

# FURNEUX PELHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting held on Thursday, 12 January 2017, at 8pm in the Furneux Pelham Village Hall.

**Present:** Cllr S Bratt, Cllr C Cantes, Cllr R Gale, Cllr H Smart and Cllr Mrs D White.

**In attendance:** F Forth, Parish Clerk and 2 members of the public.

## **17/1) Apologies**

None.

## **17/2) Declarations of interest**

None.

## **17/3) Adoption of previous minutes**

It was unanimously RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3 November 2016 as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

## **17/4) Matters arising**

- a. Common land - Cllr R Gale reported on the viability of taking ownership of the common land at East End green, primarily following a discussion with Land Registry. A number of advantages would accrue as a result, e.g., giving more control. Ownership would be via application for adverse possession which would cost £70 if no legal advice were required. It was highlighted that any application would be unlikely to succeed as need to demonstrate that it has been properly managed to the exclusion of all others. Whilst there are minutes, there are no signs and no functioning commons committee. Additionally, there is no paper trail in terms of maintenance as this is done on a voluntary basis. Consideration should be given in future to paying for mowing etc. Suggestion made that should put measures in place to demonstrate properly managing e.g. signs, a commons committee and evidence maintaining the common land. The Chair stated that he'd previously been in favour of securing ownership but now considers that the downsides outweigh the benefits. Securing ownership would result in more responsibility and cost to the Parish Council and the common land is not just the green at East End. Following discussion, it was RESOLVED that a voluntary group be formed under the direction of Cllr H Smart and involve those contiguous to the common land. A site visit will be arranged to identify issues to be addressed and this will be reported back to the Parish Council. Any non-

routine work to be agreed via Cllr H Smart. It was clarified that there would be no expectation of funding from the Parish Council.

**Action: Cllr H Smart**

- b. Village Hall Committee - Cllr D White reported that quotes are still being sought for the kitchen repairs.
- c. Councillor vacancy - vacancy still remains and a replacement has not been identified by any Cllr. Position to be re-advertised. **Action: Clerk**
- d. Telecommunications - BT fault number to be added to the website shortly. **Action: Clerk**
- e. Next meetings - meeting dates for 2017 have been set and notified to all Cllrs as well as detailed on the website.

### 17/5) Parishioner feedback

- a. 30 mile speed limit - Chair has requested that the sign be moved further out but no response has been received as yet.
- b. Parking for school - Chair has spoken with the school regarding this and the following points noted:
  - Re-introducing the 'walking bus' will be considered. It has been dropped as the 'snake' of children had to walk in the centre of the road to walk past parked cars;
  - One-way system is still being promoted which works better in the morning;
  - 'Stop and drop' is effective in the morning but less so in the afternoon due to varying times of arrival;
  - Walk to school weeks still occur but don't have the desired long term effect;
  - After school clubs have an arrangement to use the pub carpark; and
  - Head has put parking by the school as a Governor's agenda item and will feedback subsequently.
- c. Litter and flytipping - still being progressed. Cllr S Bratt has been using the online reporting function and there has been a good response. Villagers to be reminded to use this to report any flytipping seen.
- d. Branches past the sewerage works - this is in progress.
- e. Coffee morning in the Village Hall - Cllr S Bratt stated that this had been aimed at those expressing isolation. An advertisement had been placed in the December parish magazine to get in touch, including that the Parish Council would initially fund the morning with the expectation that it would become self-funding. No responses were received. Agreed to place the advertisement on the website and the noticeboards.  
**Action: Cllr S Bratt and Clerk**

## 17/6) Finance

### a. Update on current financial position

A statement of the budget to actual comparison as at 12 January, as circulated, was received. The financial position is on target to date. Following a question regarding the hedge cutting, the Clerk responded that it had been cut back by someone else this year and therefore unlikely for the budget to be spent. Consideration to be given to cutting back to the stumps next time i.e. well back from the footpath edge.

### b. Expenditure

It was RESOLVED to approve the following expenditure:

- JI Pridmore, Allotment path £1,500.00  
(Cheque issued prior to meeting in accordance with invoice terms)
- Clerk's expenses £46.20

Cheque and supporting documentation duly signed.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk's salary for January and February be approved and cheques to be signed when due.

### c. Approval of budget for 2017/18 and determination of the precept

### d. Forward financial plan 2017/18 to 2021/22

These items, which had been circulated with the agenda, were taken together as linked.

The Clerk highlighted that the information presented was essentially the same as that seen at the November 2016 meeting. The key difference to highlight was the increase in the New Homes Bonus although the information for 2019/20 onwards was still subject to changes. Question raised regarding how quickly the Parish Council receives the New Homes Bonus following a new build and the Clerk to investigate. **Action: Clerk**

It was agreed following discussion that there was no need to raise the precept. It was therefore RESOLVED to accept the budget as circulated and determine the precept at £3,000 for 2017/18.

### e. Donation to the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Information required by the Parish Council's Donation Policy had been received from the PCC's Treasurer and circulated with the agenda. It was discussed whether the PCC had sufficient funds within its bank account to cover the maintenance of the graveyard, particularly when there is another priority within the parish, namely Whitebarns Lane. Equally whether the PCC should be seeking financial support from the central body of the Church of England.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED to donate £800 to the PCC.

f. External audit update

The Clerk stated that the Parish Council's new external auditors would be PKF Littlejohn for the 2017/18 financial year onwards. Previously had expected to pay £100 to be part of the new body arranging the audit appointments but there has been no further mention of this. As income and expenditure is likely to be below £25,000, the Parish Council will be an exempt authority and no fee will be payable.

**17/7) Allotments**

Cllr Mrs D White reported that there are 9 vacant plots and these will be advertised in the parish magazine in February. The school were offered a plot free of charge but they are not in a position to accept this offer currently and would consider it in the future. A leaflet will be delivered to the new homes in the village and information can be put on the website.

**17/8) Village Hall Committee**

Cllr Mrs D White had been unable to attend the last meeting but reported that the fire regulations were all met and estimates for the kitchen work are being sought. The Christmas event was not held as several of the Committee members were away.

**17/9) Correspondence**

a. Planning applications

All planning applications received have been circulated.

b. Communications to Parish Clerk

The Clerk highlighted that the public meeting to launch the draft Furneux Pelham Conservation Area draft Character Appraisal and Management Proposals would be on the 8<sup>th</sup> February at the Village Hall (7-9pm). This will be advertised on the website and Facebook, with details included in the parish magazine.

c. Communications to or from Councillors

Cllr S Bratt referred to the Mary Wheatley Trust and confirmed that the Parish Council would like to receive feedback on its activities.

Cllr S Bratt also provided an update on the Barleycroft works issue as he had chased East Herts Council on this matter. EHC are currently investigating the possibility of obtaining an injunction to ensure the site complies with its consents.

**17/10) Residents comments**

Pallets waste

In response to a question raised about Pallets waste, Cllr S Bratt confirmed that contact had been made with the Environment Agency but no response had yet been received.

Following a comment made regarding potholes, the Chair confirmed that the best course of action is to use the online reporting facility to get these repaired. The more residents report potholes, the quicker they tend to get repaired.

**17/11) Next meeting**

Confirmed that the next meeting of the Parish Council is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 in the Village Hall at 8pm.

The meeting ended at 9:12pm.