

HORMEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Hormead Parish Council Meeting Thursday 18 July 2013 at 8 pm in The Meads Pavilion

PRESENT: Cllr Jayne Denham - Chairman (JD); Cllr Dave Baseley (DB), Cllr Robb Denham (RED); Cllr David Ginn (DEG), Cllr Elaine Harding (EH); Cllr John Kilby (JK)

9 members of the public.

In attendance: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Council

- 13.137 Apologies for absence** **ACTION**
1. **Councillors:** None
2. **Others:** PCSO Amanda Higham
- 13.138 Declarations of Interest**
Cllr D Baseley: Chairman of VHMC; Cllr Kilby Treasurer of VHMC.
- 13.139 To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 20 June 2013**
Cllr Baseley and Cllr Ginn both said they would abstain because they were not present at the June meeting. Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on 20 June 2013 be accepted as a true and accurate record.** **Clerk/JD**
The Chairman signed the Minutes at the end of the meeting.
- 13.140 Casual Vacancy** **Clerk**
The Chairman reported that no one had applied to be co-opted.
- 13.141 PCSO Report.**
PCSO Higham reported via the Clerk that the only crime reported in the Parish since the June meeting was the stealing of the Meads gate security lock.
- 13.142 Register of Interests: update** **DEG
JK
Clerk**
The Clerk said that he had not yet received updated forms from Cllr Kilby and Cllr Ginn. Cllr Kilby said his could be seen on the EHC website. The Chairman said that councillors had an obligation to send a copy to the Clerk for the Parish Council's website.
- 13.143 Chairman's Announcements: None.**

The Chairman then proposed to bring agenda item 13.151, Neighbourhood Plan, forward to this point in the meeting, and to adjourn for an open session so that parishioners could engage in a discussion. It was unanimously **RESOLVED that 13.151 be brought forward and that the meeting be suspended to allow public discussion on the Neighbourhood Plan.**

The meeting was suspended at 8.15pm
- 13.151 Neighbourhood Plan** (in open discussion)
Comprehensive notes of the ensuing open discussion are recorded at the end of these Minutes.

The meeting was resumed at 9.10pm.
- 13.144 PLANNING**
1. Applications:
- 3/13/0984/FP & 0985/LB Gardeners Cottage, Hare Street:** Erection of oak-framed orangery **Clerk**
NO COMMENTS
- 3/13/1003/FP & 1004/LB White House Lodge, Hare Street:** Change of use of outbuilding to residential annexe: *On the grounds of development by stealth, the Council raised an* **Clerk**
OBJECTION TO THE APPLICATION

2. Decision Notices

3/13/0837/FP Bradbury Farm, Hare Street: Front porch extension: APPROVED

3/13/0586/FP Stonebury Farm, Hare Street: Change of use of agricultural land and buildings to open and covered storage – retrospective: DECISION AWAITED

3. Other Planning matters: None

13.145 FINANCE

1. The report of the Council's finances for 28 May to 28 June was received (Appendix A)

Finance Summary:	£
Opening available balance 28/5/13:	9,997.59
Plus income to 28/6/13:	2,347.80
Less expenditure to 28/6/13:	<u>3,394.93</u>
Balance available to Council 28/6/13	8,950.46
Unpresented cheques as at 28/6/13:	<u>275.00</u>
Bank balance (reconciled with statement #343 of 28th June)	<u>9,225.46</u>

Following a vote it was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Accounts Statement be accepted.** Clerk

2. The Clerk explained that the insurance premium had to be increased because of the under-valuation of the Meads buildings, the rebuilding costs having not been assessed for some years. The premium was, however, still £200 cheaper than AON's renewal quote (which included the under-valued buildings). He reminded Council that the policy was for one year only and could be reviewed in 2014. Clerk

3. The list of orders for payment was presented for authorisation to be signed (Appendices B1 and B2) and it was unanimously **RESOLVED to approve all the invoices presented for payment.** It was agreed to defer the signing of cheques to the end of the meeting. Clerk

13.146 Correspondence

The list of correspondence as it appeared on the agenda was noted with brief comments on certain items not covered elsewhere on the agenda. There was a discussion on the request from Jo McNamara for support for Leapfrogs' application to EHC for a grant for facility improvements; it was **AGREED that the Clerk send a letter of support.** Cllr Ginn suggested a small donation be considered and that it be included on the Agenda for the September meeting. Clerk

