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## MINUTES

Minutes of the Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 28 September 2023 in Great Easton Village Hall.

### Present:

#### Councillors

Cllr T Martens (Chairman), Cllr M Benterman, Cllr J England, Cllr D Hahn, Cllr C Hurst and Cllr J Stevens.

Clerk: Kate Rixson

Three members of the public attended including District Cllr Haynes. Cllr Foley was unable to attend due to other commitments.

	The Chairman opened the meeting at 7 pm
09.23.01	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were noted, and the reasons accepted by resolution, from Cllrs Lawson and Neale.
09.23.02	<b>Declarations of interest</b> A declaration of a non-pecuniary interest in a planning matter was made by Cllr Hahn (see further below). Cllr Benterman declared a pecuniary interest in a payment to be approved.
09.23.03	<b>Minutes of meeting on 27 July 2023</b> The minutes of the council meeting on 27 July 2023 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chairman.
09.23.04	<b>Chair's report and receiving reports on action points from previous meetings and items not listed separately on the agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Resignation of Cllr Lawson</b> – the chair and council expressed its appreciation of the contribution Cllr Lawson had made in his time on the council and thanked him for his work.</li> <li>• <b>Highways</b> – overhanging hedges at Snow Hill. It was noted that Cllr Neale was in contact with the landowner but had not yet been able to report any agreement with regard to the hedges. It was noted that some cutting-back seemed to have been done since the last meeting. <b>Action: Cllr Neale.</b> Hedges at the junction of Duton Hill and Cherry Street also seemed to have been cut back.</li> <li>• <b>Village Green</b> –the chair took questions and comments from members of the public concerning parking near the Green. In response he confirmed that the parish council had not asked Highways to apply double yellow lines in the village. He explained that the council had looked into several methods of preventing damage to the edge of the Green but that no suitable solution had yet been found.  It was reported that the war memorial had been cleaned by conservation experts. The clerk was looking into whether the names had previously been painted or gilded and whether this needed to be renewed. <b>Action: Clerk</b></li> <li>• <b>Parking next to Tilty church</b> – The previous archdeacon having retired on 17 September, the chair will contact the new appointee in due course. <b>Action: Chair</b></li> <li>• <b>Local Councils Liaison meeting on 12 September 2023</b> – Cllr Stevens had attended on behalf of the council. The draft local plan had been discussed in detail. See Item 09.23.09 below (Planning).</li> <li>• <b>Airport representative</b> – The former chairman of the parish council has kindly agreed to monitor developments relating to Stansted Airport. The council expressed its thanks to him and to Cllr Hahn for his assistance.</li> <li>• <b>Work at Laundry Lane sports field</b> – The derelict buildings have been cleared.</li> </ul>

09.23.05	<p><b>Public participation session</b></p> <p>Two issues were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Details of a project to raise funds for playground equipment (item 6 on the agenda) were presented: A local resident is in the early stages of setting up a committee to raise funds to install play apparatus on the playing field and playground in Great Easton. It was noted that the existing apparatus is coming to the end of its life. A contribution from parish council funds was hoped for.</li> </ul> <p>The chairman responded and confirmed that the existing equipment is inspected regularly and is safe. He advised that the playground site is privately-owned land which is maintained but not owned by the parish council. It floods every year so plans for the site have always taken that into account. Councillors supported the plans in principle and councillors involved with the local community associations, with experience of fundraising, might provide practical or financial assistance. Cllr Hurst agreed to meet to discuss. The chairman confirmed that the council would consider an application for a financial contribution. <b>Action: Cllr Hurst</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whether there were plans to impose parking restrictions on The Endway, and highways issues generally</li> </ul> <p>See Item 09.23.04 Village Green above. Concern was expressed at the prospect of parking restrictions on The Endway, and whether such measures would avoid damage to the village green in any event. The effect of removing the weight limit on the bridge some years ago was discussed and it was agreed to supply further details of the Highways Authority's engineer's report which led to this decision. The chairman noted that only the Highways Authority (Essex County Council) had powers to impose any traffic control measures and it required community support and engagement before acting. The parish council would not request a highways scheme without consulting residents and the process of considering options would be transparent.</p>
09.23.06	<p><b>District and County Councillors' reports</b></p> <p>Cllr Foley (District and County Councillor) and Cllr Hayne (District Councillor) were thanked for their written reports, received before this meeting, which had been circulated to councillors.</p> <p>Cllr Haynes reported as follows:</p> <p>The new draft Local Plan will be considered by district councillors early in October and if accepted will be available for public consultation. It does not include a major development at Easton Park, but the plan for 1,200 houses on land east of High Wood Quarry, recently approved by the Secretary of State, will help the council meet its housing quota. A number of towns and villages had been allocated sites for development. The plan included building 110 houses in Great Easton (parish area), which was defined as a "larger rural village", but this was a proposal and the entire plan was in draft at this stage. However, while the figures were based on outdated data and the existing formula (which may be changed by central government soon), it was reasonable to expect some housebuilding in this area.</p>
09.23.07	<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 the hard copy of these minutes). It was noted that she had been spending time supporting the two registered charities Recreation Ground (Laundry Lane) and the Hall Fund (Great Easton Village Hall). It was suggested that the council should consider a transfer from the hall fund to the council to cover the cost of this work. <b>Action: Clerk</b></p>
09.23.08	<p><b>Neighbourhood plan</b></p> <p>In Cllr Lawson's absence there was no report but the importance of a Plan was noted in the light of the new draft Local Plan.</p>

