

HORMEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Hormead Parish Council Meeting Thursday 20 June 2013 at 8 pm in The Church Room

PRESENT: Chairman Cllr Jayne Denham (JD); Cllr Robb Denham (RED); Cllr Elaine Harding (EH); Cllr John Kilby (JK)

Clerk: Colin Marks

3 members of the public.

- 13.116 Apologies for absence** **ACTION**
1. Councillors: Cllr David Ginn (business), Cllr Dave Baseley (holiday)
2. Others: PCSO Amanda Higham
- 13.117 Declarations of Interest**
Cllr Kilby as a VHMC trustee and officer.
- 13.118 To approve Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting 16 May 2013**
Cllr Kilby said he would abstain. When asked why, seeing that he had not submitted comments for revisions during the two-week period since the draft was sent to councillors, he claimed that the Minutes were not prepared independently by the Clerk. The Clerk strongly refuted the accusation, asserting that the Minutes were his own. Cllr R Denham said the motion on the table was whether the Minutes were an accurate record of the proceedings and that is what councillors were to vote on. Following a vote it was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual HPC Meeting on 16 May 2013 be accepted as a true and accurate record.** **Clerk**
The Chairman signed the Minutes at the end of the meeting.
- 13.119 To approve Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting 16 May 2013**
Following a vote (Cllr Kilby abstaining, as above) it was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Full Parish Council Meeting on 16 May 2013 be accepted as a true and accurate record.** **Clerk**
The Chairman signed the Minutes at the end of the meeting.
- 13.120 Casual Vacancy** **Clerk**
The Chairman reported that no one had yet applied to be co-opted.
- 13.121 PCSO Report.**
PCSO Higham reported via the Clerk that no crimes had been recorded in the Parish since the May meeting.
- 13.122 Register of Interests: update** **DEG**
The Clerk said that he had still not yet received Cllr Ginn's updated form, and that he had not received from EHC a copy of Cllr Kilby's form that had been sent directly to the Monitoring Officer. Cllr Kilby was asked why he would not give the Clerk a copy; he replied that he would contact EHDC and ask them to send it to the Clerk. The Chairman asked the Clerk to check with EHDC whether it is permissible for councillors to attend meetings when no DPI register is on the website. **JK**
Clerk
- 13.123 Chairman's Announcements:** None.
- 13.124 PLANNING**
1. Applications:
3/13/0837/FP Bradbury Farm, Hare Street: Front porch extension **NO COMMENTS**

2. Decision Notices

3/13/0525/FP 1 & 2 Vine Cottages, Hare Street: Two storey rear extensions and storm porches
APPROVED, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

3/13/0456/FP Wildacre Log Yard, Wildacre Nursery: Erection of a 1.5 storey 3 bedroom dwelling
REFUSED: WITHIN EHLP RURAL AREA

3/13/0669/FP The Willows, Hare Street: First floor extension and new roof over garage, utility room and porch:
APPROVED, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

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

13.125 FINANCE

1. The report of the Council's finances for 30 April to 30 May was received (Appendix A)

Finance Summary:	£
Opening available balance 30/4/13:	11,586.49
Plus income to 30/5/13:	65.00
Less expenditure to 30/5/13:	<u>1,653.90</u>
Available to Council	9,997.59
Unpresented cheques as at 30/5/13:	<u>259.00</u>
Bank balance (reconciled with statement #342 of 30th May)	<u>10,256.59</u>

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

Clerk

2. The list of orders for payment was presented for authorisation to be signed (Appendices B1 and B2). There was a discussion on the Base Development invoice for the "Meads For Hire" sign, concerning its siting. It was agreed to pay the invoice but to discuss re-siting and amending the sign with Cllr Baseley. It was then 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/
JD

3. The Clerk explained that the approval and signing of Section 2 of the Annual Return, the Annual Governance Statement 2012/13, was required for the audit. The governance criteria had been met and approved and Minuted in March (13.048.3) and May (13.105.3), therefore the signing of Section 2 was confirmation of already approved procedures. There was a discussion regarding the presentation and interpretation of the Meads costs, which Cllr Kilby disagreed with whilst accepting these were based on his own calculations of HHFC additional costs for reimbursement. Following a vote of 3:1 it was **RESOLVED that Section 2 of the Annual Return, the Annual Governance Statement, be approved and signed.** Cllr Kilby requested it be recorded that he disagreed with interpretation of the Meads costs. Section 2 was signed at the end of the meeting.

