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MINUTES

Minutes of the Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 25 January 2024 in Great Easton Village Hall.

Present:

Councillors

Cllr T Martens (Chairman), Cllr M Benterman, Cllr C Hurst, Cllr P Neale and Cllr J Stevens.

Clerk: Kate Rixson

Three members of the public attended, two from 7pm and the third from 7.25pm, until item 01.24.18 when the meeting was closed to the public and press

	The Chairman opened the meeting at 7 pm
01.24.01	Apologies for absence Apologies were noted, and the reasons accepted by resolution, from Cllr Hahn and Cllr England.
01.24.02	Declarations of interest Cllr Benterman declared a pecuniary interest in item 11.
01.24.03	Minutes of meetings on 16 November 2023 and 4 January 2024 The minutes of the council meetings on 16 November 2023 and 4 January 2024 were approved as accurate records and signed by the chairman.
01.24.04	To consider and approve draft budget and set the precept The draft budget was discussed and it was agreed to defer the decision to enable a detailed review by councillors and for a resolution to be put to the February or March meeting. Action: Councillors, Clerk The precept demand was agreed unanimously at £49,000 for the 2024-25 financial year and would be delivered to the paying authority Uttlesford District Council immediately. The demand was duly signed. Action: Clerk
01.24.05	Public participation session A request was made to ask the district council to change the arrangements for the recyclable waste they collect. It is transported to the Tiptree/Colchester area for processing. Instead it might be possible to process the waste in the district. Enquiries will be made. The council was asked to ensure that a tendering process was in place for groundworks, hedgecutting and tree surgery contracts. The chairman confirmed that proper procedures would be followed. The continuation of the green waste skip service purchased from the district council was requested for 2024. Serious concern was expressed about damage to the village green and to verges near the ford along The Endway and the council was requested to ensure that the damage was repaired and/or the cost covered. The chairman confirmed that he would request this when the farmer concerned returned from holiday.
01.24.06	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. These now seemed to have been dealt with. • Village Green and War Memorial – The clerk reported that no transport consultant was yet available as all those approached were disproportionately expensive. The Local Highways Panel officer had said that the County Council highways authority could not advise and that some problems could not be engineered out. There was concern about dangerous parking by parents waiting for children on the walking bus. To raise this with the school. Action: Clerk <p>It was noted that community support was essential for any parking restrictions and the Great Easton Community Association might assist with establishing if this could be engaged. The chair would discuss this with the committee. Action: Chair</p> <p>Monumental masons had provided Cllr Neale with an indication of the cost of repainting the letters on the memorial, at around £2,000. The clerk was awaiting a quotation. It was suggested that funds</p>

	<p>be raised locally and from grants for this purpose. Action: Clerk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking next to Tilty church – The new archdeacon’s contact details were now available so contact would be made. Action: Clerk, Chair • Reports on playground equipment and tree safety and health The clerk reported that RoSPA had checked playground equipment at Burns Playing Field and Great Easton and the structures were generally sound. A tree survey had shown that some felling and tree surgery was needed within about three months and it was reported that quotations were being obtained. Action: Clerk, Chair. 																				
01.24.07	<p>District and County Councillors’ reports District and county councillors could not attend due to clashing commitments.</p>																				
01.24.08	<p>Clerk’s report on items not listed separately on the agenda, and correspondence A written report (annexed to the hard copy of these minutes) had been made available and was taken as read.</p>																				
01.24.09	<p>Parish Council Financial Reports and Decisions A summary and note of the bank balance at 31 December 2023 had been circulated to councillors and was tabled. Bank statements to 31 December 2023 had been reconciled with the cashbook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and payments for the year to date (1 April to 31 December 2023) Total income to 31 December 2023: £49,310.96 – precept paid in full, VAT refund received. Total outgoings to 31 December 2023: total £43,823.29 plus VAT £2,884.53, total £46,707.82 • Balances: The TSB current account held £30,783.74 and the NS&I account held £3,335.36 as at 31 December 2023, a total of £34,119.10. • Payments to note and approve A list of payments to note and others to approve had been circulated. Payments were approved unanimously as follows: <table border="1" data-bbox="328 999 1445 1274"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date due</th> <th>Purpose</th> <th>Net of VAT</th> <th>VAT</th> <th>£ Incl VAT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>31 Jan 24</td> <td>Scribe accounting software (Starboard Systems Ltd)</td> <td>345.60</td> <td>69.12</td> <td>414.72</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11 Jan 24</td> <td>RoSPA (Playsafety Ltd)</td> <td>362.00</td> <td>72.40</td> <td>434.40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 Jan 24</td> <td>Eco Tree Care and Conservation Ltd</td> <td>927.18</td> <td>185.44</td> <td>1,112.62</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of actual spending and income to date with the budget for 2023-24 An analysis had been circulated and was tabled at the meeting. • National Savings and Investment account It was resolved unanimously to close this account and transfer the balance to the TSB current account. (Note: the balance on this account is not an earmarked reserve.) Action: Clerk 	Date due	Purpose	Net of VAT	VAT	£ Incl VAT	31 Jan 24	Scribe accounting software (Starboard Systems Ltd)	345.60	69.12	414.72	11 Jan 24	RoSPA (Playsafety Ltd)	362.00	72.40	434.40	16 Jan 24	Eco Tree Care and Conservation Ltd	927.18	185.44	1,112.62
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01.24.10	<p>To approve urgent work on trees as advised It was resolved unanimously to defer this item to the next meeting, by which time quotations were expected to be available. Action: Clerk</p>																				
01.24.11	<p>To select a contractor for grass-cutting in 2024 It was resolved to defer this to the end of the meeting. See below.</p>																				
01.24.12	<p>To consider grants under s137 Local Government Act 1972 and other powers It was resolved to make no grants at this meeting but that the clerk should refer any specific requests to the council at the next meeting. Action: Clerk</p>																				
01.24.13	<p>Response to correspondence from the Essex Shed Network It was agreed that the clerk should respond with dates on which councillors could attend a meeting. Action: Clerk</p>																				
01.24.14	<p>To approve policies for dealing with complaints and vexatious communications Draft policies had been circulated and were tabled. The clerk advised that the policies were standard templates issued by the Society of Local Council Clerks and included best practice. The drafts were approved unamended and would be added to the website. Action: Clerk</p>																				
01.24.15	<p>Planning applications, decisions and progress on planning matters A schedule of the outcome of previous applications was supplied and is annexed to the hard copy of these minutes. The following new applications had been made:</p>																				

