

# Wheathampstead Parish Council

**25 March 2010, 20.00h**

Present Councillors: I Begg Chairman  
A Brewster  
G Clark  
N Page  
T Reason  
K Stammers  
J Turner  
S Walford  
A Waterfield

J Warren Clerk to the Council

Press 0  
Public 1

## **977-10 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr J Burgess, N Clements and D Hills (personal reasons).

Members recorded their good wishes for Cllr Clements' recovery.

## **978-10 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

None.

## **979-10 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Clark declared a personal interest in Minute 998-10, as she is on Plans North of the District Council Planning Authority. The way she votes at Parish Council will not necessarily be the way she votes at District Council.

## **980-10 MINUTES OF COUNCIL**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 25 February 2010 were approved

**Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2010 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

## **981-10 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The following draft committee minutes were received and receipted:

Pump	4 March 2010
Allotments	4 March 2010
Planning	9 March 2010
Village Plan	9 March 2010
Village Day	16 March 2010

In presenting the draft Minutes of the Planning Committee Cllr Clark, committee chairman, reiterated the need for apologies to be sent through the Clerk to ensure quorate meetings. The Village Day meeting of 16 March was similarly inquorate for parts. Cllr Waterfield requested that Council noted the recommendations under inquorate Minutes 967-10 (part) – 972-10. The branding of the Saturday 10 July 2010 as Charter Day (Minute 968-10) and programme and advertising rates (Minute 970-10) were agreed.

- Resolved:**
- 1 To receipt the draft Minutes of**
    - Pump Committee 4 March 2010**
    - Allotments Committee 4 March 2010**
    - Planning Committee 9 March 2010**
    - Village Plan Committee 9 March 2010**
    - Village Day Committee 16 March 2010**
  - 2 To note the need to send apologies for absence and seek a substitute where appropriate.**
  - 3 To approve the recommendations at Minutes 968-10 and 970-10 of the Village Day Committee of 16 March.**

## **982-10 STATION PLATFORM WORKING GROUP**

Members received the notes of the working group meetings and considered its recommendations including for access, screening and provision for platform and trackbed surfaces. The notes confirmed that consideration had been given to a screen to increase privacy to the east end of the platform. A complaint, discussed, had subsequently been received from a resident of Palmerston Road regarding compromising his privacy. A tree screen was debated in yew or leylandii. Members agreed to purchase 19 yew trees 100-125cm within a budget of £400. The detail regarding planting the trees and trackbed surface would be agreed by the Rights of Way and Commons Committee. Similarly the consultation and subsequent decision upon access steps to the former platform would be agreed by them. Suggested options had been taped to offer a visual idea of the possible locations

- Resolved:**
- 1 To note the report and thank the workers.**
  - 2 To note the complaint regarding tree work on the former station platform area and responses given.**
  - 3 To purchase 19 yew trees to screen the east end of the platform, planting and detail for track bed to be devolved to the Rights of Way & Commons Committee.**

#### **4 Consultation on positioning of access steps to the former platform to be devolved to the Rights of Way & Commons Committee**

##### **983-10 HERITAGE TRAIL UPDATE**

It was reported that a grant for £10,000 had been approved from the Local Strategic Partnership towards the Heritage Trail project. This money would be used towards providing plaques giving historical information on important buildings and Village Events and producing a guided trail around the Village. Once further monies had been secured this would extend to the surrounding countryside and longer local walking routes

**Resolved To note the report**

##### **984-10 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Internal Auditor's report and recommendations had been received and circulated as discussed in Minute 908-10. It stated that 'you may take comfort that your Council operates a system of internal controls which is adequate and effective, given the resources available to it, and for the most part adheres to the guide and other accounting and control principles for the financial year 2009/10.' He recommended that the more detailed risk assessment undertaken within the year be kept under review and that the review of assets be integrated with the ongoing insurance review. Further comments were made about the computerisation of records, improved purchase ordering system, and the need to streamline the current committee structure.

Members noted and accepted the comments including the need for meetings attendance.

**Resolved To note the report and implement its findings**

##### **985-10 COMMITTEES & TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The committee terms of reference for Village Plan Committee, Heritage Trail Working Group and Village Day Committee, which had been previously circulated were approved (Minute 905-10). As previously discussed at minute 905-10 and advised by Internal Audit a special Council meeting to revise the committee structure was set for 15 April 2010.

