

## WHEATHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Wheathampstead Parish Council held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008 in the Hewitt Room, The Memorial Hall, Marford Road.

Present: Cllrs. K. Stammers (Chairman), I. Begg, A. Brewster, J. Burgess, G. Clark, N. D. Clements, N. Page, J. Turner, A. Waterfield, S. Walford

In Attendance: Parish Clerk, Mrs. B. Green,  
Mrs. I. Casper, Assistant Clerk  
with Mrs. J. Warren and 3 members of the public

The minutes of the meeting were taken by Mrs. Casper

**The meeting started at 7.30pm.**

- 1) **To receive and accept apologies for absence**  
Cllr. Hobden due to family commitments. Cllr. Hills attending a meeting at HCC. The reasons for absence were accepted by the Council.
- 2) **To receive declaration of interest on items on the agenda**  
Cllr. Clements declared an interest on item 9. He is an I.F.A. (Independent Financial Advisor) and gives free advice to the Council as required.
- 3) **To confirm the minutes of Wheathampstead Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008.**  
RESOLVED that these minutes, previously circulated, be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be duly signed by the Chairman.  
**To confirm the minutes of Wheathampstead Parish Council meeting held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2008.**  
RESOLVED that these minutes, previously circulated, be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be duly signed by the Chairman.  
Cllr. Waterfield reported that he had not received an agenda for the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November, (e-mailed to all members). RESOLVED that members receive paper copies of agendas.
- 4) **To receive comments from members of the public.**  
Mr. Adams commented that the Clerk, Mrs. Green, would be missed after her retirement and wished her well. He would like to be able to read the Parish Council magazine the Pump on-line and thought the Council should invest in updating the I.T. equipment in the parish office.
- 5) **To receive an update on the Meads Underground Cables**  
Cllr. Page reported that corrected paper work had been returned to the Parish Council's solicitor. On acceptance the work should begin and take approximately 3 months to complete.
- 6) **To receive an update on Trees Overhanging Mill Walk**  
The Christmas Lighting Company has re-installed the Christmas Lights in the trees. Cllr. Burgess thought that as the Council did not instruct the company to re-install the lights the company should be contacted and informed the Council will not pay twice for the work to be done.  
Cllr. Page informed members that in the early stages of discussion on this subject his advice had been to leave the lights in the trees. The role of some, not all, of the trees is to support the lights. Without the guide of the lights too many trees may be taken out. It is sensible to leave the lights in place so that the person supervising trimming

6) continued..

back of the trees can use them as a guide. The trees are in the Conservation Area and it will take at least one month to receive permission to trim the trees.

The problem of the leaves on the ground is caused by the pavement not being swept efficiently or often enough. More thorough street cleaning is needed.

After discussion the Council RESOLVED that the Clerk contact the Lighting Company and instructs them not to remove the lights again. RESOLVED the Clerk contacts St. Albans District Council bringing the lack of thorough street cleaning in this area to their attention. **This takes in item 12 on the agenda.**

The Christmas Lights in the trees were not working tonight. RESOLVED that the Clerk informs the Company of this.

RESOLVED that the Clerk writes to Mr. David Law and McIntyre Homes thanking them for all the hard work they put into making the switch on event for the Christmas Lights such a huge success.

7) **To receive an update on York Stone Cleaning**

St. Albans District Council made a commitment to clean the York Stone monthly; the schedule should have started in October. To date no cleaning has taken place.

RESOLVED to monitor the situation.

8) **To received a report from Inspector Hanson on PCSO Funding**

No reply to date.

9) **To receive a report from Cllr. Clements on the Clerk's Gratuity**

Cllr. Clements reported that the Gratuity Fund has been en-cashed, a cheque for the full value of the account has been sent. Not received to date.

10) **To adopt a Publication Scheme to comply with the Freedom of Information Act**

Under the freedom of Information Act it is the duty of the Council to adopt and maintain a publication scheme by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009. **Note: we agreed to adopt the core elements minus the optional extras – min 5 - 28/08/08**

**Cllr. Stammers declared an interest as he has been taken to the Standards Board regarding a request for information under the F.O.I. Act and signed the book.**

Cllr. Brewster was concerned at the tight deadline. RESOLVED the Clerk to ascertain the reason for this.

The Council discussed various options. It is more onerous for a Parish Council to research out information for people due to small staffing levels. A lot of Parish Council records are now held at County Hall, going to Hertford to collect data should be reflected in the request.

The Clerk to seek information from HAPTC and other local authorities on their Publication Schemes.

The Parish Council agendas/minutes/the Pump/notices are already out in public. Parish Council minutes, Committee minutes and the Village Plan questionnaire are on the village web site. All other items the Clerk and/or Assistant Clerk have to search out. Cllr. Waterfield proposed that the Parish Council charges an hourly rate for research by the Clerk and/or Assistant Clerk, and a rate for paper copies, seconded Cllr. Walford.

A vote was taken FOR 6 AGAINST 3

Cllr. Begg asked whether any other local authorities charge for time as opposed to a fixed fee and expressed concern that Wheathampstead Parish Council should set a precedent in this regard.

