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MINUTES

Minutes of the Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 25 July 2024 in the Function Room, The Three Horseshoes, Duton Hill.

Present:

Councillors

Cllr T Martens (Chairman), Cllr M Benterman, Cllr J England, Cllr D Hahn, Cllr J Heath, Cllr C Hurst, Cllr P Neale and Cllr J Stevens.
 Clerk: Kate Rixson

Seven members of the public attended.

	The Chairman opened the meeting at 7 pm
07.24.01	Apologies for absence None.
07.24.02	Declarations of interest None declared.
07.24.03	Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting The minutes of the annual parish council meeting on 30 May 2024 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the chairman.
07.24.04	<p>Public participation session and Items 10 and 13 on the agenda</p> <p>Item 10: Proposals for the regeneration of the Burns Playing Field and its facilities.</p> <p>The Chair explained that a plan was needed for the future use of the playing field. He confirmed that the lease to the football club had ended and therefore the football pitch would no longer be used, but under the terms of the gift to the parish council the land must be used for recreation. Both the small building and the field itself are owned outright by the parish council.</p> <p>The council would take account of its legal obligation to promote biodiversity in its management plan. Some diseased or damaged trees would have to be removed and weeds and brambles would be cut back. There is a programme to eradicate giant hogweed. The Chair invited comments on the preferred use of the field and building from members of the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Duton Hill Community Association requested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no change in the programme of grass-cutting, so that no areas would be left to grow wild. • that they take over the building to use for DHCA activities and storage. They would aim to raise money to refurbish it. • a formal consultation process before the council took decisions on the future uses of the playing field and building. DHCA felt that recreational use might include installing picnic tables and benches, for example. <p>It was observed that when the land was sold to Douglas Burns (who had given it to the parish council in 1988) the previous owner had wished the land to be a playing field and recreation area for the benefit of residents so it was important to keep this overriding aim in mind. It was suggested that a hard-standing parking area could be constructed on the field, to ensure that users did not impinge on local residents.</p> <p>The chairman confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the current grass-cutting programme would continue until March 2025 but would be reviewed when the council set its budget in November 2024. The cost exceeded £3,000 a year and this affected the precept/council tax paid by local residents. Last year's budget had been reduced by 15% to avoid an unacceptable rise in the precept. • Biodiversity could be promoted by leaving some unmown areas. This might save money as well as creating a pleasant and varied environment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council was renovating the building to make it usable for a number of purposes. • Consideration could be given to creating a car park although this was likely to be expensive. A quote of £5,000 had been obtained in 2021. • Tonight's meeting was the start of the consultation process and the council would also request views informally. All ideas were welcome and the council hoped to provide something for everyone. A date for a public meeting for local residents, including the playing field's neighbours, should be set with the assistance of DHCA. Action: Clerk <p>Item 13: Proposal that the council agree to buy an item of play equipment for the Great Easton playing field at a cost of approximately £10,000.</p> <p>There was a wide-ranging discussion including contributions from members of the public. The Great Easton Community Association playground committee reported its successful fundraising for new and replacement equipment. It hoped to start installing this in Spring 2025. A contribution of £10,000 from the parish council would make a significant difference.</p> <p>The council commended the playground committee's hard work and confirmed that new equipment would be insured, inspected and maintained by the council. However the current council budget (April 2024 to March 2025) did not allow for expenditure of £10,000 on play equipment and funds were not currently available. If this amount were added to the 2025-2026 budget it would require a 20% increase in the precept.</p> <p>It was noted that the playing field was part of a larger area of riverside land owned by private individuals, so was not under the control of the council. The village had had permission to use it as a recreation ground for decades and this was still the case. The council maintained contact with the owners.</p> <p>The playground committee planned to apply for additional grants. Sources of grants for a range of play and sports equipment were suggested by councillors and District Councillor Foley, who requested further details so that he could assist.</p> <p>It was agreed to defer the proposal to the next meeting and to allow a "totaliser" to be put up outside the village hall. Action: Clerk</p>
07.24.05	<p>District and County Councillors' report</p> <p>District Councillor Foley had sent a detailed report by email which would be circulated. He advised the council of an important full council meeting next Tuesday, to decide whether to start a "Regulation 19" consultation on the draft Local Plan. This would entail the full council approving the draft and there is some opposition to it from district councillors for some wards.</p> <p>As a county councillor, Councillor Foley has again asked Highways about the repair to the road surface on the B184 outside P and A Wood. Water is seeping through the repair and he has been told by Essex Highways that at some point the road will be closed for a full investigation and repair. Cllr Foley's petition to Essex County Council was received. He has highlighted delays and poor standards of road repairs.</p>
07.24.06	<p>Chair's report and receiving reports on progress for items not listed separately on the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Green – the chair reported that, following the recent successful repair, the green had again been damaged by a large vehicle driving over it. Installing a physical barrier was the favoured solution and Cllr Neale would send details to the clerk. Action: Cllr Neale • Parking next to Tilty church – the archdeacon had not yet responded and the chair would send a reminder. Action: Chairman
07.24.07	<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.</p>
07.24.08	<p>Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>After discussion it was agreed to hold an informal public discussion in September with the help of RCCE's NP adviser Nicky Joshua and Cllr Haynes who would both be asked to attend. Nicky had been asked to be specific about the practical tasks members of the steering group would need to carry out, e.g writing a leaflet, delivering it door-to-door, etc. It was felt that there was now strong interest in creating a NP but this meeting should be advertised as much as possible. Action: Clerk</p>
07.24.09	<p>To consider holding parish council meetings every other month</p> <p>After discussion and recognising the importance of giving adequate opportunities for public participation the council unanimously agreed to hold full council meetings in January, March, May, July, September and November of each year. It agreed that occasionally an extra meeting would be needed to consider urgent matters or approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return before the deadline of 30 June. The scheme of delegation to the clerk should be checked with this new programme of meetings in mind. It was noted that councillors would also be attending meetings of the Parish Hall Fund charity trust. Action: Clerk</p>

