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MINUTES

Minutes of the Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 26 October 2023 in Great Easton Village Hall.

Present:

Councillors

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

Clerk: Kate Rixson

Two 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
10.23.01	Apologies for absence Apologies were noted, and the reason accepted by resolution, from Cllr Hurst.
10.23.02	Declarations of interest Cllr Benterman declared a pecuniary interest in a contract to be approved.
10.23.03	Minutes of meeting on 28 September 2023 The minutes of the council meeting on 28 September 2023 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chairman.
10.23.04	Chair's report and receiving reports on progress for items not listed separately on the agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways – overhanging hedges at Snow Hill. Cllr Neale reported that he had not had the promised call from the landowner and would contact him again. Action: Cllr Neale. • Village Green – Cllr Haynes contributed to the discussion of options and how to gauge local views. The Great Easton Community Association committee had concluded that it was not in a position to canvass local residents' opinions and preferences. It was agreed that obtaining a transport/highways expert report could be considered, and the clerk should request quotations for advice. Action: Clerk Names on the war memorial (now cleaned) had originally been picked out in black according to Imperial War Museum records. The clerk had a recommendation for a craftsman to repaint them and would obtain quotations. Action: Clerk • Parking next to Tilty church – The new archdeacon's contact details were needed. Action: Clerk, Chair
10.23.05	Public participation session The issue of how the weight limit came to be removed from the bridge over the Chelmer (Great Easton) was raised. The chair confirmed that this was a Highways Authority (Essex County Council) decision, on the basis of an engineer's report from 2009, as part of a county-wide review. The report assessed the bridge as capable of carrying 40 tonne vehicles.
10.23.06	District and County Councillors' reports 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. Cllr Haynes reported that the district council had approved the draft Local Plan for its next stage. There would be an extraordinary full council meeting on 30 October to decide whether to put a draft Local Plan out for consultation with local residents. Thereafter the Plan would be available for comment by councils. Cllr Haynes reported that several district councillors were concerned about the evidence base for the Plan. Cllr Haynes confirmed that the count of 110 houses for Great Easton (parish area) included houses built since 2018 and that two sites in the parish were earmarked – a field near Brocks Mead owned by Mr Trembath and a site at Gallows Green.

	Parish councillors expressed concern that development in the parish was unsustainable due to poor transport links, the only public transport being a bus service which might be withdrawn in two years' time according to the current County Council consultation on buses. It was agreed that a Neighbourhood Plan was needed, to enable the parish to set its own development plan, and that this would be pursued actively in the New Year.																									
10.23.07	<p>Clerk's report on items not listed separately on the agenda, and correspondence</p> <p>The Clerk's Report had been circulated and was taken as read (annexed to the hard copy of these minutes). No questions arose.</p>																									
10.23.08	<p>Financial Reports and Decisions</p> <p>A summary and note of the bank balance at 30 September 2023 had been circulated to councillors and was tabled. Bank statements to 30 September 2023 had been reconciled with the cashbook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Income and payments for the year to date (1 April to 30 September)</p> <p>Total income to 30 September 2023: £43,802.50 – precept paid in full.</p> <p>Total outgoings to 30 September 2023: total £32,570.86 plus VAT £2,117.00, total £34,687.86</p> <p>Balances: The TSB current account held £37,340.24 and the NS&I account held £3,335.36 as at 30 September 2023, a total of £40,675.60, with an unpresented cheque for £45 outstanding. Available balances were therefore £40,630.60.</p> <p>Payments to note and approve</p> <p>A list of payments to note or approve had been circulated. Payments were approved unanimously as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Purpose</th> <th>Net of VAT</th> <th>VAT</th> <th>Including VAT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>12 Oct 2023</td> <td>Hedge-cutting at Brocks Mead</td> <td>400.00</td> <td>0</td> <td>400.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12 Oct 2023</td> <td>Cutting car park grass</td> <td>50.00</td> <td>0</td> <td>50.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23 Nov 2023</td> <td>ICO fee for registering as data holder</td> <td>35.00</td> <td>0</td> <td>35.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>To be arranged</td> <td>Phone, mileage, stationery</td> <td>To be advised and reported</td> <td></td> <td>To be advised and reported</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Comparison of actual spending and income in the year to date with the budget for 2023-24</p> <p>An analysis of expenditure and income for the first half of the year (to 30 September 2023) had been circulated and tabled. It was taken as read. Questions were raised concerning unanticipated spending and an apparent overspend if the current rate of income and expenditure continued. It was noted that spending would not be evenly spread over the 12 months of the year and the forecast suggested outgoings would be within the budget at the end of the year. The cost of demolishing derelict buildings at the Laundry Lane football ground had been met from reserves as planned when the budget was set, as it was a one-off. The cost had been less than anticipated but still substantial and had inflated expenditure in the first half of the year.</p> <p>The budget for 2024-25 would be considered at the next meeting (16 November 2023).</p> 	Date	Purpose	Net of VAT	VAT	Including VAT	12 Oct 2023	Hedge-cutting at Brocks Mead	400.00	0	400.00	12 Oct 2023	Cutting car park grass	50.00	0	50.00	23 Nov 2023	ICO fee for registering as data holder	35.00	0	35.00	To be arranged	Phone, mileage, stationery	To be advised and reported		To be advised and reported
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10.23.09	<p>To consider draft salary budget</p> <p>This had been circulated and was taken as read. It was approved by unanimous vote.</p>																									
10.23.10	<p>To consider donations under s137 Local Government Act 1972 and otherwise</p> <p>It was noted that requests had been received from Uttlesford Citizens' Advice and Essex and Herts Air Ambulance Trust. The donations budget and the s137 allowance would cover these and it was resolved by a unanimous vote to give £250 to each of EHAAT and Citizens' Advice. Action: Clerk</p>																									
10.23.11	<p>To consider playground safety reports</p> <p>These would relate to the Great Easton and the Burns playing field playgrounds and were awaited from RoSPA. They were not yet available but were expected within a couple of weeks.</p>																									
10.23.12	<p>To consider report on tree health and safety</p> <p>A report had been commissioned on trees on all the land owned or managed by the council and was awaited.</p>																									
10.23.13	<p>To consider quote for eradication of giant hogweed</p> <p>It was noted that this weed was growing on council land and needed urgent attention. An initial treatment had been applied and a quotation obtained from a specialist horticulturalist to eradicate it over a period of a year or more. The quotation had been circulated. It was noted that for such specialist work it was not</p>																									

