

**Wheathampstead Parish Council
Parish Council Meeting
31 March 2011, 19.30h**

| | | | |
|---------|-------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Present | Councillors | I Begg | Chairman |
| | | A Brewster | |
| | | J Burgess | |
| | | G Clark | |
| | | N Clements | |
| | | D Hills | |
| | | N Page | |
| | | T Reason | |
| | | J Turner | |
| | | K Stammers | |
| | | S Walford | |
| | | A Waterfield | |
| | | J Warren | Clerk to the Council |
| | | Press | 0 |
| | | Public | 7 |

1787 -11 Apologies

None.

1788-11 Specific Declarations of Interest

Councillor Clark declared a personal interest in Minutes 1804-11, as she is on Plans North of the District Council Planning Authority and also a member of the Licensing Committee. The way she votes at Parish Council will not necessarily be the way she votes at District Council. Councillor Begg declared a personal interest in Minute 1812-11 as a close neighbour.

1789-11 Public Speaking

Mr Johnston, as Chairman of WEB (Wheathampstead for Enterprising Businesses), reminded all present of the forthcoming public consultation on the use of East Lane Car Park. He also expressed his disappointment in the lack of support by parish councillors to the survey undertaken in February when 10 volunteers made 140 visits and interviewed 331 users of the facility. With regard to the station platform sign, he advised that the Deputy Clerk had confirmed that planning consent was not necessary.

Councillor Reason, seconded by Councillor Begg, thanked Mr Johnston and the other volunteers for conducting the survey.

Mr McNeill advised that he had moved to Wheathampstead in 2010 having lived in St Albans since 1967 and taken an active interest in local affairs. He was particularly interested in practical matters and had become involved with the Station Platform project. On 21

March he had attended the Special Council meeting and expressed deep concern: he had been shocked and disappointed at the attitude and conduct of certain councillors. Mr McNeill stated that he hoped that this had been an atypical meeting and that at future meetings councillors would exhibit behaviour more appropriate to those elected to a public body.

Mr Holden, representing the Wheathampstead Riverside Residents' Association (WRRRA), suggested a range of 4 options all relating to the river and flooding, that he asked the Parish Council to consider for funding support. The project fell under E28 of the Village Plan

- Creation of a Mill Pool
- Reinstatement of collapsed riverbanks
- Removal of dilapidated and redundant structures to the weir and sluice gate to the bypass and their replacement with a full width running weir
- To support the long term siphon project.

He stated that the Environment Agency had confirmed a Provisional Funding Allocation for 2011-12 to investigate the viability of installing a siphon in the old Mill wheel housing. The siphon would discharge excess water from the river upstream of the mill, into and through the original tunnel under the mill, taking the load off the bypass.

Councillors Hills and Walford arrived and apologised for their late arrival.

1790-11 Minutes of Council

The Council Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meetings held on 27 January 2011, 24 February and 21 March (Special Council) be approved.

Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meetings held on 27 January, 24 February and 21 March 2011 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

1791-11 Minutes of Committee Meetings

The Council Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the following draft committee minutes were received and adopted:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Allotments Committee | 3 March 2011 |
| Village Plan Committee | 7 March 2011 |

Resolved: To receipt and adopt the draft Minutes of Allotments Committee 3 March 2011 Village Plan Committee 7 March 2011

1792-11 Allotments Committee Recommendations

The Council Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the recommendations of the Allotments Committee were approved.

Resolved To approve the recommendations of the Allotments Committee of 3 March

1793-11 Village Plan Committee Recommendations

The Council Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the recommendations of the Village Plan Committee were considered and approved.

Resolved To note and approve the report and recommendations of the Village Plan Committee

1794-11 Requests to the Parish Council

(a) WEB World Comes to Wheathampstead 12 June 2011

At Minute 1452-10 Council had agreed to the free use of the Marford Field with an option to use the Memorial hall for a nominal fee for this business to consumer event. WEB had subsequently requested the use of the hall for a presentation on the Boer and Zulu wars and use of the bar, kitchen and toilets. Councillor Stammers suggested that a fee be set to cover cleaning. Councillor Turner proposed, seconded by Councillor Reason and agreed, that a fee of £20 be charged and that WEB be asked to further give a donation from any profit raised – the event being designed to be non profit making.

