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## MINUTES

Minutes of the Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council meeting held at 7pm on Thursday 27 October 2022 in Great Easton Village Hall.

**Present:**

**Councillors**

Cllr T Martens (Chairman), Cllr J England (Vice Chairman), Cllr M Claxton, Cllr D Hahn, Cllr D Lawson and Cllr P Neale. Following item 10.22.03, Cllr J Stevens.

Clerk: Kate Rixson

Three members of the public and Cllr M Tayler of Uttlesford District Council

	The Chairman opened the meeting
10.22.01	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> Cllr Hurst's apologies due to absence abroad were accepted by resolution.
10.22.02	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> None.
10.22.03	<b>CO-OPTION TO FILL CASUAL VACANCY</b> No call for an election for the vacancy in the Tilty ward having been received, the council resolved unanimously to co-opt Mr John Stevens to the council to fill the casual vacancy created by the disqualification and resignation of Cllr Fiona Down. The declaration of acceptance of office was signed by Cllr Stevens and witnessed by the clerk. He then joined the meeting. Cllr Stevens made no declarations of interest in the business on the agenda.
10.22.04	<b>MINUTES OF MEETING ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2022</b> The minutes of the 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2022 meeting were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chairman.
10.22.05	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION</b> Members of the public raised the following issues relating to highways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potholes and damaged/missing drain covers along the verge outside the church, on the bend. Vehicles were forced into the middle of the road to avoid at least two deep defects, risking head-on collisions with oncoming traffic at the sharp bend where visibility was poor. There had been near-misses. The damage had been present for many months and is getting worse. With rainwater in the holes the risk was greater as the depth of the holes was concealed and there had been damage to vehicles. It was agreed that the council would report the problem and the risks to road-users to the new Essex Highways officer for Uttlesford, with photos if possible. <b>Action: Clerk/chairman</b></li> <li>- On the B184 the hedge between Snow Hill nursery and the primary school, and also from the nursery to the turn to Duton Hill, was badly overgrown and forcing pedestrians into the road. It was noted that this had been reported on the highways website on 22 August (ref 2791274) and was awaiting attention. The council was asked to cut back the hedge as the county council highways department was not carrying out its responsibilities. The chairman responded that the initial and repeated costs of this would be unaffordable for the council without a very substantial increase in the precept. The task would require the council to engaging a licensed road management company as well as contractors for the hedge-cutting, as the workforce would be positioned in the road. He would make enquiries concerning ownership of the land the hedge was growing on, to see if the landowner would cut it back. <b>Action: Chairman</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On the field near the layby, the triangulation point bollard (a low concrete block) was almost concealed by vegetation. It was believed that this stood on land owned by the proprietor of the Snow Hill nursery site. The chairman would make enquiries. <b>Action: Chairman</b></li> </ul>
10.22.06	<p><b>DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS</b></p> <p>Cllr Foley's email with part 1 of his district council/county council report had been circulated and a further detailed report had arrived just as this meeting started. It would be circulated as soon as possible. Cllr Foley was engaged tonight on family responsibilities.</p> <p>Cllr Tayler report from the district council included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- that a sum of £2.2 million had been accepted by Stansted Airport Ltd in full and final settlement of the legal costs UDC had been ordered to pay by the planning inspector, following the airport's owners' successful appeal against UDC's refusal of planning consent to increase passenger numbers.</li> <li>- The process of consulting local people on the Local Plan ("Regulation 18 consultation") was being delayed from November 2022 to the summer of 2023, due to the need to provide more robust evidence in support and because of the period of purdah before the local elections (in May 2023) during which no contentious issues could be raised.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Tayler advised that he was aware a new county council officer was now in post to deal with highways issues in Uttlesford district, and that Cllr Foley had provided her contact details to the parish council.</p>
10.22.07	<p><b>CHAIR'S REPORT ON ITEMS NOT LISTED SEPARATELY ON THE AGENDA</b></p> <p>None.</p>
10.22.08	<p><b>CLERK'S REPORT ON ITEMS NOT LISTED SEPARATELY ON THE AGENDA, AND CORRESPONDENCE</b></p> <p>The Clerk's Report had been circulated and was taken as read (annexed to these minutes). No questions were raised.</p>
10.22.09	<p><b>REPORTS ON ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</b></p> <p><b>Liaison with Uttlesford Planning:</b> The chairman reported that he would be meeting district councillors within the next two weeks and that Uttlesford did now seem to be willing to engage. There was a meeting on 7 November (parish/town councils liaison meeting) with the CEO and officers. <b>Action: Clerk/chairman</b></p> <p><b>Speeding:</b> the area's Police Community Support Officer had offered to meet councillors on 7 November (provisional date – convenient for Cllrs Claxton, Neale and Lawson) to discuss issues. <b>ACTION: Clerk – to finalise date and liaise with councillors/PCSO</b></p> <p><b>Village Hall dishwasher:</b> the agreed model of machine can now be purchased and installed although may involve electrical work as well as plumbing. Any crockery needing to be disposed of from the cupboard (which was being removed) would be donated to the Broxted Community Association crockery smashing stall. <b>ACTION: Cllr Neale and Cllr Martens to make practical arrangements. Clerk to contact BCA.</b></p> <p><b>Village Green verge damage and parking:</b> It had been established that 1 metre of land along all edges of the green was defined as "verge" and part of the highway, therefore Highways Authority consent was required to place anything there. The Highways Authority asserted that the purpose of the verge was to provide vehicles with extra space to pass each other. Members of the public in the meeting expressed the view that barriers should be placed to reduce the damage from vehicles which had caused ruts and damage to the grass by driving over the green, and that restrictions on parking would be considered reasonable if they prevented this damage. It was noted that the green was owned by the Parish Council. It was agreed the Clerk would ask Essex Highways if any prevention measures by the parish council were permissible and that the council would consider planting hedging on the green. It was noted that the weight limit over the bridge at the foot of The Endway hill had been removed using proper procedures and could not be challenged on those grounds. It was also noted that in November the Christmas tree would be placed on the green. <b>ACTION: Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Tilty Church car park closure:</b> A short response had been received by email from the Diocesan Board of Finance which held the title to the land. They said they had passed the parish council's letter to the Parochial Church Council of the Five Parishes which takes all decisions as owner, to see if reasonable adjustments could be made. The chairman reported that he had spoken to the vicar and was aiming to meet her soon to discuss matters further. <b>Action: Chairman</b></p>

