

meeting in the Village Hall on Wednesday 16 January 2019

**Present:** Maria Oats (Chair)  
Chris Exley  
Chris Jacobs  
Roger Drury (Clerk/Councillor)  
with Michael Scales.

**Apologies** were received from Cllr. Nigel Chapman (CBC Rural North) and Hannah Taylor.

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

### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December were approved as an accurate record.

### 2. Affordable Housing

Chris Exley reported that:

- Hastoe HA and Rural England HA had been informed that the preferred partner was to be Hastoe HA;
- There would be a “village walk round” at 1130 on Thursday 31 January with Hastoe and any members of the Parish Council available;
- Hastoe’s architects were Barefoot& Gillis, well respected specialists in social housing;
- An article on progress to date would appear in the February Parish Magazine.

### 3. Clerk’s Report

#### a. Emergency Assistance Plan

Chris Jacobs, Maria Oats and Chris Exley had had a preliminary meeting on revising the plan and were looking for a simplified format to contain the relevant information.

It was agreed that Vulnerable People would only be named if they had signed up as such – the Clerk to compile the list. Details of prescription needs would not be recorded – the Clerk to inform those who have provided medical information that this would not be logged.

It was agreed that the Colchester Plan ought to include details of pharmacists in case emergency supplies were needed.

#### b. Playing Field

It was noted that the grass cuttings had been removed by J P Services at a cost of £340, Bill Watson intends to cut the Wild Flower Meadow in order to plant a further flower mix – there is an urgent need to find a contractor to cut the grass as soon as possible.

The January edition of the EALC Legal notes the liability for the safety of trees in a parish. The Clerk had discussed this with Paul Cutler, Tree Surgeon, who carried out extensive work on the trees surrounding playing field in 2013 and mid-2017 and reported that the old oak in the hedge could be a potential threat from falling branches.

It was agreed to commission a full arboreal survey and seek guidance on the frequency of such checks – the Clerk to arrange.

The Parish Risk Analysis only records the hedge was trimmed in 2013 and 2017 and no comment on the frequency of checks.

#### c. Roads and verges

The Clerk handed out an article that he had written for the Winter Edition of the Dedham Vale Society Newsletter in which he had discussed the damage being done by Sugar Beet lorries at the junction of School Road/Lane and in Water lane. It was agreed that Maria Oats should draft a letter of complaint to BSC.

There was a discussion on offering financial support to the Village Hall Committee in their battle to keep the cross-road drains at the junction of School Road/Lane clear but it was felt any support could create a potential liability for the Council if work was carried out with a disregard to health and safety regulations.

#### d. Superfast Essex

The meeting discussed how they could assist Superfast Essex in evaluating the service provided to the centre of the village

It was agreed that County Broadband's claim to be able to provide a service to 52 homes in the village was not supported by the facts and should be reported to Superfast Essex. Additionally guidance should be sought on the provision of subsidies as certain properties in the village to receive the Gigaclearline were to be subsidised whilst others were regarded as a "commercial" operation.

#### e. Parish Council Website

Lorraine Brooks had been asked about accessibility of the website discussed at the last meeting and would investigate further but the costs involved could be prohibitive for a small parish council.

The Clerk would attempt to find out more on the proposed legislation and its implementation.

#### f. Footpaths

The Clerk reported on his exchange of emails with Laurence Page, Essex CC Highways, in which he had set out the criteria for diverging a footpath, the first of which was the "convenience of the Landowner". The historical importance of a footpath played no part in the decision!

DV & SV Project, who are known to be concerned about the number of footpaths being diverted in the Vale, had been informed of the correspondence.

### 4. Planning

#### a. Application No; 182896 Ridgecrest, School Road, Little Horkesley

It was noted that the Council's concern over the ridge levels of the extension had been passed to CBC.

#### b. Application No: 183109 Westwood Park, London Road, Little Horkesley

It was agreed that the changes were internal and did not materially impact the Grade 2 listed building and no comment was required.

#### c. Application No: 183035 Westwood Park, London Road, Little Horkesley

This application concerned the location of gardener's accommodation and did not impact the main building – no comment required.

#### d. Application No: 182933 Beehive Cottage, Water Lane, Little Horkesley

The approval of this application for a side extension was noted – this application had not been forwarded to the Parish Council by CBC.

### 5. Finance

a. The Quarterly Report showing a current reserve of £7,263.65 with most of the year's expenditure incurred was regarded as satisfactory.

b. The following expenditure was approved:

- J P Services £340 – removal of grass cuttings from the playing field;
- Lt Horkesly PCC £100 – annual donation to Parish Magazine;
- Suffolk CC £175 – annual donation to DV & SV Project;
- Little Horkesley Parish Hall £117 – Village Hall rental.

c. It was noted that the 2019/20 Precept had been forwarded to CBC.

d. EALC had announced the 2019/20 acceptable levels of S137 non-statutory expenditure was £8.12/elector which gives the Council the flexibility to award £8.12 x 161 = £1,307 annually.

**6. Correspondence**

The following correspondence was noted:

- DV & SV AONB December update;
- ECC Your Essex;
- Essex Warbler.

The Clerk expressed concern that the EALC Legal Updates raised issues but did not provide any guidance to parish councils on how to proceed and whether issues raised were relevant to all councils regardless of size.

It was agreed to suggest to EALC on any issue raised they ought to provide much more guidance including the financial cost and those who could advise councils.

**7. Items for the Next Agenda**

Hannah Taylor raised the fact that an individual had been sleeping rough in a car down Water Lane – this had been reported to the Police.

..... (Maria Oats – Chair)

..... (Date)

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 20 February.**