

meeting held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 20 June

Present: Maria Oats (Chair)
Chris Exley
Hannah Taylor
Roger Drury (Clerk)

Apologies were received from Cllr Nigel Chapman (CBC Rural North).

No Pecuniary or Non-pecuniary interests were declared in relation to agenda items.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 and 18 May were approved as an accurate record.

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting were reviewed and agreed as an accurate to be approved at next year's APM.

2. Management of the Parish Council

a. The actions taken by the Council over the School Lane incident were discussed and it was agreed that the minutes above were an accurate record of their actions. The Council had sought to enforce the law while avoiding a potential feud between villagers.

The resignation of Steve Clarke was regretted as his objection that the Council had failed to report the facts to Highways had in fact been achieved with the Village Hall Trustees retrospectively reporting their actions to Highways.

Highways are aware of the full facts and were in a position to take any action they thought appropriate.

b. Maria Oats agreed to act as Chair for the forthcoming year up to elections due in May 2019 and duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

c. The Clerk outlined the procedure for co-option and it was agreed to post the Notice of Vacancy in the office of Councillor on the Noticeboard on 21 June.

If 10 or more people called for an election, CBC would make the necessary arrangements, but, if no such request was forthcoming, the Council would be free to co-opt a suitable member of the public after 10 days.

It was agreed that there was insufficient time to advertise the co-option in the Parish Magazine but before the May 2019 elections that route could be used to encourage more interest.

3. Clerk's Report

a. Affordable Housing

Chris Exley's email of 18/6 was noted with the preliminary comments from RCCE which appeared to be moving towards a recommendation for two bedroom homes for rent which would be more attractive to any Housing Association.

After their final report on their recommendations, RCCE would put the Council in contact with a Housing Association who may be interested in funding the construction.

It was agreed that any homes should be built in the centre of the village and negotiations with Landowners would be necessary to identify a suitable site.

b. Data Protection

The following documents were reviewed and approved:

- Privacy Policy;
- Retention of Documents and Records Management Policy.

However, minor changes were required to the Complaints Policy which Maria Oats would implement.

These policies when finalised would be put on the Parish Council Website under a new page "Policies & Procedures" along with the current Freedom of Information insert.

The Clerk was requested investigate how closed Council meetings could be held to hear Complaints which may be of a delicate nature.

c. Playing Field

The RoSPA Report was discussed in detail, although since the day of the report on 14 June the replacement of the bark and weed killing had been completed thereby removing some of the points of criticism

Jake Jacobs had reported a broken socket on the playground equipment which needed replacement and the urgency of the need to identify a handy man to carry out such repairs was highlighted – a Paul Richardson of Great Horkelesley was mentioned and the Clerk would follow up.

The issue of the failure of CBC to maintain the approach to the playing field and the car parking area had been raised with Cllr Chapman and Colchester Homes had undertaken to resolve the problem.

d. Roads and Verges

Cllr Arnold had reported that the local Highways Group did not intend to take any action on the Coach Road crossing – this was regretted as it represented a real road hazard.

The closure of Water Lane 25 & 26 June for BT cabling laying was noted – large warning signs were in place.

The reduced cutting of the verges was welcomed in the context of preserving the environment but the time had perhaps arrived when some cutting was necessary.

e. Superfast Essex Broadband

Maria Oats reported on the Gigaclear event held on 12 June which appeared to promise much with cabling bringing superfast broadband to the south of the village as early as Autumn 2019.

However there was a degree of confusion over the division of responsibilities between County Broadband and Gigaclear.

It was agreed that the situation appeared to be somewhat fluid and an intervention by the Council at this time would probably not be useful. However, Maria Oats agreed to draft an email to Superfast Essex pointing out differences between their planned rollout and Gigaclear.

f. Royal Wedding

It was agreed that the Royal Wedding Party had been successful in bringing the village together though the support from the centre of the village had been disappointing.

It was agreed that the Council should support similar ventures but not necessarily with finance support.

g. Travellers

The advice provided by CBC on incursions by travellers was noted and would be kept for future reference but the prevention of entry on to farmland was really a responsibility of the individual landowner.

h. Mayor’s Reception 12 July.

No one was available to attend but the Clerk would write to Peter Chillingworth welcoming the initiative and apologising for the lack of support from Little Horkesley.

i. PRoW in the Village.

It was noted that Jason Botelho, ECC PRoW officer, was reviewing the state of footpaths in the village this year and it was agreed to discuss the state of PRoW at the next meeting

4. Planning

a. Application No:180895 Westwood Park, London Road, Little Horkesley

This application to convert part of the buildings to office use was noted and no objections raised. However, if further developments towards building a Business Centre were forthcoming, the Council could well oppose them.

b. Colchester Local Plan

The email summarising the Inspector’s initial comments on the plan and requiring more work on:

- Transport;
- Viability;
- Sustainability;

was noted and concerns that the main positive advantage of the plan that villages would not be expected to take up the slack in housing targets was discussed.

5. Finance

a. It was noted that the FY17/18 Accounts had been approved by the Internal Auditor and the accounts passed onto PRF for approval.

b. The following payments were authorised:

- Information Commissioner £40.00 –registration under the Data Protection Act;
- RoSPA £84.00 – Annual inspection;
- Chris Jacobs - Royal Wedding Party.

c. The FY17/18 VAT Reclaim of £28.31 was noted – this was lower than in previous years because most of the contractors used were not registered for VAT.

6. Correspondence

The Clerk reported that his email was being flooded with details of CBC Committee Agenda and minutes which were not relevant to Parish Councils. If a Parish Council had a specific interests they would follow up to get the relevant papers.

7. Items for the Next Agenda

The Emergency Plan should be discussed at the next meeting as part of the Data Protection Act.

..... (Maria Oats – Chair)

..... (Date)

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 July