It was also agreed to remove this item from future agendas until specific proposals can be considered for a way forward.

MA

Clerk

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

A Queen's Platinum Jubilee village memorial photograph was proposed, similar to the 2012 Diamond Jubilee photo that is in the Village Hall. It was agreed this was a good idea. The Chairman agreed to follow it up.

MA

### *Suspension of Meeting for Public Comments at 9.05pm:*

A parishioner requested that the welcome packs be reinstated for all new residents moving into the village. It was agreed to consider doing this.

Fly tipping: It was noted that a fridge/freezer has been dumped in the layby near the Church. All fly tipping should be reported on the Herts County Council website.

### *Meeting restored to order at 9.08pm*

### 22.016 Items for future agendas:

- To consider a Neighbourhood Plan as and when appropriate

### 22.017 Date of next Parish Council meeting

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March, 7.30pm at the Village Hall**

Clerk/MA

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

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

## **Appendix**

### **District and County Councillor Report, January 2022**

#### **£5000 in funding available for sustainable projects across Hertfordshire**

Hertfordshire County Council has teamed up with Crowdfunder to create the Sustainable Hertfordshire Fund, providing up to £5,000 in funding for local projects that will contribute to tackling climate change.

Through the fund, the county council wishes to enable and inspire projects to be delivered that assist with one or more of its Sustainable Hertfordshire ambitions.

These ambitions include:

- To become a net zero greenhouse gas county before 2050
- To ensure communities are ready for future climates
- To improve wildlife across the county by 20 per cent by 2050
- To provide access to clean air for all by 2030

To qualify for funding, projects must be local to Hertfordshire and benefit people who live or work in the county. To apply for funding and see further eligibility criteria visit [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/sustainablefund](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/sustainablefund)

Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for the Environment said:

*“In order to achieve the targets we have set for the county as part of our Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy we need to enable and inspire people across the county to take action against climate change.”*

#### **Sustainable Hertfordshire Eco-Fair a ‘storming’ success**

Hertfordshire County Council’s first ever Sustainable Hertfordshire Eco-Fair proved to be a triumph as residents flocked to the event in their hundreds despite the wind and rain caused by Storm Arwen.

Over 350 residents came to the event at County Hall, Hertford, where they were treated to an inspirational day of climate action thanks to over 50 exhibitors made up of county council services, local businesses, and climate organisations leading a mixture of talks, workshops, and activities.

The feedback from residents and exhibitors has been overwhelmingly positive, as people came away from the event better equipped with the knowledge and tools needed in the fight against climate change.

Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for the Environment said:

*“Seeing so many of our residents giving up part of their weekend to find out more about the fight against climate change in Hertfordshire was really positive and shows a real desire to make a difference.”*

*“We want to inspire our communities in Hertfordshire to take action against climate change, and the Eco-Fair is the kind of community engagement we need to achieve this.”*

#### **A recent report from the Department for Transport (DfT) into road conditions in England for the years ending March 2020 and 2021, has shown that roads in Hertfordshire are better than or equal to the national average.**

The DfT statistical release, which has been produced annually since 2007/8, categorises roads into three categories, green (good condition), amber (work may be needed) and red (roads that should be considered for maintenance). It then considers the class of road, ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and unclassified.

The DfT statistics show the roads that should be considered for maintenance and so a lower percentage is better. In 2020 and 2021, the number of roads in England classified as red was 4% of ‘A’ roads, 6% of ‘B’ and ‘C’ roads and 17% of unclassified roads. In Hertfordshire, 3% of ‘A’ roads were classified as red, 6% of ‘B’ and ‘C’ roads and 12% of unclassified roads.

The quality of Hertfordshire’s roads reflects the proactive approach the county takes to planning repairs, and the investment made through the councils invest 2 improve (i2i) programme. The i2i 5 year plan, with the final year of investment taking place in 2022/23, has seen additional funding dedicated to local roads, with £29m committed to improve the unclassified network alone.

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The unclassified network, which are primarily residential roads or country lanes, account for 63% of all Hertfordshire roads. At the start of the programme the figures for the unclassified network were at 16%, and now stand at 12%, making the Hertfordshire unclassified roads some of the best in the East of England.

The i2i ambition is to improve the unclassified road network by halving the percentage of roads that should be considered for maintenance. Last year the figures stood at 7%, and this year they are at 12%, with the national figures also going up from 15% to 17% as highway authorities delayed works and adjusted working practices during the pandemic. Although the figures have changed from last year, the county remains on the right track to meet the ambition of the i2i programme.

## **Hertfordshire's Queen's Green Canopy takes root with 36,000 trees to be planted in the next year**

The first of over 36,000 trees have been planted as part of Hertfordshire County Council's efforts in the Queen's Green Canopy, a project which encourages people to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'.

