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MINUTES

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council combined with the Annual Parish Meeting (meeting of electors) held at 7.00pm on Thursday 30 May 2024 in Great Easton Village Hall.

Present:

Councillors

Cllr M Benterman, Cllr J England, Cllr D Hahn, Cllr J Heath, Cllr C Hurst, Cllr T Martens, Cllr P Neale and Cllr J Stevens.

Clerk: Kate Rixson

District Cllr Haynes and four other members of the public.

	The retiring Chairman Cllr Martens opened the meeting at 7 pm and welcomed all attending.
05.24.01	<p>Election of the chair and declaration of acceptance of office</p> <p>Cllr Martens (proposer Cllr England, seconded by Cllr Hahn) was elected unanimously and made a declaration of acceptance of office as chair. He remained in the chair for the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Martens reported that this year is the 130th anniversary of the creation of Great Easton Parish Council and Tilty Parish Council. Books of declarations of acceptance of office by chairmen and councillors of Great Easton Parish Council since 1894 were among the council's stored records and were shown to councillors. It was agreed to continue using these original books for declarations as neither was full.</p>
05.24.02	<p>Election of the vice-chair and declaration of acceptance of office</p> <p>Cllr Stevens (proposer Cllr Hahn, seconded by Cllr England) was elected unanimously and made a declaration of acceptance of office.</p>
05.24.03	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>There were no absences.</p>
05.24.04	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>None declared</p>
05.24.05	<p>Minutes of the meeting on 28 March 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the council meeting on 28 March 2024 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chairman.</p>
05.24.06	<p>Public participation session – issues raised:</p> <p>Great Easton playground: Urgent cleaning of the swings, repair or removal of the slide, and other work on equipment, was requested. Councillors were invited to meet on 4 June at the playground to hear from a contractor able to install new equipment. The chairman reported existing plans to repair the slide and asked that decisions be added to the next agenda. Minor expenditure which was urgent (i.e. needed before the next meeting) or within budgets could be authorised by the clerk.</p> <p>Flooding on pavement on The Endway: water has been draining across the pavement from between two houses for many months. Algae is now making the pavement dangerously slippery. Although the parish council has no authority or role in solving the problem (previously investigated by Anglian Water and Highways and determined to be for the landowners/householders to fix) it was agreed that the chairman would bring the problem to the attention of those concerned.</p>
05.24.07	<p>District and County Councillors' reports</p> <p>Cllr Foley was unable to attend. Cllr Haynes reported that the pre-election period of sensitivity had now begun in relation to the General Election on 4 July, so there would be no political activity or decisions until after that date.</p> <p>Local Plan: the second draft was intended to be published in July, for further local consultation.</p> <p>Council tenants: There had been changes to the arrangements with the contracted repair and maintenance firm Norse. Tenants would be informed.</p>