**Resolved**

- 1 To approve the terms of reference for Village Plan Committee, Heritage Trail Working Group and Village Day Committee**
- 2 To agree a revised committee structure at a special Council meeting on 15 April 2010 at 19.30 hours.**

**986-10 SMALL PROJECTS PROCESS**

Council had reviewed and approved the Small Projects Policy Process at Minute 909-10. It was agreed that the process be updated to read 'all small projects must be formally *proposed and approved* by WPC or the appropriate committee in advance.....should specific skill sets be required for particular task *evidence of competence, which in certain circumstances includes certificates*, should be included.'

*Councillor Begg requested that his vote against this amendment be recorded.*

It was unanimously agreed that risk assessments be included with every completed small project from and that the volunteer could seek assistance in completing the form from appropriate committee chairman or committee member. Projects would not obtain approval without a risk assessment

- Resolved**
- 1 To amend the Small Projects Process**
  - 2 That completed risk assessments must accompany completed small project forms.**

**987-09 COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESS**

Members were asked to agree a process for communication, consultation and dealing with public compliments and complaints. The report circulated considered by Clerk, Chairman and Vice – Chairman included pointers for consideration. It also utilised current examples for inclusion – consultation on possible steps to the former railway platform (see separate agenda item notes of working group) and communications regarding recycling facilities and tree management.

Specifically members' attention was drawn to the fact that under the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 SADC would notify the Clerk if a complaint was made about one of its members. On 4 January 2010 Standards for England issued guidance on the adoption of procedures to deal with notifications about complaints in particular so that confidentiality was preserved.

The guidance recommended that we notify the monitoring officer of our procedure once it has been put in place.

Consultation processes were discussed at some length including types, feasibility and the need to look at continuous improvement. The chairman emphasized the need to learn from past events and considered that better communication and consultation may reduce bad feeling and complaints whether formal or informal. Potential benefits could be an improved profile of the parish council, better relations with the community as well as administrative time savings. One specific process discussed was to produce laminated signs requesting feedback at project locations, for example for the station platform steps. Members, having been advised of the need to consult did not wish to have a formal policy and decided to do nothing.

With regard to a complaints and compliments process Members queried whether it was necessary or just good practice to operate an internal appeals process for complaints (as recommended by officer report) or whether any complaint be heard by the entire Council and thus only outside bodies usable for recourse, such as Standards for England.

- Resolved**
- 1 Not to formalise a consultation process, ie, to do nothing**
  - 2 Clerk to establish whether an internal appeal process was mandatory**

#### **988-10 MEMBER OFFICER PROTOCOL**

Members were asked to adopt the Member Officer Protocol for which a template from the Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils had been circulated. The chairman drew attention particularly to paragraphs 3.8: shifting blame to others (as an example of unacceptable behaviour), 4.2: that agendas were the officers' responsibility and 8: save in exceptional circumstances letters and official communications on official Council business should be sent only in the name of the Proper Officer (Clerk).

- Resolved: To adopt the Member Officer Protocol**

#### **989-10 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

At minute 911-10 it was agreed that Mr Johnston make a presentation on the former railway station platform project at the Annual Parish Meeting (meeting of electorate) on 12 May 2010. It was further agreed that Cllr Begg produce a template as for 2009 presentations by committee chairmen and apologies for absence were taken from Cllrs Clark, Turner and Waterfield. Cllr Stammers would present the Memorial Hall Committee report. The format of committee reports linking to the Village Plan followed by refreshments (purchased via the High Street off licence) and public questions would be retained

- Resolved:**
- 1 To retain the format of the APM as 2009 with presentation on Station Platform restoration project, committee reports following Village Plan, refreshment break and public questions**
  - 2 Clerk to obtain refreshments from the local off licence as in previous years**

#### **990-10 SMALL BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT ACCORD**

It was noted that the Small Business Engagement Accord appeared to fit well with the aims of the Village Plan - which identified 50% of respondents prioritising shops and businesses and was the number one priority.

Following discussion at Minute 899-10 advice had been sought and received from HAPTC and other local councils. It was noted that HAPTC had found no reason why the council should not sign up to it. It was a voluntary code of practice designed to encourage the support of small local businesses, which most people would agree was what parish councils should do.