(b) WEB monthly car boot sales

The Council Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the WEB monthly car boot sales be permitted to continue in East Lane car park From April – December 2011, as in 2009 and 2010.

(c) Plaque on Queen Mother's Tree, Butterfield Road

Councillor Stammers proposed, seconded by Councillor Turner and it was agreed, to replace the plaque by the tree on Butterfield Road planted by the Queen Mother. This would be in 2 tone 'acrylic' on wood, budget up to £50

(d) To scatter ashes on Mellissa Field

A lady, with fond childhood memories of Mellissa Field had requested that her ashes be scattered there when she died. Subject to approval by the Environment Agency The Council Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that permission be granted. Councillor Stammers advised that he had experience of scattering ashes and was willing to be contacted for advice by the family.

Post meeting note – Environment Agency does not object.

(e) BBQ on the Meads

Councillor Turner proposed, seconded by Councillor Reason and agreed, that the request from the Midshires Search & Rescue Service to hold a BBQ on the Meads on 26 June be granted. This was subject to their leaving the area clean and tidy, public liability insurance and risk assessment.

(f) Royal Wedding Party on Marshalls Heath

Councillor Stammers proposed, seconded by Councillor Turner and agreed, that Marshalls Heath residents hold a 'street party' to commemorate the Royal Wedding on 29 April on Marshalls Heath, subject to the constraints of (e) above

(g) Cricket Club requests

The Wheathampstead Cricket Club had submitted a number of requests relating to the refurbishment of their cricket nets. As the Club was on Nomansland these had been discussed with St Albans District Council. It had been confirmed that gassing of vermin was not acceptable. Confirmation of acceptability to receive a charitable grant on behalf of the Club had been given by internal and external auditors. It was agreed that the roadside dip to the outfield not be taken out by importing soil – this would be a different soil type and was therefore unacceptable as habitat would be altered. The ditches along the road were to be maintained as these discouraged access from undesirable and unauthorised vehicles. Councillor Page suggested that the additional earth bunds by the nets may be used by the Parish Council on the Meads. Members agreed that he explore the options to reuse the soil including any permissions required from the Environment Agency.

- Resolved**
- 1 That WEB use the Memorial Hall for the World Comes to Wheathampstead for a fee of £20 plus donation from any profit made**
 - 2 That WEB be permitted to run monthly carboot sales April – December 2011**
 - 3 That a plaque be reinstated by the tree planted by the Queen Mother**
 - 4 That permission be granted to scatter ashes on Mellissa Field**
 - 5 That subject to risk assessment, public liability insurance and clearing up the area the Midshires Search and Rescue be permitted to hold a BBQ on the Meads 26 June 2011**
 - 6 That subject to risk assessment, public liability insurance and clearing up the area the residents be permitted to hold a 'street party' on Marshalls Heath to celebrate the Royal Wedding on 29 April**

- 7 That, following consultation with the auditors and SADC the Clerk write to the Cricket Club. Infilling of dips was not permissible with imported soil. Unwanted topsoil may be usable by WPC, Councillor Page to explore the options and report back to Council.**

1795-11 Consideration of EDF compensation money

Members were asked to bring forward costed ideas to utilise the £20,000 received from EDF's contractors for loss of amenity caused by the unauthorised felling of the two willow trees on the Meads. These would be discussed by the new Council. To date ideas included:
Solar panels on the Memorial Hall roof – Mr Partington , APM
Alterations to weir – Mr Holden, minute 1789-11 above
Heritage bridge over River Lea – Cllr Burgess
Fernery trees: assessment and management – Cllr Burgess
Shelter adjacent to Marford football field – Cllr Begg.
Councillor Stammers suggested that the money be put into general reserves rather than a specific new project