10.22.10	<p><b>MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT (PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNT)</b></p> <p>The cashbook showing spending and income, from 1 April to 30 September 2022 (but omitting items from August as the bank statement was not yet available), had been circulated to councillors. This included most payments since the previous meeting save for bank payments on the missing statement for August, and was taken as read.</p> <p>A summary and note of the bank balance to 30 Sept 2022 was also provided:  Total income (including the precept) £34,035.61  Total outgoings £23,366.87 plus £1,776.16 VAT (VAT can be reclaimed), with the note that this omitted some items as the bank statement for August was not available.  The balance on the current account on 30 Sept 22 was £41,424.11. It was noted that the second half of the precept had been paid on 21 September 2022.  Payments were approved as follows:  Clerk's office and mileage expenses as listed: £95.57  Safety inspection by Broadmead Leisure (see open spaces report below): £144 including £24 VAT  Birdboxes on playing field: £151.97  Filing cabinet purchased for storage of PC records: £154.80 including £25.80 VAT.  In addition payments made under statutory or contractual obligations were noted as in the cashbook (fuel, internet etc) and the clerk's October salary of £701.35 (gross of tax/NI) was reported.</p> <p>A query was raised concerning grass-cutting costs over the period of drought in the summer. It was confirmed that at least one cut had been omitted from the regular schedule of fortnightly cuts.</p> <p>It was noted that any councillor currently meeting approved parish council costs (e.g. for website/email hosting) would be reimbursed.</p>
10.22.11	<p><b>TO APPROVE REIMBURSEMENT OF CHAIR'S EXPENDITURE ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL AND VILLAGE HALL</b></p> <p>A schedule of expenditure had been circulated. Receipts had been provided and were held on file and for inspection. Expenses included the birdboxes and filing cabinet approved at 10.22.10 above. In relation to the village hall the expenditure included smoke alarms, flagpole clips, padlocks and spare keys. Councillors approved the expenditure for the hall as trustees and confirmed that expenditure totalling £333.17 (parish council, includes filing cabinet and birdboxes above) and £329.53 (village hall) should be reimbursed to the chairman.</p>
10.22.12	<p><b>VILLAGE HALL</b></p> <p>A report had been circulated which was taken as read, covering finances 1 April to 27 October 22 and bookings.  Total income £2,926.45  Total outgoings £6,401.84 with the note that this omitted some items as the bank statement for August was not available.  The balance on the current account on 30 Sept 22 was £35,152.49.  It was noted that for each booking the hire fees usually did not cover the resulting costs, because of the necessary cleaning.</p>
10.22.13	<p><b>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN</b></p> <p>Increasing interest from local residents and councillors was noted. Initial tasks such as establishing a working group and contacting all residents to attend an informal gathering to discuss the plan further. Cllr Tayler commented that the Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan had already been influential in local planning applications and encouraged the council to go ahead. The Local Plan, when adopted, would have broad strategic policies but would have gaps which could be filled by policies in a Neighbourhood Plan. The clerk would consider and recommend the structure for working on the NP e.g. committee/working party. <b>Action: Clerk</b></p>
10.22.14	<p><b>PLANNING APPLICATIONS, DECISIONS AND PROGRESS ON PLANNING MATTERS</b></p> <p>The clerk had circulated a table showing progress on outstanding matters and links to recent decisions and the planning committee agendas.  Comments were invited from the parish council on two applications:  <b>22/2632/FUL – land adjoining the Green Man, Mill End, Great Easton - application to build 5 dwellings</b>, a revised application. Comments to be submitted by 1 November (extended with UDC</p>