13.147 Special Interest Matters

1. **Village Hall.** Cllr Baseley reported that Minutes of the June VHMC meeting had been distributed, that a key meeting was scheduled for the following Monday and a report would follow, including a decision regarding VAT regulations. He also said tenders were being sought from five companies. DB

2. **Highways.** The Clerk reported that it is unknown when resurfacing of the remainder of the B1368 between Hare Street and Puckeridge will be completed, but probably not until next financial year. Clerk

3. **Footpaths and Byways.** Cllr R Denham reported that the appeal for a judicial review against the Modification Order decision for Hormead 33, 34 & 35 has been dropped; their status will therefore remain unchanged and the matter is closed. RED/
Clerk

Cllr Kilby reported that Greenwich Meridian Trail stickers have appeared on the Hertfordshire Way posts. He explained there are 4 books covering the length of the trail, part of which involves the Hertfordshire Way.

4. **Website.** The Clerk had nothing to report Clerk

	5. Parishioners' concerns. The Clerk reported that following a parishioner's concerns that leaflets purporting to be from South Anglia Housing were left on car windscreens in the Faylands car park, South Anglia Housing could trace no knowledge of the leaflets, but were making enquiries.	Clerk/ RED
13.148	The Meads and Pavilion	
	<u>1. The Meads generally.</u>	
	1. Cllr R Denham reported that complaints had been received that the For Hire sign cannot be easily seen from the road and that it should be re-sited. Cllr Baseley said it could not go outside the hedge and it could be subject to planning permission. Cllr Harding felt there was too much information on the sign and that it should simply say For Hire, plus a contact number. Also that two signs forming a triangle that could be read from both directions would be better seen by passing motorists. The Clerk said he would check planning regs re size of notices.	Clerk
	2. The Clerk reported that he was awaiting notification that the RPII report had been completed.	Clerk
	3. Regarding the stolen gate lock, Cllr Baseley offered to weld the lock on to the barrier so as to make it secure.	DB
	4. Cllr R Denham noted that one of the Beware signs along the western boundary had been knocked over again; Cllr Baseley said he would put it back.	DB
	<u>2. Small Capital Project Grant.</u> The Clerk reported that the Council did not appear on EHC's recent grants list and he therefore believed the council had not been awarded a grant this time. The next round will be in December.	Clerk
	<u>3. Roofing repairs.</u> The Clerk had circulated a quote from builder Jason Willicombe for £585 for repairing the leaking roof and replacing the broken terrace roofing with new high-impact corrugated upvc. Following a vote it was unanimously RESOLVED to repair the roof leak and replace the terrace roofing as quoted.	Clerk
	<u>4. Refurbishment of parish benches and notice boards.</u> The Clerk reported that he has yet to discuss Cllr Baseley's assessment with Stephen Ruff and to do arrange for the work to be done. Cllr Baseley said wood preservative should be used rather than yacht varnish.	Clerk
	<u>5. River bank fencing.</u> Cllr R Denham reported that following the Risk Assessment seminar he had attended with the Clerk, another RA needs to be undertaken. The insurer takes the position that if there is a "natural barrier" (ie vegetation/hedging), then fencing is not necessary.	RED/ Clerk
	<u>6. Feasibility study for new Meads pavilion: Cllr Ginn.</u> Nothing to report.	DEG
13.149	Risk Assessment: Review yet to be done.	RED/Clerk
13.150	Asset register: Ongoing	RED/Clerk
13.151	Neighbourhood Plan: Discussed following 13.143 above; report below.	
13.152	Parish Newsletter: It was agreed to not pursue this.	
13.153	Help for Heroes events: The Clerk reported that notices for the Bear-B-Q and Mini County Fair had been posted on the parish notice boards. The sandwich boards requested by Sheila Beetles had not gone ahead due to lack of definitive information.	
13.154	Clerk's holiday. These dates were noted for councillors' information.	
13.155	Urgent matters not elsewhere on the agenda: None	
13.156	Items for future agendas	
	1. Feasibility study for new Meads pavilion: Cllr Ginn	DEG
	2. Other items for future consideration: No items were suggested	

13.157 Date of next Parish Council meeting:

Thursday 19 September 2013 at 8pm in the Meads pavilion.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.00 pm.

