

Little Horkesley Parish Council

meeting Held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 21 November

Present: Maria Oats (Chair)
Chris Exley
Hannah Taylor
Chris Jacobs
Roger Drury (Councillor/Clerk)
with Cllr Nigel Chapman (CBC Rural North) and Michael Scales.

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

1. Minutes

The amended minutes, including the additional comment at Item 3f. Superfast Essex, were approved as an accurate Record.

2. Affordable Homes

It was agreed that Chris Exley would summarise the meeting with the English Rural Housing Association and the Council were invited to read that report and the one on the Hastoe Group before the next meeting. At that point a decision on which to proceed with would be made.

3. Management of the Council

a. It was noted that Andrew Weavers, CBC Monitoring Officer, had confirmed that work done by "Jake" Jacobs did not create a Conflict of Interest for Chris Jacobs.

b. It was agreed that Chris Jacobs, assisted by Maria Oats, should lead on the Emergency Response Assistance Plan although it was expected that all members of the Council would be involved in some capacity.

An amended list of Parish Council Responsibilities attached.

4. Clerk's Report

a. Emergency Response Assistance Plan

The changes at 3 b. were noted.

Maria Oats would review the Emergency Response Assistance Plan letter of Consent Form and the draft Form contained in the minutes of 10 October would not be placed on the Parish website.

b. Data Protection

No response had been received from Came & Co questioning whether the Parish Council insurance would cover fines from the Data Protection Commissioner – the Clerk would chase up.

c. Playing Field

The possible need to replace Jerry Munson as the Parish's grass cutting contractor was discussed - Michael Scales raised one possibility but it was agreed to keep looking to identify alternatives.

The removal of the grass pile remains a problem as licences are needed to remove waste – the Clerk would talk again to CBC Zone 3.

d. Road and Verges

The Council agreed to consider financially supporting the Village Hall Committee in hiring a "gully sucker" periodically to clear drains at the junction of School Road/School Lane but only when the full costs were available.

5. Planning Issues

Cllr. Nigel Chapman reviewed the current state of the Colchester Local Plan where the concept of creating “garden communities” was currently under consideration by the Planning Inspectorate after the Public Enquiry.

A worst case scenario was that the Plan could be rejected in which case an increased housing allocation could be wished on CBC and, given there would be no plan in place, opportunities would be created for Developers to exploit. This would be a threat to all the villages in the Borough with very limited controls on development.

The situation may become clearer before the year end.

6. Finance

a. 2019/20 Budget

It was noted that:

- The marginal increase from the 2018/19 budget could be accounted for by the need to allow for a contested election in May 2019;
- The reduction in Playing Field maintenance reflected the major works done in 2018 e.g.rebarking and hedge trimming;
- The costs of weekly inspection of playground equipment was budgeted for in 2019/20;
- Budgeted figures incorporated a 5% increase except where no increase was felt necessary;
- EALC had been asked whether any funds were available for the maintenance of Parish Council Websites.

It was noted that the reserves 2018/19 to 2019/20 were virtually unchanged at approximately £6,000 and that figure was within the guidelines provided.

It was agreed that the draft 2019/20 budget should be the basis for calculating the 2019/20 precept.

b. The following expenditure was approved:

- Jerry’ Gardening Services £600 – grass cutting;
- J R Drury £124.85 – stationery/postageetc;
- J R Drury £20.00 – RBL Wreath.

7. Correspondence

The following correspondence was noted:

- Essex & Herts Air Ambulance –acknowledgement of donation;
- EALC Strategic Plan 2019/20 Questionnaire –it was noted that the Clerk had responded on behalf of the Council;
- Essex Warbler;
- DV&SV AONB Update October.

8. Items for the Next Agenda

Oats – Chair)

(Maria

..... (Date)

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 December.