

HORMEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Hormead Parish Council Meeting Thursday 18 September 2014 at 8pm in the Meads Pavilion

PRESENT: Cllr Jayne Denham, Chairman (JD), Cllr Dave Baseley (DB),
Cllr Robb Denham (RED), Cllr John Kilby (JK), Cllr Denis Madden (DM),
Cllr Teresa Marks (TM), Cllr Richard White (RW)

Two members of the public

In attendance: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

- 14.168 Apologies for absence** **ACTION**
1. Councillors: None (all present)
 2. Others: C Cllr Rose Cheswright (rec'd after the meeting), PCSO Amanda Higham, parishioners Colin Dedman, Roland Coxall, Mick Bull, Graham Skinner
- 14.169 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**
1. Declarations of Interest: Cllr Baseley on Village Hall matters, being VHMIC Chairman.
 2. Dispensations: As stated on the agenda, it was noted that Cllr Teresa Marks has a dispensation to speak and vote on Council finance business in which she has a pecuniary interest as the wife of the Clerk.
- 14.170 To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 17 July 2014**
- No amendments having been previously advised, ***the Minutes of the full Parish Council Meeting on 17 July 2014 were taken as read and accepted as a true and accurate record.*** **JD/Clerk**
- The Chairman signed the Minutes at the end of this (October) meeting.
- 14.171 Police Report**
- The Clerk read a report sent by PCSO Amanda Higham which said: Since the date of the last Parish Council Meeting there have been no recorded crimes in Great and Little Hormead or Hare Street. The focus for the East Herts Rural Team for the next few months is raising people's awareness of home heating oil tank security. With people filling up their tanks and the run up to Christmas, this is the time when we urge people to be more cautious and report any suspicious people or vehicles in their community by ringing 101. Advice has already gone out via the OWL messaging system and we are looking into tank security which we can advise people on using.
- 14.172 Register of Interests** **Clerk**
- The Clerk said he had not received any updates to members' DPI registers.
- 14.173 Chairman's Announcements**
- None
- 14.174 PLANNING**
- 1. New applications:**
- 3/14/1283/FP Kenton House, Hare Street: Part demolition of disused motor repair workshop & change of use to a 2 bed dwelling** **RESOLVED: NO OBJECTION** **Clerk**
- 3/14/1546/OP Land adjacent to Elm Cottage, Hare Street: Outline application for 4 dwellings (incl 1 affordable)** **RESOLVED: OBJECT** because: 1) it contravenes that which is permissible within a Category 3 village; 2) It does not meet the criteria for a Policy HOU4 Rural Exemption Affordable Housing Site; 3) It would inevitably lead to further on-street parking on the B1368, already saturated with parked cars that cause problems with numerous HGVs using the road, especially those from Anstey Quarry. **Clerk**
- 3/14/1576/LB Little Meadow, Conduit Lane: Alterations/replacement to ground floor window** **RESOLVED: NO OBJECTION** **Clerk**
- 3/14/1624/CL Hillcrest, Hare Street: Certificate of lawfulness for use as a dwelling house** **RESOLVED: OBJECT** because the proposal was considered to constitute an abuse and violation of planning rules and regulations. **Clerk**

2. Decision Notices

3/14/1422/CL Gelders, Conduit Lane: *Removal of agricultural tie* DECISION AWAITED

3/14/1313/FP Mantree, Horseshoe Hill: *Erection of open porch, canopies and alterations to steps* APPROVED

3/14/1144/FP Lavender Cottage, Hare Street: *Single storey rear extension to replace conservatory, first floor side extension & replacement dormer window* APPROVED

3/14/1112/FP Bury Farm, Gt Hormead: *Convert existing buildings into 7 dwellings* FULL PLANNING DECISION AWAITED

3/14/1113/LB Bury Farm, Gt Hormead: *Convert existing buildings into 7 dwellings* LISTED BUILDING APPROVED

3/14/1068/FP & 1069/LB Carters Field, Hall Lane: *Single storey linked extension, retaining wall and steps to car parking space* 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:

1. Sworders: it was noted that the outline plan for development of the allotment site in Horseshoe Lane, has been withdrawn.

2. The Parish Council was asked for its views on an outline proposal for a 16-unit development on the old steel works site in Hare Street. The Council had no objections in principle since the site is outside the main village, would be set back from the main road and would not significantly impact traffic.

Clerk

14.175 FINANCE

1. The report of the Council's finances for 1 July to 31 July and from 1 August to 31 August was received (Appendix A)

Finance Summary from 1 July to 31 August:	£
Opening available balance 1/7/14:	7,203.63
Plus income to 31/8/14:	1,920.74
Minus expenditure to 31/8/14:	<u>3,373.86</u>
Balance available to Council 31/8/14	<u>5,750.51</u>
Unpresented cheques as at 31/8/14:	<u>576.40</u>
Bank balance reconciled with statement #365, 31/8/14	<u>6,326.91</u>

The Clerk reminded the Council that there is an outstanding VAT reclaim for £1,719 for VAT paid in the first three months of the financial year. This was mainly VAT paid to the insurer's building company for flood reinstatement work on the pavilion. HMRC had been chased but they have a backlog.