RESOLVED that a Publication Scheme is in place within the next 6 weeks, including an hourly rate for research and a rate per copy for paper copies. Action Clerk to find

10) continued....

out and compare what other Parish Councils charge for and to produce a Publication Scheme for Council approval.

11) **To receive a report from Cllr. Clark on the Village Sign**

Cllr. Clark reported that we are still waiting for the signs to be made.

Cllr. Brewster referred to an item of correspondence (item 23). As a means of receiving some money the Council can make a bid to St. Albans District Council for funds for Improving the Visible Street Scene. The Council should consider putting a bid in for money towards the Village Signs.

Cllr. Brewster informed members that W.E.B. will not be producing a Calendar next year.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Cllr. Brewster contacts W.E.B. to discuss/exchange ideas towards putting forward in a bid.
- b) Cllr. Brewster and the Clerk to liaise to forward a bid to the District Council.

12) **To receive an update on the Butterfield Road Lease**

Cllr. Begg expressed concern that it is still not clear when (what date) the Tenant Act 1954 clause was removed. An update from the Clerk was that the lease became non-renewable in 2006. Cllr. Begg will call into the office to see the documentation.

Cllr. Brewster reported that the electricity and water has been turned off at the site and this is affecting the footballers changing room. She will contact Persimmon Homes.

Cllr. Clements informed members that the Council and HCC had agreed that there would be a continuous supply of water and power to the changing room.

The lease to be checked to see the legal obligations of the landlord, Hertfordshire Council Council. A separate water and power supply must be organised.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr. Brewster contact Persimmon Homes, Clerk to contact HCC.

Cllr. Hills to be asked who to contact

13) **To receive an update on the Glebe Field Lease**

Ongoing. Our Land Agent is going to contact the Diocesan Board.

14) **To receive an update on the sale of the old office printer**

Cllr. Stammers apologised for the delay in putting the printer on EBay. He will move this on now.

15) **To comment on the Revised Code of Conduct**

Comments to be in by 24<sup>th</sup> December. No comments received.

16) **To receive a report on the progress of the Village Plan**

A leaflet is to be circulated with the Pump informing parishioners when the results of the analysis will be publicised. The leaflet was distributed to members.

Members noted that there were some errors on the leaflet, they have already gone to the distributors.

There was a proposal that the distributors are contacted and asked to remove/destroy the leaflets. There was no seconder to this. RESOLVED that the leaflets are distributed.

The results of the Village Plan will be announced at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2009.

ACTION – Clerk to check the Village web site for details of the Plan. A correction will be published in the next edition of the Pump.

17) **To discuss signage around the Village**

This item referred to the Highways and Public Transport Committee.

- 18) **To receive an update on the East Lane Car Park Survey.**  
The Clerk reported to members that this survey had taken place but St. Albans District Council will not release the result to the Council.  
Cllr. Clements informed members that he represents Parishes on the Parking Working Party, this next meets on 20<sup>th</sup> January. The Working Party will receive this report and he will report the findings back to the Council.  
Cllr. Turner proposed that the Clerk writes under the Freedom of Information Act pointing out our interest and demanding sight of the survey, seconded Cllr. Begg.  
Cllr. Brewster informed members that this is our last chance to extend the car park and we must keep the pressure on the District Council.  
Cllr. Clements pointed out that not all the information has been collected yet. If the final results show the car park is heavily used there is a reasonable chance it could be extended.  
Cllr. Begg reported that the District Plan and Planning Policy had indicated the potential to extend the car park. After a review a year ago that policy was not retained.  
After further discussion Cllr. Turner withdrew her proposal.  
Cllr. Turner then proposed - this subject be deferred until the January Parish Council meeting, seconded Cllr. Begg.  
A vote was taken FOR 8      AGAINST 0  
RESOLVED that the Council wait for Cllr. Clements to report back from the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January, and the item to be on the agenda for the January meeting.
- 19) **To receive an update on the footpath closure at Garrard Way.**  
Cllr. Page reported that he has requested a site meeting with HCC. No reply as yet.  
Cllr. Clements to attend the meeting.
- 20) **To receive an update on Peer Mentoring**  
A date has to be agreed for the first meeting with the Mentor. RESOLVED that the first meeting with the Mentor to be held on January 15<sup>th</sup> 2009, time 7.30pm or 8pm.  
ACTION – Clerk to confirm date and time with NALC Friday morning.
- 21) **To note correspondence received by the Clerk**  
a) Noted receipt of details of the Rotary Club of St. Albans Charity Cycle Ride on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2009.  
b) Noted letter from St. Albans District Council regarding the Visible Street Scene. See item 11).  
c) Noted letter from Mr. Adams.  
d) Noted letter from Dr. Cox regarding Heartwood Forest. ACTION Clerk to advise Dr. Cox to send comments to St. Albans District Council.  
e) Noted letter from Mr. Brian Joyce regarding the restoration 32/34 High Street. Members discussed this item and thought the Parish Council should make some recognition when restoration of buildings takes place. RESOLVED that the Clerk send a letter of thanks to Mr. Joyce. This item is passed to the Pump Committee.  
f) Noted letter regarding the new street sign at the Abbott John Mews. ACTION referred to the Highways and Public Transport Committee.  
g) Noted the European Parliamentary and County Council Elections will be on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009.  
h) Letter from Cllr. Brewster to the Chairman deferred to January meeting.  
i) Noted e-mail regarding Winter Works on Nomansland Common. Trees will be felled that are on land belonging to Wheathampstead Parish Council.