Signed **Dated**.....

Notes of the Neighbourhood Plan discussion held during the meeting are appended to these Minutes.

Notes regarding a Neighbourhood Plan, as discussed at the Hormead Parish Council meeting in the open session under agenda item 13.151, 18 July 2013.

Participating: Cllr J Denham (JD), Cllr D Baseley (DB), Cllr R Denham (RED), Cllr D Ginn (DEG), Cllr E Harding (EH), Cllr J Kilby (JK), Mr E Fremantle (EF), Mrs S Fremantle (SF), Mrs M Kilby (MK), Mr H Medicott (HM), Mrs N Medicott (NM)

- RED** Following our invitation to our neighbouring parish councils to consider joining together to produce a single plan for a cluster of parishes, only Anstey has responded, and they have declined the offer. It is therefore down to Hormead to either join with Buntingford Town Council or go it alone, - or to take a third option, which is to do nothing. **ACTION**
- As well as ourselves, two other parishes - Cottered, and Chipping & Buckland - who seem to have a better understanding than some of what's going on, have so far attended BTC's joint meetings, but none have yet signed up to join with BTC.
- We will need a public meeting to see whether residents want a Plan. Hopefully by then, interested people will be identified or come forward to be part of the process.
- We must start now otherwise we will be too late to join BTC (if that's considered the best option) and in which case we'll be on our own.
- The Parish Council has a duty to hold discussions on the wisdom of a Neighbourhood Plan and these should be in the form of full parish meetings. People are here tonight to express their views on this. **HPC**
- JD** We need a steering group and we need a lot more parishioners involved.
- RED** Four so far have "signed up", but more are interested and we will follow them up. **RED/EF**
- There is a BTC deadline: the "Neighbourhood" area we are to be in must be defined by the end of October. However, if we join with them we will still retain our own input; if not, we are on our own.
- Sarah Fremantle is very knowledgeable on this subject and is our guide.
- SF** There are pros and cons:
- There is a price tag; there is a lot of work to do; there needs to be enthusiasm and broad input so the task is not overpowering.
 - A Plan is essential as a defence mechanism to protect our community. BTC invited Jonathan Ling, who is very well informed on these matters, to address one of their meetings. The set-up cost for BTC could be £20k, which they will pay for if we go in with them. We would be left to pay for our own meetings, and the printing and delivery of the necessary flyers, which might be in the region of £500 to £1000.
 - The Parish would also have to pay for its own referendum.
 - EHC have not yet published its own plan.
- MK** That's not expected to be out until 2015.
- RED** EHC has started populating its website; there are 9 sections; we are in section 3. They have a "traffic light" system for things they know about so far. We are at "RED" – ie they are not currently looking at us for major development projects.
- SF** So that means we'll be the dump for travellers.
- JK** What's the term of the plan?
- RED** 2031 – ie 20 years from its inception in 2011.
- JK** Nothing has changed in the last 20 years, and nothing will change in the next 20. The parish might not want better bus services, lighting etc.
- SF** You can't say things will not or cannot change!
- MK** Joining BTC, couldn't they (EHC) just see Hormead as part of Buntingford and simply fill in the fields in between?
- RED** That could happen anyway, and without us having any say at all.

