

## PARISH OF HEMPSTEAD

### Minutes of the Meeting of Hempstead Parish Council held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Present:** Nick Turkentine (Chair), Nicola Davies, David Drane, Diana Frost, James Nicholson, Mark Welbourn, Julie Wilson and the Clerk.

**The Parish Council meeting started at 7:30pm**

**24/001 Apologies for Absence** County Councillor Foley and District Councillor Tayler

**24/002 Public Forum** No members of the public were in attendance.

**24/003 Declarations of Interest** None

**24/004 Reports from District and/or County Councillors** District Councillor Tayler had emailed a report prior to the meeting, which included information on the Local Plan and social isolation in the District.

**24/005 Minutes of Previous Meeting of Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March** were approved and signed by the Chair

**24/006 Finance**

**Item 1** – the Clerk presented the draft Financial Statement 2023/24, which summarised the income and expenditure for the year.

**Item 2** – Ross Midgley had once again agreed to carry out the governance review of the Parish Council. Councillors unanimously approved the 2024 Asset Register, Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Exemption Certificate and the draft Financial Statement for 2023/24. These were then signed by the Chair and Clerk.

**Item 3** – the following regular payments were unanimously approved:

<b>Standing Orders</b>	Rebecca Cox – Salary	£339.56	per month
<b>Community Heartbeat</b>	Defibrillator Management	£198.00	per annum
<b>CPRE</b>	Subscription	£36.00	per annum
<b>RCCE</b>	Subscription	£44.10	per annum
<b>100 Parishes Society</b>	Subscription	£10.00	per annum
<b>Essex Heritage</b>	Donation	£25.00	per annum
<b>Unity Trust</b>	Service Charge	£76.00	per annum
<b>Grass Cutting</b>	Payments to Outdoor Jack	Up to approved £3400 budget	

**Item 4** – Councillors unanimously approved payment of the EALC affiliation fee for 2024/25 of £152.28 and the Chair signed invoices presented: £152.28 for EALC and £44.10 for RCCE.

**24/007 Planning** no new planning applications.

**Thatch Cottage:** UTT/24/0280/DFO. AWAITING DECISION

**Barns at Little Smiths Green Farm:** UTT/23/2576/OP. AWAITING DECISION

**Wayside:** UTT/24/0164/HHF. APPROVED

**Shepherds Cottage:** UTT/24/0075/HHF. APPROVED

**Barns South of Conifers House:** UTT/23/2821/FUL. WITHDRAWN

**Enforcement** – it was agreed that the Clerk to write to Uttlesford Planning Enforcement requesting an update on Hempstead's open cases (Boyton's Farm and Fairview Bungalow).

**24/008 Correspondence** Essex Village of the Year and Rural Community Awards 2024 – Diana Frost noted that the Village Hall would be nominated. It was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council would not nominate Hempstead in the Village of the Year category.

**24/009 Annual Report** A draft had been circulated to Councillors. Would require updating regarding the bus service, but could then be finalised for publishing. The Clerk to action.

**24/010 Speedwatch** VASI sign replacement. Clerk had investigated cost of replacing the current signs with Speed Indicator Devices (SID) and had found information on Essex Highways website regarding requirements for a Parish financed scheme. The Clerk to obtain further quotes and investigate insurance impacts. Julie Wilson to ask a village electrician to look at the currently non-working VASI sign on High Street. It was also agreed to further consider financing for a SID either through crowdfunding or fundraising activities, or by including in the budget for 2025/26.

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**24/011 Highways Representative Visit** Following discussion on the lack of response from Highways regarding any of the issues raised at the visit on 14<sup>th</sup> March, except the Local Highways Panel and possible speed surveys, it was agreed that Diana Frost would write to County Councillor Foley with a list of concerns that need to be addressed, on top of the road surface and flooding issues, including the re-painting of white lines where they have worn away, and the replacement of “Hempstead” and speed limit signage. The work that the Parish Council and village volunteers undertake in Hempstead would also be highlighted, with a request for support for doing things that is not in the Parish Council’s ability.

### **24/012 Reports from Councillors Highways and Rights of Way**

Footpath Cutting – The Clerk and David Drane had received a quote from Country Gardens & Landscapes for £1977.24 to carry out an initial cut of village footpaths. It was agreed that as only £1000 is in the budget for a footpath cut, David Drane would revert to Country Gardens & Landscapes with a request to reduce cutting requirements to fit within the £1000 budget, and to commence with cut as soon as possible.

Footpaths crossing fields – the Clerk to write to landowners asking when footpaths are to be cut/delineated to ensure users keep to the correct paths.

**Flooding** No response has yet been received following the Highways representative visit in March. Noted that Anso Road drains appear to be full to the brim with debris/mud.

**Health and Wellbeing** Hempstead’s bus service at risk of sudden withdrawal of operator, but Essex County Council have undertaken to provide a service for peak and school buses. Confirmation of timetable and further information to hopefully be provided shortly.

**Neighbourhood Watch** Recent updates have given monthly figures on local crimes (Thaxted/Clavering area in which Hempstead falls), which included 28 violent or sexual offences and 10 burglaries. Alert has also been issued regarding fake QR codes being placed on parking meters in car parks.

**Policing** The Chair had enquired with the Police about visiting Hempstead. They are happy to arrange if there is certainty that people would attend. It was agreed not to pursue a visit at this time, but give it some consideration.

### **Environment**

Blackwater and Pant restoration plan – a fluvial audit by Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust (more information to come).

Stansted Airport – the airport are looking to remove the current restrictions on night flights and a consultation has been opened. It was agreed that the Parish Council would write a letter of concern to submit to the consultation and that parishioners would be encouraged to respond as well. Mark Welbourn to draft the letter to be sent out by the Clerk. Diana Frost to share the consultation to residents via the Newsletter circulation list.

Tree Survey – carried out on 9<sup>th</sup> April (second visit due on 18<sup>th</sup> April). Awaiting report, but immediate action was required for a tree in the churchyard (raised directly with Meryl Haylock).

Littlebury Energy Project – Diana Frost attended an information event, which was very informative but it was felt the project was not directly applicable to Hempstead at the current time.

Village upkeep – the following actions will be required over the coming months, for which volunteers would be sought: painting of the bus shelter, cleaning of village railings in preparation for Diana Frost to paint and cleaning of 40mph sign on Bumpstead Road (David Drane volunteered to clean).

**Communications** Noted that the Parish Council page of the website needs updating, which is being actioned.

**Village Hall** The MacMillan Spring Fayre coming up on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Painting of the inside of the hall to start at the end of May.

### **24/013 Matters Arising requiring decisions, to be included on the next Agenda**

The Bluebell Inn – to discuss the Historic England guide to enforcement action to save historic buildings.

**24/014 Future Meeting Dates:** Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May at 7:30pm for Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> May at 8pm for the Annual Parish meeting. Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> June at 7:30pm.

The meeting ended at 9:34pm