**Resolved To note the report
To consider further options**

1796-1 IT Support

Council, whilst setting its budget, had allowed for IT support by annual maintenance contract rather than pay-as-you-go as used to date. The office's reliance upon IT was discussed and it was agreed that call-out be monitored and a contract be trialled for the year. This was subject to comparison with other providers. Councillor Burgess proposed, seconded by Councillor Reason, that following renegotiation of the contract price and comparison with alternative providers a one -year maintenance contract be taken out.

Resolved To take out an annual maintenance contract for IT support

1797-11 Parish Online

Councillor Reason proposed, seconded by Councillor Turner, and it was agreed that the annual licence for Parish Online be renewed. Councillor Reason would work with the Clerk to map Parish Council owned land and footpaths during 2011.

Resolved To renew the annual licence for Parish Online

1798-11 Risk Review

The Risk Log as approved in 2009 and 2010 had been circulated prior to the agenda incorporating amendments to risks and mitigating actions regarding the absence of staff (R33, 33A, 33B). It was further agreed that R52 (unsafe trees causing injury or damage to property) be altered to state that the Clerk would take prompt action once notified.

The Council Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the Risk Log as amended be adopted

Resolved To approve the amended risk log

1799-11 Internal Audit Report

The internal Auditor's report dated 10 March had been circulated including a letter confirming independence. It was noted that the terms of reference had been previously agreed in line with the NALC 'Practitioner's Guide' and scope developed following issues highlighted from minutes, discussions with staff and update on previous internal audit reports. The audit was competent having been carried out objectively, ethically and with integrity.

In summary the Internal Auditor noted:

- The Council has an adequate and effective system of internal controls given the resources available to it, and for the most part adheres to the Practitioner's Guide and other accounting and control principles for the financial year 2010-11.
- He recommended that actions upon decisions be given a time frame for delivery
- That the new Sage accounting framework be designed per Council Structure
- That Council consider the abolition of committees as these have no delegated powers.

The audit observation regarding staffing resources had been accounted for in the revisions to the risk log (Minute 1798-11) and it was further agreed that the Personnel Committee of the new Council consider cover arrangements for all staff absence.

The Chairman suggested that a generic coding system be used for Sage in light of the auditor's comments about aligning coding to Committee structure.

Councillor Stammers, who had been absent from the Special Council meeting on 21 March, asked about the consideration given by those present to the advice that the Council structure be reviewed and committees be abolished. Councillor Burgess confirmed that whilst the internal audit report was 'on the table' the motion not to fundamentally change the way Council worked prior to the election (ie no change to structure) had been proposed and seconded so quickly that the audit recommendations had been unable to be considered. The Auditor's recommendations would thus fall to the new council

The problem of lack of quoracy of meetings was noted as was the resolution to revisit Council structure with the new council.

The Council Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the Internal Auditor's report be noted and its recommendations implemented.

Resolved To note and implement the recommendations of the Internal Audit Report.

1800-11 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2011-12

Councillor Reason proposed, seconded by Councillor Turner and agreed, that HW Controls be reappointed internal auditors for 2011-12 at a fee of £675 – the same as 2008-9. It was further agreed, that for good practice, consideration be given, towards the end of 2011, to alternative internal audit services for the following year.

Resolved

- 1 To reappoint HW Controls as Internal Auditor for 2011-12**
- 2 For good practice reasons to later consider alternative options for internal audit for 2012-13**

1801-11 Internal Control Review & Annual Governance Statement

The Council Chairman proposed and it was agreed that Annual Governance Statement and Internal Controls review as circulated be adopted.