	<p>possible to obtain three quotes and that a decision based on one quote was permissible under the council's financial regulations.</p> <p>The quotation was for £1,822, covering Burns Playing Field, Great Easton playing field and the river path in Great Easton (east bank only). Cllr Benterman took no part in the discussion or vote having declared an interest. The work was approved and the quotation was accepted by unanimous vote. The expenditure was noted for inclusion in the 2024-25 budget. Action: Clerk</p>
10.23.14	<p>Planning applications, decisions and progress on planning matters</p> <p>UTT/23/2620/HHF – The Paddocks, Mill End – proposed front extension. The council did not wish to comment.</p> <p>UTT/23/2468/HHF and 23/2469/LB – Calmsden, Gallows Green – 1 ½ storey extension. The council did not wish to comment.</p> <p>Appeal 3323661 – rear of Marshes, Tilty – domestic storage - appeal start date 26 October 2023 now announced, to proceed by written representations. It was noted that the council's original comments would be forwarded to the planning inspector by Uttlesford DC and it was agreed not to add further representations. A schedule of the outcome of previous planning applications was supplied.</p>
10.23.15	<p>To receive representatives' reports (for items not shown separately on the agenda)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open spaces including playing fields and play areas Cllr England reported that the only welders who had responded concerning work on the stainless steel slide (from the Great Easton playground) had said they were unable to take on the work. Cllr Neale offered to approach another firm. Action: Cllr Neale • Footpaths, road safety and highways – See items 10.23.04 above. • River interests – it was reported that work had been done to clear a mass of vegetation, including a tree growing in the riverbed, from the stretch of the river Chelmer running through Brocks Mead open space (owned by the council which therefore had obligations, as owner of the river bank, to control flooding). The contractor had advised that large quantities of sand and gravel had been washed through a waste pipe into the river and this had built up in the river. The Environment Agency would need to deal with this. Action: Clerk • Airport – it had been noted that the airport had a large construction project near the Coopers End roundabout. The purpose was not clear. The representative would make enquiries so that information could be added to the council website. The clerk would supply Stansted Airport Watch's email address. Action: Clerk • Community activities and events Cllr Neale confirmed that the Great Easton Community Association had arranged a quiz and firework display in November and a winetasting event in December. They would be putting up the Christmas tree on the green and arranging carol-singing around the tree. There would be a children's Christmas party. • Dunmow United Football Club – the club had laid out a new car park at Laundry Lane and were aware of a new grant fund available for sports clubs. It was noted that there had been delays in concluding a lease for adjoining land which was owned by Land Securities. • IT, website, social media and communications – Cllr Hahn reported that the website now has a facility to report potholes and other highways issues directly to Essex Highways via a link. Following each meeting, the approved minutes would now be uploaded to the site to replace the draft. This had presented technical difficulties in ensuring minutes would appear in date order but this problem had been solved. The report of the conclusion of the 2022-23 audit in September had been uploaded. The clerk has created a Facebook page, and profiles for both the Parish Council and the Clerk. The profiles have joined the Great Easton Village group and the Duton Hill and Tilty Community group. The page is not yet fully set up and is a work-in-progress. Action: Clerk Cllr Stevens reported that he had raised issues of poor mobile signal and the ending of BT copper wire connections with the constituency member of parliament. She had replied, pointing out that BT will have a legal obligation to continue to provide a landline service where required. However she had not provided any assurances about any improvement in mobile signal coverage.
10.23.16	<p>Items for next meeting's agenda and in the Five Parishes magazine</p> <p>For the next agenda: to consider the draft budget.</p>
10.23.17	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Thursday 16 November at 7pm (note change of date).</p>
10.23.18	<p>There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.30 pm.</p>