	<p>agreement). Although the site was not attractive in its present state, having formerly been the overflow car-park for the pub-restaurant, concerns were expressed about construction traffic during building, and the addition of the vehicles belonging to 5 households to the narrow local lanes, especially Breach Lane which is single-track with limited passing places. It was also possible that cars wishing to park would be displaced from the land onto road verges. A vote was taken and it was resolved to support the application: five in favour with two abstentions.</p> <p><b>22/2713/CLE - Radley Cottage, Radleys End</b> – change of use of land to private garden – certificate of lawful use. The council agreed it had no view on this application.</p> <p><b>Action: Clerk</b></p>
10.22.15	<p><b>TO RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS (FOR ITEMS NOT SHOWN SEPARATELY ON THE AGENDA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Open spaces including playing fields and play areas</b> Broadmead Leisure had carried out an urgent inspection as a visitor had mentioned serious safety concerns about the swing set. Although the swings were considered safe, the inspector's comments on other equipment had led the chairman to tape off the slide to prevent use. Quotes had been obtained for removal. Advice was received from Mr Southon during the meeting that the chute could be repaired, and this was felt to be preferable, to avoid disposing of a longstanding fixture in the play area. An initial limit of £300 was agreed for his charges. It was agreed he should fence off the slide especially in view of the fireworks display this weekend which would be attended by many children. <b>Action: Cllrs agreed to meet Mr Southon to discuss other play equipment and make recommendations to the council.</b> <b>Cllr Neale would add fundraising for the playground to the next Great Easton Community Association meeting agenda. Clerk to respond to the visitor who had raised concerns.</b></p> </li> <li>Footpaths, road safety and highways – see above.</li> <li>Airport – see above as reported by Cllr Tayler.</li> <li>Community activities and events – The Great Easton fireworks display would take place at the weekend. The wine-tasting event at the pub was already sold out. The quiz would take place in the Village Hall in December. In Cllr Hurst's absence, Duton Hill Community Association events were not discussed. However it was noted that both CAs may wish to approach the Parish Council for grants before the end of the financial year.</li> <li>Dunmow United Football Club - it was reported that land offered to the club at Laundry Lane by the neighbouring land owner, Land Securities, would be on a short lease and would be expensive for the club. It would probably not, therefore, be a substitute for the Burns playing field in Duton Hill which the club continued to lease from the parish council. It was confirmed that the derelict building on the parish-council-owned land did need to be demolished and the clerk was obtaining quotations so that the work could be done before August 2023.</li> <li>IT, website and social media – it was noted that charges for Microsoft 365 and web/email-hosting should be met by the council. Cllr Hahn was thanked for having set up the arrangements and funded the costs to date. It was noted that the clerk should carry out a risk assessment which included data protection and cybersecurity of council information and communications. <b>Action: Clerk</b></li> </ul>
10.22.16	<p><b>ITEMS TO NOTE, FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA OR IN FIVE PARISHES MAGAZINE</b> - Details of any gathering about the Neighbourhood Plan. <b>Action: Clerk</b></p>
10.22.17	<p><b>TO EXCLUDE PUBLIC AND PRESS TO DISCUSS A CONFIDENTIAL MATTER</b> The salary budget for the next financial year was considered and approved.</p>
10.22.18	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b> Thursday 24 November 2022</p>
10.22.19	<p>There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9pm.</p>