

WEST HORNDON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: - Kim Harding – 27 Cadogan Avenue, West Horndon, Brentwood CM13 3TU

Tel: 07756 962034 E-mail: whpc.parishclerk@gmail.com
www.westhorndonparishcouncil.org.uk

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WEST HORNDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 25th APRIL 2024, AT 7.30 PM AT ST FRANCIS CHURCH. THORNDON AVENUE, WEST HORNDON, BRENTWOOD.

In the chair: Councillor Foan

Present: Councillors Hannah, Houghton, Keefe, Marchant, Moorcroft & Petty

Also attending: Cllr Marsh (BBC), Cllr Murphy (BBC) and eight members of the public

Clerk: Mr K Harding

The Chair noted that the agenda for the meeting had been adjusted to allow topics upon which Cllr Moorcroft would wish to contribute to be dealt with earlier in the meeting. This would allow Cllr Moorcroft to leave the meeting early if she so wished and was in recognition of her ongoing medical treatment. The revised order for the agenda would continue for future meetings.

PUBLIC FORUM

Residents from Old Mill Cottages attended the meeting to express their serious concerns regarding the present plans for Dunton Hills Garden Village (DHGV) and the proposed siting of social housing and gypsy and traveller pitches close to their properties. It was stated that no consultation on the detailed revised plans for the development has taken place with the residents. West Horndon Parish Councillors were unaware that any firm decisions had been taken regarding the site plans for DHGV. They were under the impression that the location for key elements of the development were to be decided under reserved matters following the initial element of outline planning permission being granted in November 2023. It was agreed that copies of the residents' correspondence with Brentwood Borough Council would be forwarded to the Clerk. This was with the intention that the Parish Council would contact Justin Booi of the Planning Department to ascertain the present position regarding DHGV. Also, to confirm that West Horndon Parish Council would support the residents of Old Mill Cottages to ensure their homes would be safeguarded, as far as possible, from the detrimental effects of the major development taking place on their doorstep.

{Action – Diane Middleton and Clerk}

24/38

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION/NATURE OF INTERESTS

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Lister and McKinlay (ECC). Cllr Lister was unable to attend due to a family commitment and Cllr McKinlay (ECC) was at another meeting.

No declaration of interests had been received.

24/39 MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29th FEBRUARY 2024

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 29th February 2024 were authorised as a true record.

[Proposed Cllr Foan, Seconded Cllr Houghton – All in favour]

24/40 CANCELLATION OF MEETING TO BE HELD ON 28th MARCH 2024 – Clerk

In accordance with advice received from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) the decision was taken by West Horndon Parish Council to cancel the meeting scheduled to take place on 28th March 2024. The Local Government Act 1972 clearly defines the Easter Period as being the Thursday before Easter Sunday to the Tuesday after Easter Sunday inclusive. It states that days within this period cannot be taken into consideration when meeting the statutory requirement to provide three clear working days' notice of an impending formal council meeting. While the Parish Council had met this requirement, the two associations were also of the view that no meetings should be held on Maundy Thursday. Despite extensive searching through Local Government legislation it has not proved possible to verify this, and the advice offered to West Horndon Parish Council has been queried.

24/41 COMMUNITY ISSUES – Cllr Houghton and Clerk

It was confirmed that the awards of Community Engagement Grant 2023 had been made available to the successful applicants.

Cllr Moorcroft advised that a number of local residents had expressed an interest in receiving defibrillator training, which she had organised in a private capacity. Arrangements were in hand for this to be provided in the near future.

24/42 CCTV CAMERAS – Clerk

A second quotation in respect of the replacement of the inefficient CCTV camera equipment at the Village Hall was being sought. Daniel Cannon of BBC had also made the Parish Council aware of the possibility of applying for part funding of the replacement cost.

24/43 PARK UPDATE – Cllrs Houghton and Petty

It was confirmed that Cllr Petty would now be the lead councillor on matters relating to West Horndon Park. Since receipt of the RoSPA inspection report on equipment within the Park he had been in contact with various repair and maintenance companies to secure quotations for the various works noted as needing attention. These would be assessed by the Parish Councillors when all estimates had been received. It was noted that some key decisions needed to be taken. The roundabout was thought to be expensive to repair and it was considered that it might prove beneficial for it to be removed and a more user friendly replacement sought.

The three entry gates to the Children's Play Area all needed to be repaired and the quotes received for this questioned whether it would be more cost effective to secure complete replacement of the gates rather than purchase and fit new parts.

Cllr Moorcroft had contacted South Essex College with a view to discovering whether any of the present students, as part of their present training courses, could be used to undertake some of the painting and minor repair work noted within the RoSPA report. Enquiries on this matter were ongoing. It was understood that insurance for any students who did undertake painting, etc. tasks would be provided by the college.

