

Parish Council of Hempstead
Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Hempstead Parish Council
held at the Village Hall on Thursday September 5th, 2019 at 8 pm

Present: Mr Sean McCarthy (Chairman), Mr David Drane, Miss Diana Frost, Mrs Laura Saxel, Mr Alan Weedon, Mr Mark Welbourn, and the Clerk. District Councillor Alan Storah.

The Parish Council meeting started at 8 pm

50) Apologies for absence: None had been received

51) Reports from District or County Councillors:

District Councillor Alan Storah had sent in a report that had been circulated. It was noted that he had 'called in' the Re-application from Boytons for change of use to nursery provision. The planning Enforcement Officer would not pursue the matter further until the re-application was determined.

He reported on the progress with the Local Plan. In view of the extended consultation the reply from the inspectors was delayed probably until mid-October. Similarly, there was no further updates on the Stansted Airport planning issues.

He also outlined the changes to the Planning Committee process that had been implemented for a trial period.

The Chairman thanked him again for his report and attendance.

52) Minutes of Previous Meeting held Thursday August 1st 2019: After a correction to one sentence the minutes were approved

53) Matters arising not covered elsewhere: There were none

54) Planning

Frenches Farm UTT/19/1987/OP Though there were reservations about sustainability issues, this seemed to be in-fill on some redundant land. At this stage this is only outline permission. Hence, there will be further opportunities to comment on the detail of the application and assess reaction from other agencies such as highways and the local authority. Therefore, it was agreed that no comments would be offered up at this stage.

The Clerk said that there was a small piece of common land approximately 55 by 22 metres opposite Frenches Farm where the application mentioned developing woodland. It was agreed to investigate this further.

The council noted the following three outcomes:

Newlands: UTT/18/3513/ FUL Appeal refused

Anso Farm, New dwelling. UTT/19/1140/FUL Re-application after refusal: Refused

Brookmead UTT/17/1212/HHF Permitted with condition re discharge of water

It was also noted that the address of the of new build at Thyme Cottage was Clove Cottage.

Land South of Limes: UTT/19/1756/FUL Miss Frost declared an interest and took no part in the discussion of this item. As it had been established that the shed was to be painted green and was not obtrusively visible it was not deemed necessary to offer comments on this application.

Boytons reapplication for Nursery UTT/19/1979/FUL: The Clerk had circulated draft comments. The council was still implacably opposed to this application. The transport arrangements altered from the first refused application were even worse, entailing using the small parking area in front of the house for all parking and drop off purposes. Proposals to build passing spaces would completely ruin the rural nature of this protected lane. Calculations for the traffic created were flawed. Comments opposing would be submitted to the effect that it showed a cavalier attitude to the rural nature of the area, the well-being of parents, children, staff and other road users.

Bramley Hollow: UTT/19/2082/OP. The Council decided that it had no objection in principle to this small-scale development subject to certain measures to preserve the rural character of the area and mitigate the impact on neighbours. These include the minimum felling of vegetation, including trees and adequate replacement of screening. Windows should not overlook neighbours. The proposed communal wildlife area should be protected from future development. An acoustic barrier fence should be erected, and control of working hours agreed to mitigate disruption to neighbours on what will be a long process of demolition and building.

This is acknowledged to be a most dangerous road area with a blind summit and hollow and is already a matter of continuing concern to the Council. This is only reinforced by the traffic survey presented, which shows unsafe high speeds. Given the increase of vehicles this application will mean, together with the three new properties nearby at Ruses, that there is urgent need for action to install a speed limit.

55) Defibrillator: The clerk said that he had still not yet contacted the two additional volunteers for first responder training but that he hoped to do so soon. The Chairman agreed to contact Community Heartbeat to press this forward. The Clerk had again contacted the Charity about a promised new box that would make access easier for checking but there was no progress yet.

56) Correspondence New nature reserve near Bullsbridge. The Chair had replied to an appeal by Emma Horton of Walden Countryside to support a grant application to help in establishing a small nature reserve near Bullsbridge Farm. He encouraged others to respond.

57) Highways and Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way

Footpaths had now been cut and several residents had commented on the improvement. It was decided that the Clerk should write to Councillor Bentley at ECC passing on the thanks from the Council and residents and expressing the wish that this improvement in services continues. Mr Drane continues to chase the repair of footpath bridges and road surfaces.

Local Highway Panel: Still no firm date had been received for the 40mph zone though notification of the 40mph limit and tidying up descriptions of the 30mph limit had gone out to press.

58) Environment:

The Borough. The Chairman outlined concerns about this area of the village that has become overgrown and being used as a dumping ground for adjacent properties. Some parts are used as an access to properties. There is a need to take care of it by agreeing a sensible management plan so that it can be used as a footpath. Mr McCarthy agreed as a first step to contact the County Definitive Map manager to discuss its status and possible changes.

Pond at top of Church Hill. This is another area that has become neglected and badly maintained. It was agreed that the clerk would write to Tim Sills proposing that the Parish Council possibly becomes involved in some clearance activities.

59) Finance: In view of the ever-increasing workload it was agreed to increase the Clerk's hours by 1 hour from September 1st and review further in October.

The potential grant from Councillor Storah has been clarified as £500. The Council now needs to discuss the best use of this money.

60) Communications: Miss Frost had contacted several providers of websites that allowed content to be up-loaded. There were either no replies or they proved more costly than the current arrangements.

Google Calendar was being considered for the front page as well as bookings calendar for the Village Hall and as a useful planning tool. The Clerk is currently working on a calendar of tasks to show the Council's work through the year and ensure timely responses and actions.

It was agreed that we probably need to retain Brian Kitchen but review his workload and remuneration. It was still a priority to install a search box to navigate the website and this is currently being worked on.

61) Councillor Vacancy: This matter is still ongoing.

62) Neighbourhood watch: The response is still limited despite paragraphs in the Ambo and newsletter with few takers to join the scheme. Mrs Saxel said that we need to keep going perhaps with presence at community events. Stickers and notices for doors will be ordered and it may be worth organising a door to door event.

63) VE Day 2020. Discussions on this issue would continue over the coming meetings.

The meeting ended at 9.25pm

Future Meetings: Tuesday 1st October 8.15, Thursday 7th November 8pm and Tuesday 3rd December at 8.15pm, all in the Village Hall.