Resolved To approve and adopt the Annual Governance Statement and Internal Control Review

1802-11 Budget Review 2011-2 and year end transfers

The expenditure report to February with known commitments had been circulated and was discussed. The Council Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the report be noted and transfers to earmarked reserves be made. As previously agreed (Minute 1629-11) up to £9000 (within budget sums at year end closure) for new play equipment at Marford Play area and £5000 from the play area contribution to the MUGA/sports court reserve. £4200 from Highways would go to bus shelter improvements as resources had not enabled this to be achieved in 2010-11. The 'regular' transfer to provisions were agreed:
 £2000 East lane Car Park
 £2000 Staff provision

- Resolved**
- 1 To note the report**
 - 2 To approve the transfers to reserves and provisions**

1803-11 St Albans District Council changes to Planning Process

As agreed at Minutes 1528-10 and 1678-11 members were asked to consider a response to the trial of the relocated Plans North meeting from Harpenden to St Albans, electronic (only) availability of planning appeal information, and 'improved' website and officer support. Councillor Clark reported her concerns about the limited availability of planning officer support and the vagaries of the website. It was generally agreed that there was room for improvement and that constructive criticism was in order. Members were asked to share their views, via the clerk who would circulate a suggested response. Councillor Clements proposed, seconded by Councillor Stammers, and agreed, that the Clerk respond to SADC detailing the Parish Council's concerns

- Resolved** **Clerk to compile a response to SADC following input from councillors**

1804-11 Planning

Councillor Clark took the Chair for this item

Under delegated powers (minute 1114-10) decisions made – recommendation of no objection:

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5/11/0355 | 12-13 Gustard Wood | Single storey rear extension |
| 5/11/0279 | 32 Ash Grove | Single storey rear extension, new porch and alterations to openings |
| 5/11/0194 | Dane Spring, Bower Heath Lane | Insertion of front dormer window and insertion of pitched roofs to all front dormer windows and front porch |

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5/11/0297 | 9 Croftwell, Harpenden | Two storey front extension, part first floor part two storey side extension, front canopy and new hipped roof above existing rear extension |
| 5/11/0358 | 51 Manor Road | Extension of time for implementation of planning permission 5/08/1557 dated 21/08/08 for replacement garage and pitched roof to existing rear extensions |
| 5/11/0507 | 42 Garrard Way | Single storey front and side extensions and alterations to openings |
| 5/11/0334 | 33 Long Buftlers, Harpenden | Single storey front extensions and alterations to openings |

Under delegated powers (minute 1114-10) decisions made – recommendation of no objection: Provided old access is closed

| | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 5/11/0218 | Land opposite Grove Farm, Pipers Lane, Harpenden | Relocation of access drive |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|

Under delegated powers (minute 1114-10) decisions made – recommendation of RECOMMEND REFUSAL

It is still more than a barn

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5/11/0202 | Dane Spring, Bower Heath Lane, Harpenden | Replacements Barn (resubmission following withdrawal of 5/10/2262) |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

1805-11 Polytunnel on Marford Allotments

An enforcement notice had been served on all with an interest in the Marford Allotment Field regarding the polytunnel on Hitchens Field. The Council Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that receipt of the enforcement notice be noted. Councillor Hills drew members' attention to the larger polytunnel and livestock on the small holding on the Meads. It was agreed that the Clerk investigate this and it be considered by the Rights of Way and Commons Committee

Resolved

- 1 To note receipt of the letter**
- 2 That the Clerk investigate the small holding on the Meads and report back to Rights of Way & Commons Committee.**

1806-11 Accounts for Payment

The revised schedule of accounts for payment in March had been circulated. The Clerk would revise this to include the payment to Parish Online at Minute 1797-11 and Top Hat invoice received after the schedule had been printed. The large reimbursed payment to Councillor Page of £530.60 was queried. This was supported only by a credit card bill. Councillor Page assured members that this was in respect the £441.50 for the supply and planting of native willows approved at Minute 1426-10. He explained that he had ordered direct because of the complexities of dealing with the supplier. The Chairman reminded all of the need for all orders to go through the Clerk. The Clerk was asked to chase the VAT itemised invoice.