The communications cable to 18, Cadogan Avenue, which stretched over the vehicular access to West Horndon Park, had still to be raised. This prevented maintenance vehicles gaining access to West Horndon Park and, due to the delay, concerns had been raised over the length of the grass. Discussions with Openreach were proving very arduous but were ongoing.

Cllr Keefe, along with a friend with grounds' keeping experience, had agreed to carry out inspections of the play equipment on a regular basis to ensure that health and safety issues were reported promptly. However, it was noted that the monthly play equipment checks, as recommended by RoSPA, should be undertaken by a suitably certificated/qualified individual. Information was still awaited from BBC on which company undertook monthly inspections of playgrounds run by the Borough Council.

In researching how the Parish Council had taken over responsibility for the running of the Park, three final drafts of key documents had been found. These were (a) a Maintenance and Management Agreement; (b) a Licence Agreement; and (c) a Deed of Adherence. It was noted that the originals of these agreements had been signed on 7th September 2006. It was confirmed that originals of these documents needed to be secured. Cllr Houghton also had concerns about these documents providing enough legal standing to safeguard the Parish Council with regard to its role and responsibilities in running West Horndon Park. She would investigate this matter and report back to the Parish Council.

{Action: Cllr Houghton and Parish Clerk}

Sovereign Design Play Systems Limited had responded to the Clerk's enquiry regarding concerns raised by the RoSPA inspector on older children climbing onto the flat roof of the Captain Mainwaring piece of play equipment. The solutions provided by the company were to (a) fix a 'Don't Climb' sign close to the flat roof; or (b) remove the flat roof. Neither option met with the Parish Councillors' approval. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the RoSPA inspector seeking his views regarding how critical he regarded the observation made in his report.

{Action: Clerk}

Information had been provided by RoSPA Play Safety Limited that 20 items of equipment had been examined during the recent inspection. This meant that it would be less expensive to have the annual inspection of play equipment undertaken during May/June when cheaper rates applied. The Parish Councillors agreed that

this option should be explored. The company also provided a quotation of £450 plus VAT for an open spaces and risk assessment of the Park to be carried out. Councillors regarded this as expensive and it was agreed that Cllr Petty would speak with the companies providing quotations for the maintenance/repair of the play equipment to verify how much they would charge.

{Action: Cllr Petty}

In respect of concerns raised over older children climbing onto the roof of the shelter RoSPA Play Safety Limited advised that the shelter is not easily climbable. Anyone climbing it must have reasonable agility and be of an age to understand the risk to which they were exposing themselves. No alterations to the shelter were thought necessary.

It was recognised that nearly two years has elapsed since the last Tree Survey. It was agreed that the Clerk would 'chase up' BBC regarding who held responsibility for the trees within the Park. This was in line with the query raised regarding the statement made by the Borough Council on its website.

{Action: Clerk}

24/44 PARISH NEWSLETTER – Cllr Houghton

Cllr Houghton confirmed that the latest edition of the Parish Newsletter had recently been circulated. She requested that a copy of the Newsletter be placed on the Parish Council's Website and also that a link be provided on social media sites to access the Newsletter.

{Action: Cllrs Hannah and Petty}

It was agreed that Cllr Moorcroft would assist Cllr Houghton in the future regarding the preparation of articles for inclusion within the Parish Newsletter.

Cllr Moorcroft left the meeting at 8.40 pm

24/45 PROGRESS REPORT – Clerk

Cllr Houghton advised that she continued to liaise with Morrisons store regarding the loud intruder alarm. She had spoken with the facilities manager who stated that the alarm operation complied with standing legislation. The matter had now been escalated to a more senior manager within the company.

Progress against other actions was shown in the distributed report. Many actions had a bearing on items being dealt with later on the agenda. Where appropriate any information discovered would be disclosed under the relevant agenda headings.

24/46 FINANCE – Responsible Financial Officer

It was agreed that annual membership of the Rural Community Council of Essex should be renewed.

[Proposed Cllr Foan, Seconded Cllr Hannah – All in favour]

The payments for April 2024 were approved.

[Proposed Cllr Foan, Seconded Cllr Houghton – All in favour]

The budget/spend analysis for 2024/25 to date was noted.

The bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2024 was noted.

24/47 PLANNING UPDATE – Cllr Foan

24/00233/ADV – Unit 1, London Brentwood Commercial Park, Old Tilbury Road, West Horndon – Erection of two internally illuminated fascia signs: one to the south east elevation and one to the south west elevation (retrospective).