Currently just over 850 trees have been planted, including 100 trees at 43 Hertfordshire schools, as well as on highways verges across the county. The remaining 36,000 trees will be planted across a number of sites in Hertfordshire over the next 18 months.

This year's planting includes a 'statement' site at County Hall, Hertford, where 27 trees were planted followed by a small ceremony during the Sustainable Hertfordshire Eco-Fair on Saturday 27 November.

In addition, an avenue of 30 lime trees at Aldenham Country Park make up the second 'statement' planting site, with 350 more trees planned for Aldenham next year as part of the park's 100 Aker Wood.

## **New powers for Highways to enforce in 'hot spots' across Hertfordshire**

### **Hertfordshire County Council will be applying for new legal powers to issue penalty charge notices to motorists ignoring Highways restrictions across the county.**

The Department for Transport announced in June that councils will be able to apply for the legal powers to use cameras to enforce moving traffic contraventions, such as ignoring no entry and one-way restrictions, driving in formal cycle lanes, or waiting in yellow box junctions.

Hertfordshire County Council intend to apply for these powers in the new year once legislation has been passed. The powers will also need to be agreed by cabinet and following public consultation. The council would look to initially trial them in locations that will improve connectivity, boost active travel, or reduce congestion when the legal process is complete, which is expected to be 2023. Some of the areas that will be considered by officers and then consulted on with residents will be places that could improve bus reliability, reduce congestion, or where roads are unsuitable for large vehicles. For example, in Bishops Stortford town centre where cars often wait in areas that are prohibited.

At the moment in England only local authorities in London can issue penalty charge notices (PCNs) for these types of traffic offences and gaining these additional legal powers will enable the county council to target difficult areas and support the police in their efforts to reduce traffic offences.

It is hoped that the legal powers will be available to local authorities in 2022, and as it will take time to consult, design, install and operate camera enforcement it is likely to be 2023 before camera enforcement starts in Hertfordshire.

## **Positive change for people the priority as innovation scheme in Hertfordshire gathers pace**

With significant progress being made on the ground-breaking Hertfordshire Living Lab project, our county is showing clear signs of securing a more sustainable future.

Work on Hertfordshire County Council's pioneering Living Lab initiative, for which it received a Local Growth Fund grant of £748,000 from Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), started in 2020 – the scheme is leading the way in ultimately creating 'smart' towns and cities across the UK. As well as Hertfordshire LEP, the County Council's other partners on the scheme include Ocado Group, BT and the University of Hertfordshire.

In simple terms, the project has seen Hatfield Business Park become a 'test-bed' for 'smart' living, with a variety of innovations being developed there as viable solutions to tasks and issues we all face

# UNAPPROVED DRAFT<sup>1</sup>

in our everyday lives.

The Living Lab has and will continue to provide experimental services to residents, local workers and students such as the driverless delivery of goods, while people will have the opportunity to help to shape these innovative concepts through a dedicated digital engagement platform.

This cutting-edge innovation, which includes the use of drones and robots, is being developed to test the way in which technology can seamlessly interact to make life better for everyone. The Hatfield Business Park is a perfect location for these trials - being home to a range of private businesses, the university and residential properties.

In the last year, the project has created an environment for future mobility solutions to be trialled and tested on the ground. A number of traffic and weather sensors have been installed, at the business park, which provide live data, while a 'digital twin' model has been developed. Fed by this traffic and weather information, the model will enable testing to see how new technology could operate in various environments before it is potentially implemented elsewhere in the county.

## **Cole Green Way Geared Up for Cycling and Walking**

**A small group of members from Hertfordshire County Council gathered outside on Friday 17 December to celebrate the completion of a project to improve a popular local traffic-free route.**

The Cole Green Way – once the railway line between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford – has had a major makeover, thanks to funding from Sustrans and the county council.

Over the last three years the three miles of the route owned by the county council have been resurfaced. The improvements have provided a more attractive and user-friendly route for use by local walkers, cyclists and horse riders, while maintaining the rural character at its heart.

Walking and cycling charity Sustrans are custodians of The National Cycle Network which is a critical part of the UK's active travel infrastructure. At almost four miles long, the Cole Green Way forms part of the network and provides a valued connection between Welwyn Garden City and Hertford. Sustrans were able to support the project as part of their 'Paths for Everyone' review and a funding package from the Department for Transport to improve the network.

## **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.

**Hertford Theatre** awaiting final tender responses for the ambition to enhance the theatre offer. In the meantime Hertford Theatre has been working with Southern Maltings in Ware to produce a very successful Christmas show. The expectation in the future is for more outreach work like this to take place.

**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.

**Eric Buckmaster**  
**January 2022**