- HM** What other advantages are there of going in with BTC over the alternatives?
- RED** Mainly to keep out of EHC's clutches, and a referendum would cost a lot of money. The cost would be based on a parish headcount, and we have approximately 570 electors in a total population of 770.
- EF** BTC has a lot of people who can get this thing on the road. We would still have work to do, but not nearly so much as going it alone.
- RED** We would still have to do our own Plan. Also, we don't know what our neighbours in Brent Pelham and Furneux Pelham etc are doing
- JK** Has anyone asked?
- SF** I've tried but haven't got any answers yet. **SF**
 There's also a cautionary note: in going in with BTC, we wouldn't want to be overtaken by them, but by being there we would know what's going on.
- RED** The village school is becoming a feeder for Buntingford schools. That might grow the population wanting to move here for the first school side.
- EF** We are not an island and we have to take account of our neighbours; we are obliged to do so because anything here could affect them. The Plan is almost a "Domesday Book" assessing amenities, lifestyle, fire stations, hospitals etc – you can't just get hung up on affordable housing.
- RED** The infrastructure is not here yet, but this is virgin territory for it. A Plan can only be done with the backing of the people here.
- NM** Isn't there a connection to the Plan for a proposed upgraded A120 to be extended from the M11 to Baldock, a road right across here?
- SF** A mixed group of housing should be what the Plan aims for, not all of one sort.
- RED** At the moment there is an exception to the amount of affordable housing that has to be incorporated into each development: in a development of under 11 houses, no affordable housing is required.
- SF** But affordable housing *is* required – and shops and other community amenities.
- RED** We need to hold a public meeting in the second half of September. So we will be contacting a lot of people because everyone needs to be involved. **HPC**
 The Parish Council can help lead and set things up, but it is for parishioners to be involved at the forefront; it's not only a Parish Council project.
- SF** BTC has a group of 21, but we don't need as many, I think. Can we check? **RED**
- EF** This is what we need to do:
 1. Have a meeting; publicise it well – Newsletter, flyers etc; encourage everyone to come along; get them to ask questions; get someone knowledgeable in to answer them and explain all the facts and implications; then vote whether to join in with BTC.
 2. Then ask people to come forward to join in. The Parish Council can steer it from there.
- SF** Get Jonathan Ling to come and talk to us – Eddie Plume has already been approached by RED and Jonathan Ling is willing.
- RED** We need to get an initial information leaflet out to identify people's interests, eg housing, transportation etc. The August Newsletter deadline is about now and we need to put an advert in it. This should be followed up with a flyer in September. **RED**
- DEG** The first decision has to be: Do we go in with BTC? All other decisions follow on from that.
- JD** But parishioners need to be fully informed before they can decide whether BTC is the best route.

- SF** A few things to consider:
 1. Do we need a Neighbourhood Plan at all? **EF/RED**
 2. Do we go in with BTC or take an alternative approach?
 3. Can we shake up the neighbouring parishes again? **SF/CM**
 Then: Once things are rolling, people may wake up and want to jump in.
- RED** Once in with BTC, there's still a get-out – but it's doubtful whether it's worthwhile.
- JK** People may not *want* to change.
- SF** Things have *already* changed; there is a now a presumption *in favour* of sustainable development.
- JK** But very little development has taken place in the last 20 years and the next 20 will be the same. Nothing will change; therefore a Plan is unnecessary.
- SF** Have you not read the material I circulated? Change could happen whether you want it or not.
- MK** It's good to know what you want in your village, whether it's part of the Plan or not, but you wouldn't want to spend a lot of money just to find out.
- JD** We need to discuss this with all parishioners.
- HM** Costs are very high: is there any help? Are grants available?
- SF/EF** BTC have applied for a grant.
- JK** But nothing will change; we don't need a plan.
- RED** But this time last year there weren't three major developments in Buntingford. It could be that next year the developers will be looking here.
- JK** The scenario for building behind the school is a non-starter. How can we have a plan when we don't know the rules?
- RED** It's the *presumption in favour of development*, as Buntingford has found out!
- DB** We have a duty to inform; initial reaction will be small. But the clearest information must be given to parishioners in the most simple and concise form possible.

 Let's vote on who's going to do the informing: how/when/why as an initial step to a public meeting as soon as possible thereafter. Can we vote on who's going to do it?
- EF** I'm happy to have some input, but the information should not be too specific – just let people know what the meeting will discuss and what everyone will be asked to vote on.
- RED** A lot has been discussed tonight. There are four people around the table so far; EF and RED will put some words together. **EF/RED**
- SF** It's important this is done by parishioners, with the support of the Parish Council.
- RED** Then it's agreed: EF and RED will take it forward: **EF/RED**
 1. Contact Jonathan Ling to check his availability in the second half of September.
 2. Then arrange a public meeting, details to be advertised/flyers in the Newsletter.
 3. Interested parties to be contacted and kept abreast by email – if you are interested, please make sure we have your email address.
- SF** More information can be obtained on the web by googling Neighbourhood Plans.

The public discussion was closed at 9.10pm and the Parish Council Meeting reconvened.