	<p>23/3186/FUL – Coldharbour Farm, Tilty – erection of 1 dwelling and demolition of agricultural barn (revised application).</p> <p>23/2899/FUL – Maysland Farm, Dunmow Road – conversion of outbuildings into dwelling (revised application).</p> <p>Appeal ref 3333617 against refusal of UTT/23/2389/HHF and 23/2390/LB – The Dairy, Grange Green, Tilty. Application to retain three rooflights.</p> <p>The council decided not to submit comments or further comments in relation to either of these applications.</p>
01.24.16	<p>Village Hall Report</p> <p>It was agreed to defer this to later in the meeting. See below.</p>
01.24.17	<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 It was noted that Mr Trembath had agreed to cut a path between the Great Easton playing field and Burns Playing Field which would be a significant improvement. Dunmow United Football Club would be vacating Burns Playing Field from 1 June 2024. Any new use of the playing field would take account of the restrictive covenant in the 1988 Deed of Gift which passed ownership to the parish council. This limited its use to “playing fields”. • Footpaths, road safety and highways – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Better warning signs for the ford in Great Easton were needed. Action: Clerk to contact Local Highways Panel/County Councillor ○ Potholes at the B184 Thaxted Road and The Endway junction were deep and filled with water from below. Action: Clerk to contact Highways Authority/County Councillor ○ Public concern about damage to verges and the green by large farm vehicles was noted and discussed. Action as at 01.24.05 above: Chairman • River interests – it was confirmed that the Environment Agency would no longer undertake work on the River Chelmer and was relying on the owners of river banks to manage the river including flood prevention. • Airport – a report was likely at the February council meeting. • Community activities and events – both Community Associations were planning events for 2024 which would be publicized in due course. • Dunmow United Football Club – see “open spaces” above. • IT, website, social media and communications – It was noted that the Village Hall charity (Great Easton Parish Hall Fund) trust minutes and governing document were now on the website as requested by the Trust. The charity annual accounts would be added.
01.24.18	<p>To select a contractor for grass-cutting in 2024 (agenda item 11 having been deferred to this point).</p> <p>Cllr Benterman, having declared a pecuniary interest, left the meeting for this item.</p> <p>The council resolved unanimously to exclude the public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1(2) on the basis that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.</p> <p>After discussion the council resolved unanimously to engage Steve’s Gardening Services to carry out ground maintenance in the parish area on the terms set out in his quotation dated 5 January 2024, for 2024-26, the council having the option to extend this for a further two years. The council also resolved to approve Neil Benterman as a contractor for ad hoc work.</p>
01.24.19	<p>Village Hall report (agenda item 16 having been deferred to this point)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Income and payments for the year to date (1 April to 31 December 2023) Total income to 31 December 2023: £4,086.14– hall hire plus VAT refund and investment income received. Total outgoings to 31 December 2023: total £6,989.25 plus VAT £459.82, total £7449.07 ○ Balances: The TSB current account held £31,747.28 and the Unity Trust Bank account held £878.81 as at 31 December 2023, a total of £32,626.09.
01.24.20	<p>Meeting dates in 2024, including Annual Parish Meeting/Annual Assembly and Annual Parish Council meeting</p> <p>It was agreed that meetings would continue on the last Thursday of each month, with no meeting in April, August or December. The Annual Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council meeting and the Parish Meeting (Assembly) for Great Easton parish would be combined with the May meeting.</p>
01.24.21	<p>There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.45 pm.</p>