07.24.10	<p>Proposals for the regeneration of Burns Playing Field See item 07.24.04 above</p>
07.24.11	<p>Mirror on Tilty Church Lane Purchase of two mirrors at £200 each plus VAT, and installation costs, was approved unanimously. (Budget category Asset Maintenance/routine.) Action: Clerk</p>
07.24.12	<p>Proposal to join The Hundred Parishes Society Details had been provided. Membership for the parish council was unanimously approved at a cost of £10. Action: Clerk</p>
07.24.13	<p>Proposal to buy an item of play equipment for the Great Easton Playing Field at a cost of approximately £10,000. See item 07.24.04 above</p>
07.24.14	<p>Proposal to order three Remembrance Day poppy wreaths The parish council unanimously agreed to order three Type B wreaths, two of these on behalf of the community associations which would reimburse the council. The net cost would be £20 and this was approved. (Budget category Community Support/Remembrance Day wreath.) Action: Clerk</p>
07.24.15	<p>Parish Council Financial Reports and Decisions A summary and note of the bank balance at 30 June 2024 had been circulated to councillors and was tabled. Bank statements to 30 June 2024 were made available to councillors and had been reconciled with the cashbooks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and payments for the year to date (1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024) Total income to 30 June 2024: £24,500 (precept) Total outgoings to 30 June 2024: total £11,553.92 including VAT • Balances: The TSB current account held £40,049.30 as at 30 June 2024. • Payments to note and approve <p>There were no new payments requiring approval except those appearing elsewhere on the agenda. A list of payments from 1 May to 1 July 2024 was tabled and noted. The clerk confirmed that a donation for use of the Essex Wildlife Trust land in Duton Hill was still being made although the grass was being cut only for events, to reduce expenditure.</p>
07.24.16	<p>Village Hall Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and payments for the year to date (1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024) Total income to 30 June 2024: £1,479.55 – hall hire plus investment income. Total outgoings to 30 June 2024: £1,578.67 including VAT • Balances: The TSB current account held £8,800.97 and the Unity Trust Bank account held £22,866.66 as at 30 June 2024, a total of £31,667.63. • It was reported that regular bookings were being maintained and one-off bookings were healthy. • It was noted that a trust committee meeting would be held shortly, by video. Action: Clerk
07.24.17	<p>Planning applications, decisions and progress on planning matters A note of the outcome of previous applications had been circulated and was tabled. The following new applications had been made: UTT/24/1455/FUL – Maysland Farm, Dunmow Road – demolition and conversion to 1 self-build dwelling - Amendments to scheme approved under UTT/23/2899/FUL (comments due by 12 August). The council did not wish to comment. UTT/24/1664/HHF – Wheatlands, The Endway – 2-bay garage and storage shed – Alternative scheme to previously approved UTT/22/0402/HHF (comments by 31 July). The council did not wish to comment. UTT/24/1703/FUL – south of the Old Post Office, Dunmow Road – new self-build dwelling (comments by 5 August). The council wished to see the Place Services’ view on the effect of the development on the nearby scheduled ancient monument Great Easton Motte castle. This was not yet available – enquiries would be made of the planning officer. Action: Clerk UTT/24/1748/FUL – Folly View, Broxted Rd, Great Easton – extension and dormer windows (comments by 12 August). The council did not wish to comment. UTT/24/1678/FUL – Tilty Hill Barn, Cherry St, Duton Hill – change of use to mixed residential and commercial, conversion of barn for use as home office (comments by 16 August). The council did not wish to comment.</p>

07.24.18	<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 – a query had been addressed to District Councillor Martin Foley about the growth of giant hogweed along the river banks, on parish council land and, mainly, on other land not within the council's control. A response had been supplied explaining that the parish council had treated the plants in Spring. It was noted that a second application, to any new growth, might be needed in the autumn and this had been included in the eradication plan. The council noted a question from the public participation session concerning weeds and brambles near benches at Great Easton playing field. The chairman will check if this is being dealt with in the grass-cutting contract and, if not, make arrangements for cutting back. Action: Chair • Footpaths, road safety and highways – a local resident had recently stepped in to remove a fallen tree branch which was obstructing the lower road at Duton Hill and had done this on a voluntary basis. It was agreed that a letter of thanks and appreciation should be sent. The bus shelter in Duton Hill had been graffitied and needed cleaning. Action: Clerk • River interests – nothing new to report. • Airport – nothing new to report. • Community activities and events – Great Easton Community Association: The Open Gardens event and scarecrow competition had been popular after a wet start. • Dunmow United Football Club – the club had now vacated the Burns Playing Field and the goal posts had been removed. The club has asked for permission to put up permanent structures at the Laundry Lane sports field and this had been agreed. • IT, website, social media and communications – nothing new to report.
07.24.19	<p>Resolution to exclude the press and public to discuss sensitive matters</p> <p>The resolution was passed unanimously. In the absence of public and press the council unanimously agreed to accept a quotation to carry out works on the former changing rooms at the Burns Playing Field amounting to £3,120.00 plus VAT. The work would include removing the existing changing room facilities and water tank. The guttering and downpipes would be replaced and the soil stack vent renovated. Basic kitchen and bathroom facilities would be in place. If grants were not available to cover the cost, it would be met by virement from the Asset Maintenance/river bank management budget.</p>
07.24.20	<p>The date and time of the next meeting was confirmed as 7pm on Thursday 26 September 2024 at Great Easton Village Hall.</p>
	<p>There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.15 pm.</p>