- Resolved**            **To support the Small Business Engagement Accord**

#### **991-10 NATIONAL FISHERIES MONITORING PROGRAMME**

Members approved the annual request from the Environment Agency to conduct a summer fish survey in the River Lea and agreed that in future years approval of this annual request be delegated to the Clerk

- Resolved**
- 1 To approve the request for a summer fish survey**
  - 2 To delegate approval of future annual survey requests to the Clerk**

#### **992-10 BUTTERFIELD ROAD DEVELOPMENT - Name update**

As agreed at Minute 913-10 the sub-committee comprising Cllrs Brewster, Clark and Reason had met on 1 March to discuss possible names for the development site, and themes for roads. The local residents had been approached so their input could be considered. Persimmon had thanked WPC for the detailed response including its historical references.

Persimmon had responded and suggested Tutor's Gate. Councillors were concerned that this could lead to confusion with Tudor Road. Given the imminence of the Heritage Trail and all the Village's historic heritage councillors would also prefer a more clearly historic name

**Resolved**                    **Clerk to respond pointing out potential confusion for Post Office and residents of a similar name to Tudor Road, and reiterating preference for a historic reference and disappointment to a generic name.**

**993-10    TESCO UPDATE**

It was reported that Tesco's arrival in the High Street was closer, the problems regarding the loading bay had been resolved and BT cables were the final obstacle to their arrival.

**Resolved**                    **To note the report**

**994-10    VISIBLE STREET SCENE**

It was reported that the £2,500 Visible Street Scene grant for the planter had been received. The Village Sign was now painted and ready for despatch. A site meeting with highways would be arranged to consider any lighting. Councillors agreed that the installation and details of its design in the planted area be delegated to a sub committee comprising Cllrs Brewster, Clark and Turner with the Clerk.

**Resolved**                    **1 To note the report**  
**2 Installation of the Village Sign adjacent to the Mill Bridge including approval of design work and lighting to be delegated to a sub committee comprising Cllrs Brewster, Clark and Turner with the Clerk.**

**995-10    ADDITIONAL TIME**

**Resolved:**                    **To approve additional time to complete agenda items as the time approached 22.30.**

**996-10    SUBSCRIPTION TO LOCAL COUNCIL REVIEW**

It was reported that one copy of the LCR was supplied as part of HAPTC membership, additional copies remained at £12 per copy. Members agreed that a single additional quarterly copy be purchased which would be circulated to members, individual copies would no longer be ordered

**Resolved**                    **To purchase one additional quarterly copy of LCR for circulation thus keeping a reference copy in the Parish Council Office**

**997-10 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

The schedule of accounts for payment in March had been circulated.

The Chairman drew attention to year end committee balances which were unadjusted for creditors and transfers to reserves including Youth Fund £13,000, Tennis Club resurfacing £1,000, East Lane Car Park £2,000 and Staff Provision £2,000. A number of external grants had also been received for improving the Village.

**Resolved: To pay the accounts per March 2010 schedule amounting to £23,697.66**

**998-09 PLANNING**

Councillor Clark, as chairman of Planning Committee, took the chair for this Minute.

The following plans were considered:

5/10/0536	33 Bury Green	Rear conservatory
5/10/0473	Site of former chapel, 153 Lower Luton Road	Erection of three 3 bedroom two-storey terraced dwellings
5/10/0568	25 Wick Avenue	Demolition of existing side garage and erection of part single part two storey side extension including insertion of front and rear dormer windows (resubmission following refusal of 5/09/2323)
5/10/0564	31 Marshalls Way	Single storey front and rear extensions including insertion of single roof light
5/10/0496	1 The Broadway	Infill garage and main house. Change garage dormer windows flat to hipped, extension of roof to create more space, insertion of front dormer window, alterations to openings, removal of chimney & re-tiling of roof
5/10/0513	22 Wick Avenue	Demolition of existing dwelling & erection of one, three bedroom dwelling
5/10/0460	1 St Thomas Place	Single storey front side and rear extension including roof lights and 2 storey side extension
5/10/0452	6 Burton Close	Car port - retrospective
5/10/0507	1 Valley Rise	Single storey side extension with roof lights

**Resolved: RECOMMEND: No objection**



- Resolved**
- 1 To note the report**
  - 2 Chairman of Playing Fields and Youth to liaise with Cricket Club and St Albans District Council**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 23.05h.**

**Dated this            day of            2010**

**Chairman**