Clerk/
JD

13.126 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. In response to a question, the Clerk said that the Minutes of the 2012 Annual Parish Meeting were not on the website at the moment, and as they are not Parish Council Minutes, they are actually not a Parish Council matter.

Clerk

13.127 Special Interest Matters

1. **Village Hall.** Cllr Baseley was absent and there was no report. It was noted that draft Minutes of the June VHMC meeting had been received.

DB

It was also noted that the VHMC are considering a village fete in 2014 with the involvement of the Parish Council and the Church.

2. Highways. The Clerk reported that work on the repair work to the B1038 where it was caving into the Hormead Brook, just east of the Three Tuns, was finally underway. **Clerk**

3. Footpaths and Byways. Cllr R Denham reported that the reinstatement of most of the footpaths and bridleways had been completed. The exception is the Hertfordshire Way that runs diagonally across Faylands field, which has been put down to grass. He confirmed that the route must remain diagonally across the field and could only be changed by a court order. Cllr Denham also expressed thanks to the landowners who had reinstated paths across their land. **RED/
Clerk**

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

5. Parishioners' concerns. It was reported that letters have been posted saying the public car park behind Faylands Cottages cannot be used unless you are a Faylands resident. It was agreed the Clerk would investigate and that Cllr R Denham would try to get a copy of the letter. **Clerk/
RED**

13.128 The Meads and Pavilion

1. The Meads generally.

1. Cllr R Denham reported that the Meads barrier had been left open the previous day and that the combination lock had been stolen. The Clerk said he had reported the matter to the police. Another combination lock with a different code has replaced the stolen one. Users have been made aware. The new "Meads For Hire" sign was discussed under 13.125.2 above. **Clerk
DB**

2. The Clerk reported that, as requested, Fields in Trust had looked at the Meads deeds and that they confirmed the Meads did not have charitable status as a result of the QEII Jubilee Dedication. Their Deputy Chief Exec had also looked at the 1949 and 1950 deeds and could see no reference to a trust being created, but he said that, although he had considerable experience in the field, he was not a lawyer and that independent legal advice should be sought if a definitive legal position was required. **Clerk**

3. The Clerk reported that the annual RPII inspection of the play area would be undertaken in the coming month.

2. Small Capital Project Grant. The Clerk reported that he had applied for a grant for repairs to the Meads car park, the disabled entrance, and the roof repairs. DC Rose Cheswright had kindly endorsed the application.

3. Roofing repairs. Cllr Baseley had provided an estimate of approximately £200. It was agreed to ask him to formalise this upon his return. **DB/
Clerk**

4. Kitchen. The Chairman and Cllr Harding reported they had spring-cleaned the kitchen area. New cutlery was needed and it was agreed that, under the Clerk's authority, Cllrs JD and EH purchase some good-value cutlery from Matalan or similar. Cllr R Denham proposed a vote of thanks to Cllrs Denham and Harding for their work, which was agreed. **JD/EH/
Clerk**

5. River bank fencing. Quotes for various types of fencing were discussed and there was disagreement as to the necessity for it, considering the cost. The majority of councillors thought that warning signs were not sufficient and that there should be fencing of some description. The Clerk reminded Council of its duty of care, particularly towards hirers of the Meads. Cllr R Denham proposed a vote on the principle of the need for fencing and to ask the Clerk to continue to look at quotes and options and to check with the Council's insurer. This was agreed, but not voted on. **Clerk**

6. Refurbishment of parish benches and notice boards. Following Stephen Ruff's quotes and Cllr Baseley's recommendations, it was agreed that the Clerk would follow up the matter with them to get the work done. **DB/Clerk/
SR**

13.129 Neighbourhood Plan

1 & 3. Cllr R Denham reported on the meeting hosted by Buntingford Town Council that he and Edward Fremantle had attended. He said it had been explained that if Hormead were to go in with Buntingford it would not lose its autonomy over the Parish Plan. It was also revealed that BTC would cover the majority of costs involved. If the Parish goes it alone, it would have to cover the mandatory inspections and referendum costs, which could be in the region of £6,500. There was to be another meeting at BTC the following week.