Clerk

It was unanimously **RESOLVED that the Accounts Statement be accepted.**

An accounts summary is published each month in the Minutes on the website.

2. The list of orders for payment was presented for authorisation to be signed (Appendices B1 and B2).

It was **RESOLVED to approve all the invoices presented for payment.**

Clerk

Cheques were signed at the end of the (September) meeting.

3. Annual Audit Return

1. It was **RESOLVED to approve the Annual Return as audited by BDO**

Clerk

2. The Minor Issues Arising report was received and its recommendations noted for the future. It was also noted that this had not incurred an additional fee.

The Clerk said the statutory audit notices would be displayed on the notice board and website.

Clerk

4. Following a report and suggestion by the Chairman, there was a unanimous expression of appreciation and thanks for the volunteers who have faithfully maintained

	and refurbished the War Memorial over a number of years and it was noted that they would like to continue. They were to be complimented. A token of thanks in the form of a reimbursement was discussed and it was RESOLVED up to £100 reimbursement should be given them as a token of thankful appreciation. The Chairman to arrange.	JD/Clerk
	The question of whether the uneven memorial steps constituted a risk that should be repaired was also discussed. The options and cost of any repairs were considered. Cllrs White and Marks said they would undertake a site inspection and report back to Council.	RW/TM
	5. Cllr Robb Denham suggested that, since a number of development plans have recently arisen, the New Homes Bonus paid to the Parish Council should be ring-fenced. The Clerk agreed to investigate how the Bonus was expected to be used.	Clerk
14.176	Correspondence The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the agenda. The Clerk drew members' attention to an item not covered elsewhere on the agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk drew attention to Narelle Milligan's (Australia) offer of a family tree book with Hormead connections for the parish library, if it had one. Cllr Baseley said the new Village Hall was to have an archive and the book could be kept there. The Clerk to organise with NM. 	Clerk
14.177	Special Interest Matters	
	1. Village Hall. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Baseley said he had distributed the VHC AGM Minutes and those of the July meeting. There had been no subsequent meetings and had nothing further to report. 	DB
	2. Highways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Madden said he had received more contacts for DriveSafe and was hopeful that could now be progressed. • Has had little success yet in getting any agency or department to take responsibility for resolving problems with tipper lorries going through the village. • It was noted that the salt bin at Worsted Lane/The Street has not been repaired. It was agreed to check the salt reserves held by Mark Wyld and whether more winter salt should be ordered. • The hedge at Willow Close needs cutting back again. 30mph sign obscured. • The large willow tree at the B1038/Horseshoe Hill junction (Westons) is obstructing visibility turning out of Horseshoe Hill; must be trimmed. • A report was submitted of the Police Locality Meeting held on 4th September, attended by Cllrs Madden and R Denham: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Levels of crime in the area surrounding Hare Street is generally falling slightly, low in comparison with towns. Mainly domestic; main targets fuel theft and shed break-ins. - Speeding not mentioned; major problems if existing lorry routes are changed. - Camera watch has been severely tightened to essential need for use; three available but cannot keep intelligence previously obtained. - Crime reporting standards require every notification of a crime, whether reported late by victims or at site, up to 5 years maybe. - 5 officers and 6 PCSOs covering whole of East Herts. - Hare coursing season will be a large target for future. 	DM Clerk/DM Clerk Clerk
	3. Footpaths and Byways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The successful clearance of FP20 was noted. • Bridleway 15 needs clearing – to be organised • FP8 (Buntingford extension) needs reinstating over ploughed field. All landowners to be reminded of reinstatement obligations. 	RED/ Clerk
	4. Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk gave an outline of WordPress costs vs a specialist Council website company, together with the pros and cons of each company. It was agreed to proceed with WordPress, for which he would provide a more detailed specific proposal. 	Clerk

5. Parishioners' concerns.

- Concerns have been raised by some Faylands residents regarding problems created by dropped kerbs that give access to parking in front gardens. It was agreed this is a matter that should be taken up directly with Herts Highways.