	<p>Cllr Foley has been elected to be Chair of Uttlesford District Council.</p> <p>It was noted that the Planning Appeal relating to the land to the rear of Marshes in Cherry Street Duton Hill had been dismissed and the matter should now be dealt with immediately by Planning Enforcement at Uttlesford District Council.</p>
05.24.08	<p>Minutes of previous meetings</p> <p>This item was not discussed as no decision was needed.</p>
05.24.09	<p>Chair's report on items not listed separately on the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Green – the contractor had been asked by the farm business to go ahead with repairs to the edge but the ground had been too wet. Action: Chair to contact contractor • Parking next to Tilty church – the chair had met the new archdeacon at the end of April and she had asked pertinent questions before agreeing to consult colleagues and revert to the parish council. Action: Chair to contact in about two weeks. • Tree surgery – Quotes were needed from the tree surgeons approached. Action: Chair and Cllr Stevens • Pavilion/former changing rooms at Burns Playing Field – this is in poor repair and a quote for the work needed will be presented at the June Parish Council meeting. Regenerating the building and the playing field was important now that Dunmow United Football Club had officially ended their lease. The chair was aiming to meet the Duton Hill Community Association as soon as possible to gauge local residents' views. The regeneration of Burns Playing Field including the building should be a regular agenda item. Currently the consensus was to use the building as a Community Shed and the clerk was collecting information on how to implement this, which would be reported to the council. Action: Clerk to contact the Community Payback Scheme regarding work to clear weeds and pavilion contents. Chair to contact DUFC to ask for removal of goalposts. • Essex Wildlife Trust field in Duton Hill – the grass has been cut regularly as it has been used for parking by football club visitors/members to avoid obstructive parking near the playing field. It will now only be cut when needed such as DHCA events.
05.24.10	<p>Clerk's report on items not listed separately on the agenda, and correspondence</p> <p>A written report (annexed to the hard copy of these minutes) had been made available and was taken as read. The clerk reported that the research, sorting and archiving of the council's stored documents was nearly complete. The council thanked the volunteer who had been working alongside the clerk since January for her invaluable assistance and contribution to the project. Documents and materials which had come to light (such as the books of declarations referred to at 05.24.01 above) would be exhibited at the Open Gardens event and other occasions.</p>
05.24.11	<p>Neighbourhood Plan/ Neighbourhood Plan steering group</p> <p>It was noted that practical help was available from RCCE. As the draft Local Plan allocated housing to the village of Great Easton it was very important to have the views of Great Easton residents and it was hoped that the Community Association could spread the word. A group of residents needed to form the steering group.</p>
05.24.12	<p>To consider and/or approve internal audit report, Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 and public access to accounts</p> <p>12.1. The internal auditor John Lewis was thanked for his work on the council's audit. His report on page 3 of the Return was noted</p> <p>12.2. The Annual Governance Statement questions (Form 3 Section 1) were considered by the council and it was agreed that a response of "yes" should be entered for all questions. The Statement was duly signed by the Clerk and Chairman</p> <p>12.3. The Accounting Statements (Form 3 Section 2) were considered by the council taking into account the bank reconciliation and assets register. The restatement of the value of fixed assets for 2022-23 and the reason for doing so was noted. The Statements had been signed on 6 May 2024 by the clerk as Responsible Financial Officer and was signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>12.4. The Statement of Variance from the previous year and the Assets Register were noted.</p> <p>12.5. The council noted that the Clerk would set a period of 30 working days, to include the first ten working days of July, for the exercise of public rights relating to the accounts. A Notice of Public Rights in the prescribed form will be published on the website and noticeboard no later than the day before the beginning of the period. Action: Clerk to return Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR and supporting documents to the external auditor as required.</p>

05.24.13	<p>Parish Council Financial Reports and Decisions</p> <p>A financial summary and note of the bank balance at 30 April 2024 had been circulated to councillors and was tabled. Bank statements to 30 April 2024 were made available to councillors and had been reconciled with the cashbooks. A list of previously-approved payments made since the last meeting had been circulated and was noted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and payments for the year to date (1 April to 30 April 2024) Total income to 30 April 2024: £24,500 (first half of precept) Total outgoings to 30 April 2024: total £4,111.72 including VAT • Balances: The TSB current account held £47,491.50 as at 30 April 2024. It was noted that the auditor had advised the council to open an interest-bearing instant access account to avoid a large balance in an account which paid no interest. • Payments (contractual, statutory or due under an obligation) approved in advance including by direct debit and continuing authority by debit card The following payments were authorised for payment as they fall due: Contractual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Payroll service fee £300 approx (annual); ○ Clerk’s salary (monthly); ○ Essex Pension Fund contributions (monthly); ○ Clerk’s mobile phone £4.50 approx (monthly); ○ Clerk’s training costs if training session approved; ○ Accounts software package £350 approx (annual); ○ Parish Online mapping service £85 approx (annual); ○ Garden waste skip from UDC, as budgeted (annual); ○ Grass-cutting on parish land as agreed with contractor; ○ Electricity supply at Burns Playing Field pavilion (monthly direct debit); ○ Gigaclear broadband £68 approx (monthly direct debit); ○ Microsoft email and cloud services approx £32 (monthly). Annual subscriptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Essex Association of Local Councils pro rata to electorate; ○ Society of local Council Clerks pro rata to salary; ○ Rural Community Council of Essex approx £80; ○ Uttlesford Association of Local Councils approx. £25. Statutory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information Commissioner’s Office registration approx. £35 (annual direct debit); ○ HMRC PAYE tax and National Insurance; ○ External auditor’s fee £220 approx, annually ○ Costs of election if needed, payable to Uttlesford District Council Other obligations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Essex Wildlife Trust £50 (monthly direct debit) • Other payments as circulated before or at the meeting. The following were approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ £50 for grass-cutting at Duton Hill EWT site 29 April 2024 ○ £118.40 including VAT for toner cartridge (cost to be shared with Broxted Parish Council pro rata to hours worked by K Rixson as clerk) ordered 19 May 2024. ○ Renewal of insurance with Clear Insurance (formerly BHIB) for 2024-25 by 31 May 2024. The initial quote of £1,809.94 had been reduced to £1,764.36 by the removal of the demolished buildings at Laundry Lane from the policy.
05.24.14	<p>Village Hall Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and payments for the year to date (1 to 30 April 2024) Total income to 30 April 2024: £429– hall hire. Total outgoings to 30 April 2024: £679.44 including VAT • Balances: The TSB current account held £9,563.90 and the Unity Trust Bank account held £21,952.41 as at 30 April 2024, a total of £31,516.31. • It was noted that the roof had been patched to prevent the leak.
05.24.15	<p>Proposal to apply for a grant to restore the War Memorial from the War Memorials Trust</p> <p>The clerk reported receiving advice from a specialist stone mason (Independent Memorial Inspections in Nottingham) on options including having the letters re-cut before they were repainted, or fixing new stone blocks to the steps or next to the memorial with the names cut there. The edges of the letters had become</p>