09.23.09

**Monthly Parish Council finance report**

A summary and note of the bank balance to 31 August 2023 had been circulated to councillors and was tabled. Bank statements to 31 August 2023 had been reconciled with the cashbook.

- **Income and payments for the year to date (1 April to 31 August)**

A copy of the cashbook showing payments made since the last meeting was tabled.

Total income to 31 August 2023: £22,802.50

Total outgoings to 31 August 2023: total £24,325.32 plus VAT £815.17, total £25,140.49

- **Balances:** The TSB current account held £25,842.61 and the NS&I account held £3,335.36 as at 31 August 2023, a total of £29,177.97

- **Payments to note and approve**

A list of payments for approval had been circulated. Payments were approved unanimously as follows (Cllr Benterman taking no part in relation to the payment to Neil Benterman):

Date	Transaction description	Supplier	£ Incl VAT
07/07/2023	Replace defib battery and pads (Gt Easton)	Community Heartbeat Trust	261.54
07/07/2023	Hedgecutting Brocksmead land	Steve's Gardening Services	300.00
07/07/2023	Cut riverbank	Steve's Gardening Services	160.00
12/07/2023	Hedgecutting hall carpark	Steve's Gardening Services	120.00
12/07/2023	Treat weeds in car park and around hall	Steve's Gardening Services	50.00
18/07/2023	Hedgecutting Brocksmead land (second session)	Steve's Gardening Services	150.00
25/07/2023	Fees for title register and plan, land with overgrown hedge next to pavement	HM Land Registry	6.00
24/08/2023	Audit fee PKF Littlejohn LLP	PKF Littlejohn LLP	252.00
07/09/2023	Replace defibrillator pads (Duton Hill, replacement plus spare)	Community Heartbeat Trust	130.74
11/09/2023	Staining fixtures on green: benches, flower box and footpath sign	Steve's Gardening Services	140.00
14/09/2023	Demolition of Laundry Lane buildings and disconnect/reconnect electricity supply	Gladwyns developments Ltd (formerly Mackness Contracting Ltd)	7,261.68
not yet paid	Removal of vegetation from river at Brocks Mead Approved by clerk using delegated powers on grounds of urgency and now reported to the council.	Gladwyns developments Ltd	tbc 1,980
not yet paid	Treatment of hogweed on parish council land	Neil Benterman	318.00
not yet paid	Donation for wreaths for Remembrance Day (s137 LGA 1972)	Royal British Legion	45.00
not yet paid	Conservation clean of war memorial	Bakers of Danbury Heritage Ltd	2,250.00

It was noted that the removal of vegetation from the river had previously been carried out by the Environment Agency but had not been done for some years. The work should not need to be repeated for several years. The expense of the work at Laundry Lane was noted also to be exceptional and relating to land belonging to a registered charity for which the council is the trustee. The draft budget for the parish council for 2024-25 would be on the agenda of the November council meeting.

- The council noted that the external auditor (Littlejohns) had carried out a limited assurance review and reported that the annual reports (AGAR) and supporting information was satisfactory. This report was being displayed and made available for public access as required by the regulations.