EHC have not yet produced their own plan and so there are no points of reference from them.

The deadline for incorporating into Buntingford Community Area is 31st October. After that the Parish would be on its own, but at the moment the Parish is not tied to BTC and can withdraw if it does not wish to continue discussing the option. The Parish could still withdraw after the October deadline but would then have to bear its own costs.

Cllr Harding said the feeling amongst residents at the Annual Parish Meeting was one of opposition to joining with Buntingford. She expressed concern that if the Parish Council is now in favour of joining BTC, irrespective of the reasons, it will get blamed for going against the expressed public will. Cllr R Denham replied that Edward Fremantle had also attended the Buntingford meeting and Sarah Fremantle and Stuart Taylor, although unable to attend, had been kept informed and were researching possible avenues.

It was made clear that before any decision could be made, a questionnaire would have to be sent to all residents and then a referendum held at a public meeting. This will have to be progressed with some diligence.

2. The Clerk said he had still not received any direct response to the letter sent to the neighbouring Parish Councils of Anstey, Braughing, Brent Pelham & Meesden, and Furneux Pelham enquiring if they had any interest in joining together to create a single plan for a cluster of parishes.

**RED/
Clerk**

Clerk

13.130 H&H newsletter

To be followed up at a later meeting.

DB

13.131 Insurance

The Clerk reported the new policy is in place and a review of the valuation of assets is still being undertaken.

Clerk

13.132 Help for Heroes

1. The Clerk reported that some photos of the pit-stop lunch at the Farm Shop & Tea Room were on the website and that more will be added shortly. He also read a report of the event from Sheila Beetles. It was a tremendously successful afternoon and several members of the team said the reception at Hare Street was the best one they had received on their journey from Edinburgh to London.

2. Sheila Beetles made a request for the Parish Council to provide some large signs or notice boards for the next Help for Heroes event, a Bear-B-Q on 20th July at the Beehive from 2 pm to 12 midnight. There's also a mini Country Fair at the March Hare Tea Room in the afternoon. It was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Sheila to ascertain exactly what is required.

Clerk

13.133 Urgent matters not elsewhere on the agenda: None

13.134 Items for future agendas

1. Feasibility study for new Meads pavilion: Cllr Ginn

2. Other items for future consideration: No items were suggested.

**DEG
ALL**

Adjournment for public comments

It was **RESOLVED that the meeting be suspended to allow public comments.**

Linda Stratton said that at the Annual Parish Meeting it was clear that when considering a Neighbourhood Plan, parishioners didn't want to join Buntingford. However, the problem is they are so expensive that small parishes can't afford to go it alone. Cllr R Denham replied that would be the advantage of joining BTC. Cllr Harding said there were concerns that Hormead would simply be swallowed up with Buntingford. Cllr Kilby commented that Buntingford have no control over their own planning and therefore won't be able to influence East Herts plans.

Teresa Marks said that, although she was not a parishioner, she was the Clerk's wife, and had attended every HPC meeting for the past 18 months and wished to make an official complaint. She said that that she had witnessed regular harassment and bullying towards the Clerk, as had happened that evening. She said that the Council was the Clerk's employer, that it was becoming an employment issue, and it had to stop. She also said there was an incident earlier in the evening when the Clerk was setting up the room for the meeting and no councillors were present: a parishioner, still in the meeting, confronted the Clerk in a very threatening and aggressive manner. Again, as an employer, the Council could not allow that to happen while the Clerk was on Parish Council business.

The Chairman asked the parishioner if he had anything to say for himself, but he replied that he had no comment.

The meeting was resumed.

13.135 Date of next Parish Council meeting:

Thursday 18 July 2013 at 8pm in the Meads pavilion.

13.136 Staffing Committee Report

The Chairman said that due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was in the public interest that members of the public be excluded and they were therefore instructed to withdraw. The Chairman asked the Clerk if he wished to remain, since the discussion would be about him; the Clerk replied that he would also leave the room so that councillors would be free to express their views.

Cllr Kilby also withdrew from the meeting of his own accord.

The meeting was reconvened and there being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.55 pm.

Signed **Dated**.....