	<p>uneven so repainting might not achieve good results. The clerk had therefore approached several monumental masons and one would be inspecting and providing a quote for hand-cutting the letters so that they could be re-painted (assuming, as recorded by the Imperial War Museum, that the letters had originally been painted). It was noted that there were 685 letters on the memorial.</p> <p>It was agreed that a pre-application form should be completed for the War Memorials Trust and Cllr Neale was thanked for locating this source of funds. The memorial would first need to be registered on the WMT website War Memorials Online. It was noted that WMT advised that obtaining a grant would take several months at least.</p> <p>It was reported that the Great Easton Community Association had discussed supporting this project and was strongly in favour. Cllr Stevens proposed that a joint group should be set up to start fundraising.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to add memorial to War Memorials Online and complete pre-application form.</p>
05.24.16	<p>Planning applications, decisions and progress on planning matters</p> <p>New application: UTT/24/1281/HHF – Barnards Farm, Snow Hill - retrospective application to build an extension. The council did not wish to comment</p> <p>Appeals: It was noted that both were proceeding by written representations so any comments previously submitted by the council would be sent to the Planning Inspector for consideration.</p> <p>UTT/23/2927/LB and 2926FUL – Grange Green Barn, Tilty – two single-storey extensions refused January 2024.</p> <p>UTT/23/2564/FUL – Barn at Old Forge, Duton Hill – conversion and extension of barn to form one dwelling (refused January 2024)</p> <p>The council decided not to make any further comments.</p>
05.24.17	<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 – See above • Footpaths, road safety and highways – It was noted that some footpaths had been ploughed over. Cllr Foley was thanked in his absence for his persistence in relation to the condition of the B184 at the junction with the Endway. • River interests – It was reported that walking the permissive footpath along the river was not possible currently. A footpath from Burns Playing Field to Great Easton Playground was being planned by the landowner. Action: Chair to contact landowner. • Airport – the council's response to the Night Flight restrictions consultation was on the PC website under "latest news". • Community activities and events – Beacons in Great Easton and Duton Hill would be lit on 6 June to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Great Easton Community Association had organized a scarecrow competition and Open Gardens event for Sunday 16 June and would use the Village Hall for a pop-up café. It was confirmed that the contractor would carry out an extra cut on grass on the open land at Brocks Mead in Great Easton. • Dunmow United Football Club –The club had now vacated Burns Playing Field, bringing their lease to an end. • IT, website, social media and communications – Cllr Hahn would look into creating a new area of the website for access only by councillors. This could hold confidential documents.
05.24.18	<p>Items proposed for next meeting's agenda</p> <p>A proposal to join the 100 Parishes Society; consideration of quotes for tree surgery and repairs to the building at Burns Playing Field; replacing the traffic mirror at Tilty Church Lane; work on equipment at the Great Easton playground.</p>
05.24.19	<p>The date and time of the next meeting was confirmed as 7pm on Thursday 27 June 2024 in the Function Room of the Three Horseshoes in Duton Hill.</p> <p>It was noted that the room was a self-contained area and no alcohol would be served in the meeting room</p>
	<p>There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.16 pm.</p>