14.178 The Meads and Pavilion

- The Meads generally: Cllr Madden reported that the new fridge had been installed in the pavilion and the new picnic bench had been delivered, but was yet to be assembled.
- The quality of grass cutting was again discussed and agreed to be of an unacceptable standard, particularly the southern end of the field and the play area and surrounding. It was agreed to look for another contractor. The Clerk said he had already left a message with Neil Gardner and was awaiting a reply. **Clerk**
- The annual play area report was discussed. Attention to be given to those items where the identified rotting posts could become a serious safety issue. The Clerk said he had arranged Broadmead Leisure to inspect and quote for repairs or the cost of replacement items; he was also looking at grants possibilities. Cllr Marks said she had spoken to some mums there during the holidays who were unhappy with the condition of some of the items and concerned whether they were safe. They were also critical of the level of maintenance of the play area. **Clerk**
TM
- It was reported that the gate had been unlocked by persons unknown and left open a number of times during the summer, requiring the combination to be changed again. Options for making the lock more secure were discussed. It was also noted that the shed lock was inaccessible and couldn't be opened; Cllr Baseley said he would look into it. **DB**
- Other matters: None

14.179 Revised Standing Orders

Cllr Robb Denham said that yet further changes had to be incorporated into the draft to comply with NALC recommendations. It was requested that changes be highlighted in the draft for ease of identification. **RED**

14.180 Risk Assessments Review: All outstanding matters had been dealt with

14.181 Asset register

Cllr Robb Denham had circulated a draft, but said it was still a work in progress. The basic figures were done but there were considerably more assets than originally listed. **RED/ Clerk**

14.182 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Robb Denham reported that the Forum had not met for three months. The next meeting was 23rd September where the first business would be to elect a new chairman. **RED**

14.183 Parish Council Newsletter

Cllr Baseley outlined a proposal for a bi-monthly Council newsletter, including content, contributors, production and delivery. He said the content would be limited to Council facts and although it would contain a VH report, would not be a joint PC/VHMC venture. **DB**

14.184 FOI Internal Review

1. Following correspondence with, and advice from, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Clerk presented for adoption an updated FOI policy document, and a draft FOI Single Stage Internal Review (Complaints) Procedure, as recommended by the ICO and based on their guidance publications. It was **RESOLVED to adopt the updated FOI Policy and also the FOI Single Stage Internal Review (Complaints) Procedure.** **Clerk**

2. Following a parishioner reporting to the ICO dissatisfaction at the Council's several responses to an FOI request, and advice from the ICO on action the Council should take, the Clerk presented the Council with a synopsis of the FOI requests from May 2013 to June 2014 and his responses, as the Clerk and Responsible Officer, to those requests. Following an Internal Review into the complaint it was **RESOLVED that the FOI requests had been properly dealt with and the complainant had received a satisfactory and appropriate response from the Clerk.** **Clerk**

3. The Clerk then advised the Council that the email sent by the parishioner on the

previous evening (17th September) contained a request for "...all the information relating to me under the Data Protection Act, held by the Parish Council...". This was later confirmed by the ICO to constitute an official DPA request. However, the Clerk clarified that, although the parishioner said they had been informed by the Information Commission that they should be asking for the information under the DPA, the ICO told the Clerk they do *not* advise people what to do - they can only advise what action someone *might* consider taking. The request cannot be denied and the Council may charge a maximum £10 fee for fulfilling the request, irrespective of how long it takes, and therefore costs, to complete. It must be completed within 40 calendar days. The ICO recommended that, in view of the parishioner being a former employee of the Council and therefore records may go back many years, the parishioner should be asked to define the specific scope of the request, and that if a charge is made, the request need not be complied with until the fee is paid (*ICO Code of Practice, Chapter 5, page 18*). The Clerk confirmed that he had emailed the parishioner that day an acknowledgement of the request, advised that a £10 fee was payable, and asking for the scope of the request to be defined. The Clerk said he was very concerned about how long the request might take to fulfil and how much extra time might have to be charged to the Council.

~~There then followed a heated and unruly exchange of comments and accusations and the Chairman, having ascertained from the public present that they did not wish to raise any questions, adjourned the meeting without further reference to the Agenda*.~~

There followed a heated and despicable outburst of comments and accusations from councillor Kilby, including reference to employment matters and making derogatory and defamatory comments to the clerk and other councillors, in complete breach of our Code of Conduct and Standing Orders, with great disrespect to the Chairman, fellow councillors and the clerk and the public present.

The Chairman, having ascertained from the public present that they did not wish to raise any questions, adjourned the meeting without further reference to the Agenda*.

Note: These matters are being investigated by the Staffing Committee to report to the next meeting.

14.185 Urgent matters received too late for inclusion on the agenda

Not discussed – see 14.184.3 above*

14.186 Items for future agendas

Not discussed – see 14.184.3 above*

Adjournment for public comments

No comments requested to be heard*

14.187 Staffing Committee: Report

Not discussed – see 14.184.3 above*

14.188 Date of next Parish Council meeting

16th October at 8pm in the Pavilion.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 10.10pm*

Signed **Dated**

Cllr Teresa Marks has requested the following statement be recorded and appended to the Parish Council Minutes for 18th October 2014:

The Minutes do not record what was said when agenda item 14.184.3 was being discussed. Cllr Kilby made derogatory comments to and about the clerk concerning matters of finance, salary, and hours worked. These are employment issues concerning a parish council employee and they should not have been made in a public meeting.