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Cllr Page proposed that a letter is sent to the District Council reminding them that the Parish Council is the owner of the common land in question and of the right to plant and cut trees there. Felling would require the Councils permission, seconded Cllr. Turner so RESOLVED.

22) **To receive minutes of Parish Council Committees and reports from members who have attended outside meetings**

a) Village Plan Meeting 17<sup>th</sup> November. RESOLVED these minutes are accepted.

b) Cllr. Turner gave a brief report on a Police Liaison Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> October. The crime rate in the area has dropped. The police helped address how the Allotments Committee can enhance security on our allotment fields. ACTION Clerk to contact police regarding posters for the allotment fields.

c) Cllr Clements circulated report on meetings he had attended.

**4<sup>th</sup> November – Wheathampstead House (St. Albans High School for Girls – Junior House)**

This meeting was one of a series on road safety matters affecting the school, but was the first since Mr. Fraser Campbell took over as Bursar (from Mr. Matthews). Those present in addition to Mr. Campbell and Cllr. Clements included our County Councillor Cllr. Hills, the area engineer and his deputy (from Herts Highways), the County Head of “safer routes to school”, the Headmistress and two others from the school.

The main points were as follows:-

Full backing from the school and Governors for the scheme previously described to Council whereby a new roundabout at the junction of Cory-Wright Way and Codicote Road would take all vehicles leaving the school grounds. The school has already consulted architects and engineers on the changes needed within their ground for a new road etc. and they are willing to subsidise the works needed by Herts Highways on the public highway.

The school would like a pedestrian crossing outside their entrance (zebra, pelican or whatever the HCC professionals recommend) and the Governors are willing to subsidise this work (or perhaps to pay for it) in the interest of the many who would like to walk to the school, perhaps using the East Lane Car Park with potential benefits to village shops.

There are almost 400 people using the school daily (pupils and staff) which becomes more than 400 when parents delivering and collecting children are added.

The next meeting in this series will be held in March 2009.

**19<sup>th</sup> November – Public meeting concerning Necton Road and Marford Road**

A meeting was called to which all residents of Necton Road and of those parts of Marford Road thought to be interested, were invited.

The prime purpose of the meeting was for Herts Highways (Rupert Thacker supported by Paul Walecki) to describe and explain two options for changes to the traffic flow in Necton Road and the effect that the changes would have on sight-lines and hence on safety as well as on road-side parking and the effect that this would have on convenience.

The public were then asked to express a preference for scheme A, scheme B or no change.

In the event, a slightly higher response was obtained for the plan with one-way and only limited reduction in road-side parking. A much higher level of support was shown for a scheme not originally considered by the Highways Engineers by which roughly half of Necton Road would be made one-way and the eastern part would continue to be two-way.

The engineers were asked to consider this variation (which could mean, for the eastern part of the road, that northward travel would be for access only, or that some

22) continued.....

form of turning head would need to be constructed at the bottom – north end – of the road).

d) Cllr. Brewster reported on the great work of Youth Connexions. The Youth Club is successful; outside trips are organised and very popular. Discussion groups are proving very successful. 38 children attend the club.

The Internet Café has started.

Due to illness ArtSkool has been cancelled in December and January. Local schools have been informed.

23) **Report from Cllr. Turner on the Memorial Hall Committee**

Cllr. Turner reported that at the end of the Memorial Hall Management Committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November, Cllr. Stammers retired as Chairman of the Committee.

Cllr. Stammers will remain as a member of the committee.

Cllr. Begg proposed Cllr. Turner be Chairman of the Memorial Hall Management Committee, seconded Cllr. Brewster.

A vote was taken      6 FOR              1 ABSTENTION

RESOLVED that Cllr. Turner is Chairman of the committee.

Cllr. Turner informed members that as she is now Chairman of the Memorial Hall Management Committee and aware of the huge responsibility this position entails she therefore feels she must step down from the Rights of Way and Commons Committee and the Youth/Playing Fields Committee.

ACTION Clerk to remove Cllr. Turner from the committee membership.

Membership of the two committees to be looked at, at the January Council meeting.

24) **To approve accounts for payment**

The subscription is now due for Mrs. Warren's membership of CIPFA, £275.

Cllr. Turner proposed the Council agrees to the payment of this subscription, seconded Cllr. Begg. RESOLVED Mrs. Warren's subscription is paid.

Cllr. Clements proposed approval of the November accounts, seconded Cllr. Waterfield. RESOLVED acceptance of the November accounts. (Attached).

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.32pm.