Councillor Burgess voiced his concerns regarding the two willow trees planted adjacent to the felled tree stumps. His understanding being that the trees had been felled as beneath the power lines which were to be placed underground. He advised that Councillor Page, who had supervised the tree planting had assured him that his concerns were unfounded and the newly planted trees would not cause concern to EDF.

The Clerk reported that there had been a series of unexpected problems regarding the Memorial Hall and thus unanticipated expense. This included failure of the entry alarm system, serious boiler problems, breakdown of the smaller water urn and failure of the cooker (caused by unauthorised disconnection of the gas supply). The Council Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the revised list of accounts as circulated and amended be passed for payment

- Resolved**
- 1 To pay the revised list of accounts per March 2011 schedule amounting to £22,740.58**
 - 2 To note the reports**
 - 3 Clerk to chase the VAT invoice for the willow trees**
 - 4 Councillors to remember that all orders must go through the Clerk**

1807-11 Village Entry Signs

This item had been deferred from February, Minute 1752-11. The Clerk reported that the insurance excess for the stolen signs was £100. The signs had not been recovered despite a police appeal on the local radio. The Council Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that a claim be made to the Insurance Company.

- Resolved**
- Clerk make an insurance claim in respect of the stolen entry signs.**

1808-11 Small Projects

Councillor Turner proposed, seconded by Councillor Brewster, and it was agreed, to thank Councillor Burgess for fixing the guttering and anti-climb paint on the Marford Football pavilion (minute 1682-11) and mending the Station Yard Gate; and to ask that he treat the bench by the Village sign with sadolin per his small project request and clean the Haddonstone planter with soapy water. Council would assess at a later date when /if the Village Sign post needed treating.

- Resolved**
- 1 To accept Councillor Burgess offer to clean the Haddonstone planter with soapy water and sadolin treat the bench by the Village sign.**
 - 2 To later review whether the Village sign post needed treating**
 - 3 To thank Councillor Burgess for his work at the Marford Football pavilion and on the Station Yard Gate**

1809-11 Consultations and meetings

It was agreed that new councillors could attend the HAPTC newly elected councillor training courses (cost £30 each).

HCC had asked, on 30 March, for input to its submission to the DfT's Local Sustainable Transport Fund Bid by 6 April. In view of the short response deadline it was agreed that a reply be submitted from the Highways and Public Transport Committee together with Clerk.

The Council Chairman proposed and it was agreed that these motions be carried.

- Resolved**
- 1 To note the reports**
 - 2 Newly elected councillors to be given option to attend courses (£30 each)**
 - 3 Clerk and chairman of Highways and Public Transport Committee to submit response to HCC following committee meeting on 5 April.**

1810-11 Reports from Councillors on Meetings Attended

Councillor Brewster reported that the lottery application for the Heritage Trail had been approved subject to confirmation of details. The joint application with Sandridge Parish Council and Woodland Trust for the Nomansland Nature Quest was similarly approved subject to confirmation, as was the bid with CMS for work on Devil's Dyke.

Councillor Clark had circulated a detailed note about the Localism Bill training she attended in her capacity as a district councillor.

- Resolved** **To note the reports**

1811-11 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved To exclude the press and public, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed (LGA 1972 Sch 12A Part 1)

1812-11 Draft s106 Old Rectory

Council agreed at Minute 1247-10 to take ownership of the Old Rectory Land. The draft s106 agreement had been circulated. It was agreed that Council's solicitor's advice be sought.

Councillor Reason proposed, seconded by Councillor Burgess, that subject to the Parish Council's solicitor's satisfactory response the Clerk be authorised to sign the s106 agreement on behalf of Wheathampstead Parish Council.

Councillor Waterfield asked that his vote AGAINST this proposal be recorded

Resolved Clerk to sign s106 agreement on behalf of Wheathampstead Parish Council following advice from Council's solicitor

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 22.10.

Dated this day of 2011

Chairman