Parish Councillors were concerned that this was a retrospective application and saw no reason why consultation with the BBC Planning Department over the potential erection of the signs could not have been made well in advance of their installation. The Councillors noted that the signs were extremely bright and were illuminated throughout the hours of darkness. The signs were clearly not in keeping with the local environment and nearby residents were extremely concerned. The Councillors believed the signs should be of a more compact design and size and only be illuminated during the hours of darkness prior to midnight.

[Proposed Cllr Foan, Seconded Cllr Houghton – All in favour]

{Action – Clerk}

24/00292/FUL – Yards 51 to 54 & Units 3 & 4, West Horndon Industrial Park, Station Road, West Horndon – Demolition of the existing buildings at Units 3 & 4 and change of use of land to B8 outdoor storage with security gates.

Parish Councillors had no objections to the demolition of the existing buildings. However, by creating a large outside storage area concerns were raised over what this space would be used for. No information was provided over hours of usage and because of this Councillors believed far greater detail regarding future use of the site and operational hours was required to ensure there was minimal disturbance to local residents.

[Proposed Cllr Foan, Seconded Cllr Petty – All in favour]

{Action – Clerk}

Notification had recently been received from the BBC Planning Department that despite not complying with permitted building regulations it was not regarded as in the public

interest to impose formal enforcement action on the non-complaint outbuilding built in the garden of 7, Dunmow Gardens, West Horndon. This was due to the noted height infringements being regarded as minimal in nature. Following discussion it was agreed to write on this matter to the new Director of Place – Emma Giddings.

{Action – Clerk}

24/48 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN/LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – Cllr Foan

There were no matters to report.

24/49 HIGHWAYS UPDATE – Cllr Houghton and Clerk

Cllr Houghton advised that she had written to Cllr McKinlay (ECC) regarding a loose manhole cover close to her property. This was causing disturbance to local residents particularly during the night when trying to sleep.

Cllr Moorcroft had highlighted earlier in the meeting that those residents who had volunteered to be part of the community speed watch team would shortly be receiving their initial training. Cllr Houghton had asked to be included within the team.

Other matters which needed to be notified to Cllr McKinlay (ECC) were (a) a tree where growth was damaging the pavement outside 4, Freshwell Gardens; and (b) bushes and foliage blocking road signs on the A128 from the junction with the A127 southwards to the railway bridge.

{Action – Clerk}

Despite being attended to by Essex Water, a damaged water pipe outside 22 & 24 Freshwell Gardens continues to leak. It was agreed the Clerk would write to the company.

{Action – Clerk}

At 9.30 pm it was agreed that Standing Orders in respect of formal meetings lasting a maximum of two hours would be suspended.

[Proposed Cllr Foan, Seconded Cllr Petty – All in favour]

24/50 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS – Clerk

An annual review of Standing Orders had been undertaken. It was agreed that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model Standing Orders dated March 2018, as adopted at the West Horndon Parish Council meeting held on 28th February 2019, continued to be acceptable. This was subject to subsequent amendments issued by the NALC, and one consideration as highlighted at the West Horndon Parish Council meeting held on 22nd February 2018. This consideration related to tasks to be undertaken at the Annual Parish Council meeting. It continued to be recommended that

the wording of the relevant paragraph should be amended such that the listed tasks could be undertaken at the meeting, or at a more appropriate time during the following twelve months.

[Proposed Cllr Foan, Seconded Cllr Petty – All in favour]

{Action – Clerk}

24/51 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS – Responsible Financial Officer

An annual review of the Financial Regulations had been undertaken. It was agreed that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model Financial Regulations (England), as updated in July 2019, still remained valid and would be adopted. This was subject to all financial thresholds and limits as agreed by West Horndon Parish Council and recorded within meeting minutes remaining as approved. A copy of the updated Model Financial Regulations (England) had previously been circulated to Parish Councillors for consideration.

[Proposed Cllr Foan, Seconded Cllr Petty – All in favour]

{Action – Clerk}

24/52 DELEGATED AUTHORITY – Clerk

The following action had been undertaken under delegated authority since the Parish Council meeting held on 29th February 2024.

Approval of expenditure for March 2024 totalling £3,755.82

24/53 DIARY NOTE

This document had recently been introduced to remind Councillors of key upcoming dates for inspections, membership renewals, etc.

24/54 REPORTS

A report summarising planning applications dealt with by the Parish Council during 2023 and 2024 had been circulated to the Parish Councillors and was noted.

24/55 CORRESPONDENCE LIST

The correspondence list for April 2024 had been circulated to the Parish Councillors and was noted.

24/56 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

No items were put forward.

24/57

NEXT MEETING

The next meetings of West Horndon Parish Council are planned to take place on
Annual Parish meeting – Thursday 16th May 2024
Annual Parish Council meeting – Thursday 30th May 2024

Kim Harding

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

9th May 2024