

**Minutes of the meeting held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 15 March 2017**

**Present:** Steve Clarke (Chair),  
Maria Oats,  
Hannah Taylor,  
Roger Drury (Clerk).

**Apologies** were received from Cllr Nigel Chapman (CBC Rural North) and Chris Exley.

No pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests were declared.

**1. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February were approved as an accurate record.

**2. Clerk's Report****a. Superfast Essex**

The response to the flyer on the coverage provided by County Broadband appears to have been more than satisfactory. Although individuals were not required to advise the Clerk of their responses, at least 12 properties have been granted "white" status – this means those properties were entitled to continuing support from Superfast Essex. However, what that support exactly means is unclear at this time.

It has become obvious that Superfast Essex are using the responses from the flyer to evaluate County Broadband's service to the village.

The service provided to the centre the village was also an issue of concern. If County Broadband were claiming to provide 20/30mbs, this was questionable as 8-15mbs appeared to be more realistic. The Clerk was invited to raise the issue with Superfast Essex.

The Clerk said that the community ought to offer a vote of thanks to Maria Oats for initially recognising the potential problem and then producing an excellent flyer.

(Post Meeting Note – Maria Oats has been in contact with Superfast Essex and they require information on those linked into County Broadband who are **not receiving a 30mbs service**. I will take this up initially with Steve Clarke and seek names/addresses from County Broadband on who they serve.)

**b. Rix Farms Ltd**

The exchange of correspondence between John Rix and the Clerk was noted and, in view of the refusal to accept any responsibility for damage done to roads/verges, it was recognised that the Council had no powers to restrict the activities of Rix Farms Ltd on public roads.

There was a lengthy discussion on how the verges in the village had been destroyed over the years by agricultural vehicles transiting Little Horkesley but also by the school bus, refuse lorries etc. It was agreed that it would be impossible to impose a width restriction on what are public roads but it would be useful to build a database of information so in the future the Council could show a record of damage. Additionally road safety would provide a powerful argument to get Highways to take action.

To this end the Clerk would write an insert for the Parish Magazine asking the public to report damage giving time and location and where possible photographs to the village website email address [clerk.littlehorkesley@btinternet.com](mailto:clerk.littlehorkesley@btinternet.com).

c. Playing Field

The Clerk reported that Jerry Munson had weeded the equipment area and also dug out the bark as previously requested. He had recommended that additional bark ought to be purchased – Steve Clarke would look at the situation and order additional bark if he thought necessary.

Bill Watson reported that the WFM was progressing well – the crocus provided by the DV&SV project had done well and Roger Drury undertook to provide additional primroses. The area had been fenced off for the summer and a working party would shortly be required for weeding purposes.

d. Roads

The Clerk reported that ECC Highways had commented that the repairs done to Workhouse Road/School Lane were a “temporary surface suitable for country lanes”. There had been complaints on the state of Holt Road where heavy vehicles were parked there during the works on Workhouse Road.

Additionally Christopher Orme had reported that the drains on School Road adjacent to the pond needed cleaning out – the Clerk would report both to Highways.

No information on the conclusions of the LHP on recommendations to improve road safety on London Road had been received – Great Horkesley PC had supported our recommendations.

It was noted that many roads in the village were due to be closed for repair in w/c 13/20 March but the Clerk had not received the advanced warning.

The Suffolk CC consultation of increased speed limits on the A134 Nayland to Sudbury were noted but their value was questioned

e. Footpaths

Generally the footpaths were felt to be in reasonable condition for the spring but a number of marker posts were missing –the Clerk would report to the Essex Footpath Officer.

f. Little Horkesley PC Website

The number of “hits” now stood at 55 showing not great interest in the site by the local community.

David Lewis had been invited to produce a Spring version of the Farming Focus and the Clerk had agreed to an expression of concern over the future of British farming provided it did not have a party political bias.

(Post Meeting Note – We are required to give access to our Register of Registerable Interests on the website – no problem, we can just do a link into the CBC Register of Registerable interests which contains all of our forms.

Additionally they should be updated for any change in our circumstances – I think the only one affected is Steve Clarke and I will liaise with him.)

g. Community Agents

The Clerk reported that no response has been received to the Council’s enquiry.

h. Annual Parish Meeting, 8pm Wednesday 3 May

The insert in the Parish Magazine was noted and it was agreed to circulate the flyer on the week prior to the APM.

i. Verges

The Clerk reported on the response received from Highways giving details of what roads in the village they were responsible for cutting but no details on timing. Clearly the priority was road safety not the preservation of biodiversity but the Clerk would follow up to obtain more details.

j. Colchester Walk-in Centre

A bulletin had been produced summarising actions so far in the consultative process but no decisions would be made until later in the year.

**3. Planning**

a. Application No: 163168 Thrift Farm Barns, Nayland Hill, Great Horkesley

It was reported that the application had been “called in” and subsequently refused – the decision letter which is on the website gives comprehensive reasons for that decision.

b. Application No: 170421 Joscelyns, Water Lane, Little Horkesley

It was agreed that this “agricultural” building had been constructed for horticultural purposes growing on potted roses and the very large property applied for would in no way enhance the AONB.

The Parish Council should object.

c. Application No: 170595/594 Westwood Park, London Road, Great Horkesley

This application relating to the replacement of windows was not an issue of concern.

d. Colchester Plan

The Clerk reported that there was no more information available and the final report on the consultation could not be expected before late spring/summer.

**4. Finance**

a. Contracts

The Clerk reported that EALC had been unable to provide guidance on the monetary value of contracts that should be put out to tender. Similarly NALC guidance to Parish Councils does not specify a monetary value.

It was agreed that the Council should accept a monetary value of £500.

b. 2016/2017 Audit arrangements

The Clerk reported that by the next meeting he hoped to lay the required audit and supporting papers before the Council for approval at the April meeting.

**5. Correspondence**

- a. The DV&SV Project February Update was noted.
- b. Victim Support Volunteer Recruitment Poster has been posted on the Noticeboard.

**6. Items for the Next agenda**

..... (Steve Clarke – Chair)

..... (Date)

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held at 1930 on 19 April 2017**