09.23.10	<p><b>To consider action on poor mobile signal in parish area</b></p> <p>Cllr Stevens explained that the traditional copper phone lines would be removed by the end of 2025. After that, residents would need a good mobile signal or a broadband connection to use a phone. There would be no traditional “landline” connection and phones would use Voice over Internet Protocol technology instead. Mobile companies seem to have no plans to improve the signal locally and Ofcom has not responded to Cllr Stevens’ enquiry. He planned to contact the local member of parliament to ask how the parish should deal with this worrying situation and would report her response. <b>Action: Cllr Stevens and others.</b></p> <p>On a related matter it was pointed out that power cuts are not infrequent, locally, and will prevent the use of internet-based phones, as Wi-Fi routers obviously depend on a power supply. Cllr Hahn recommended that residents install a UPS [uninterrupted power supply] device in their homes which would switch a broadband connection to power from its battery in the event of a power cut.</p>
09.23.11	<p><b>To consider installing picnic benches and/or tables on open spaces</b></p> <p>After discussion it was agreed that this should be discussed with the committee raising funds for equipment at Great Easton (see 09.23.05 above). <b>Action: Chair.</b> It was agreed that currently the parish council did not have sufficient funds for this in the current year and nor did the Duton Hill Community Association.</p>
09.23.12	<p><b>To consider setting up a Facebook page or profile, to publicise news and supply information</b></p> <p>After discussion it was decided by a vote of 4 in favour, one against, to set up a Facebook page in the name of the Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council. It was agreed this should operate as a virtual noticeboard not a discussion forum and would include links to the website. The clerk should be the administrator. <b>Action: Clerk.</b></p>
09.23.13	<p><b>To consider quotations for conducting a safety and tree-health survey on land under the control of the council and to select a contractor.</b></p> <p>Two contractors had quoted. After discussion it was decided by unanimous vote to engage Eco Trees, on the basis that although their quote was about 10% higher than the other, they had visited the sites and were known to have provided good reports for other councils. <b>Action: Clerk</b></p>
09.23.14	<p><b>Planning applications, decisions and progress on planning matters</b></p> <p>The clerk had circulated a chart of progress on outstanding matters. Links had been supplied to recent decisions and the planning committee agendas.</p> <p><b>UTT/23/2270/FUL – land at Brookside Duton Hill – demolish garage and build one house.</b> It was noted that this new house would be behind the existing neighbouring property. The council had no comments on the application but asked the clerk to establish whether the layby opposite Brookside was a passing place or available for off-street parking. <b>Action: Clerk</b></p> <p><b>UTT/23/2389/HHF and 23/2390/LB- Section 73A Part retrospective application to install 3 rooflights.</b> Cllrs Hahn and England took no part in the decision on the council’s response to consultation and abstained. It was resolved unanimously (among councillors present and voting, in accordance with Standing Orders) to await Place Services’s (conservation officers) views before revisiting the application. Thereafter the clerk may submit comments under her delegated power to do so. <b>Action: Clerk</b></p>
09.23.15	<p><b>TO RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES’ REPORTS (FOR ITEMS NOT SHOWN SEPARATELY ON THE AGENDA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Open spaces including playing fields and play areas</b> Cllr England reported that none of the several welders she had approached about repairing the slide from the Great Easton playground had been able to take on the work but she was still waiting to hear from one. It was noted that the clerk had not yet heard whether the wasps’ nests in the Burns playing field had been found and removed. Giant Hogweed spraying had been arranged as a matter of urgency (see list of payments approved at 09.23.09 above) as it was starting into growth and the cost was within the amount allowed in the current year’s budget. A quotation had been obtained for an eradication programme by a specialist, and this would be considered at the next council meeting and for inclusion in the budget for 2024-25.</li> <li>• <b>Footpaths, road safety and highways</b> – See items 09.23.04 and 09.23.05 above.</li> <li>• <b>Airport</b> – no additional issues. The council has endorsed the response of Stansted Airport Watch to the airport’s noise consultation. The period for residents to respond to that consultation has now been extended until November 2023.</li> <li>• <b>Community activities and events</b> – no additional issues to report.</li> <li>• <b>Dunmow United Football Club</b> —see report at 09.23.05 above regarding work at Laundry Lane. The club’s arrangements regarding parking in Duton Hill associated with matches at Burns Playing Field</li> </ul>

	<p>were noted and their leaflet to visiting clubs and families had been supplied to the parish council. The clerk was asked to circulate this to councillors. <b>Action: Clerk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>IT, website and social media</b> –the new website was now operating and the old one had been taken down. See discussion relating to Facebook at 09.23.12 above.</li> </ul>
09.23.16	<p><b>Items for next meeting's agenda and in the Five Parishes magazine</b></p> <p>For the next agenda: consideration of a quotation for eradication of giant hogweed. For the Five Parishes magazine: to thank the retiring editor.</p>
09.23.16	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS</b></p> <p>Thursday <b>26 October</b> 2023 at 7pm and Thursday <b>16 November</b> at 7pm (<b>note change of date</b>).</p>
09.23.17	<p>There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.45 pm.</p>