

FURNEUX PELHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the annual meeting held on Thursday, 10 May 2018, at 8:00 pm in the Furneux Pelham Village Hall.

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

In attendance: F Forth, Parish Clerk and 5 members of the public.

18/28) Report from the Parish Council

Cllr S Bratt, as Chair of the preceding year, summarised the key points from the last year. (Full report at Appendix A). Cllr C Cantes was thanked for his years of service to the Parish Council and he received a round of applause following the announcement that this was his last meeting.

Cllr C Cantes thanked Cllr S Bratt for being Chair.

18/29) Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr S Bratt be duly re-elected to the office of Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing civic year. Cllr S Bratt duly signed his declaration of office.

18/30) Vice Chair

Following discussion, RESOLVED that Cllr H Smart be duly elected as Vice Chair of the Parish Council for the ensuing civic year.

18/31) Apologies

None.

18/32) Declarations of interest

None.

18/33) Adoption of previous minutes

RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 10 March 2018 as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

18/34) Matters arising

- a. Car park update - the Chair reported that the red landrover was still abandoned in the Parish Council car park: unlocked, windows open and keys in the ignition. In addition, he reported that a check of the licence plate identified that the vehicle is not taxed, has no MOT and has a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN). Agreed that, prior to involving East Herts Council, a letter be distributed to all Barleycroft End

households requesting that the owner of the vehicle get in touch to purchase a permit, or remove the vehicle. If no action is taken, the Parish Council will remove it. **Action: Clerk**

- b. Allotment lease - not applicable until September 2018
- c. Whitebarns Lane - see item 18/35 below.
- d. Playground - see item 18/36 below.

18/35) Whitebarns Lane

The Chair provided an update. At the last meeting, he reported that he'd written to the Chief Executive of Clarion Housing Group and, 7 weeks later, no response had been received. Consequently, using the helpline number for tenants, he'd phoned Clarion and been promised a reply to his letter by 3:30 pm today and still no response received.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council had taken this matter as far as it could, and the focus now needed to be on supporting residents to pursue this matter with Clarion. It was agreed that:

- the Parish Council would write a handover letter for residents, outlining the history, current position and proposed next steps; and
- residents to be encouraged to write to Clarion individually but these letters be despatched collectively with a covering letter.

Action: Chair and Cllr Mrs D White

18/36) Playground

Cllr P Watmough reminded those present of the actions taken to date to encourage potential users to get involved with developing the playground. The response has been limited but the Head of the Pre-School is keen to be involved and a further approach to be made through the school. A new resident at the meeting volunteered to help.

The next step will be to apply for a grant from East Herts Council, the deadline for which is the 25th June. As a reminder, the Clerk highlighted that any grant application had to go through her.

Action: Chair and Cllr P Watmough, with support from the Clerk

18/37) Councillor responsibilities

Following discussion, it was agreed that Councillor responsibilities would be as follows:

- Cllr S Bratt Business/Broadband/Waste directives
- Cllr R Gale Footpaths/Highways
- Cllr H Smart Planning applications/Common land
- Cllr P Watmough Playground
- Cllr Mrs D White Village Hall/Allotments

The Clerk outlined the process for filling the vacant Cllr position, with the first step being notifying East Herts Council to enable the vacancy to be advertised. Providing no request is made by 10 local government electors for an election, the Parish Council will be able to follow its Co-option Policy at the July 2018 meeting to fill the vacancy.

18/38) Parking restrictions

The Chair outlined the difficulty that has been faced by a resident near the school, and the restricted visibility for those turning right from Whitebarns Lane. The request had been made to consider what parking restrictions could be introduced to alleviate these problems.

Cllr C Cantes explained the difference between single and double yellow lines, including the issues with getting these in place in the first instance. Based on his experience, it was likely that a request would be turned down. The Clerk also highlighted that there had been a number of comments on Facebook opposing these proposed lines.

Ultimately, the question being posed was how to stop inconsiderate parking around the school. Following discussion, it was conceded that there is no easy solution and certainly nothing that the Parish Council could do. The Chair agreed to let the resident know.

18/39) Internal controls

a. Internal Audit

The Clerk reported that the Annual Internal Audit review had been completed for the 2017/18 financial year, and that this is recorded on page 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The review concluded that the Parish Council had the expected controls in place and no recommendations were made. It was agreed to note the review.

b. Review of effectiveness

The Clerk reported that the effectiveness of the internal controls in place from April 2017 to March 2018 had been reviewed and no issues

had been identified. This review underpins the Annual Governance Statement for the last financial year which is part of the next agenda item.

For information, the Clerk highlighted that this review had been undertaken in the past but had not been formally documented.

Documenting the review was a point that had been raised in the external audit briefing earlier this year.

RESOLVED to approve the review of effectiveness of internal controls for 2017/18.

18/40) Annual Governance & Accountability Return

Firstly, the Clerk reported that the unapproved Annual Governance and Accountability Return and detailed accounts were available on the Parish Council's website. [www.furneuxpelham.org.uk/accounts]

a. Annual Governance Statement 2017/18

The Clerk highlighted that the Annual Governance Statement, detailed on page 5 of the Return, reflects that the Parish Council has a system of internal control in place, as highlighted by the review of effectiveness considered under the last agenda item. Following consideration, RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2017/18.

b. Accounting Statements 2017/18

The Clerk highlighted that there are two versions of the accounting statements: very summarised version, detailed on page 6 of the Return, and the detailed accounts. Following consideration, RESOLVED to approve both formats of the Accounting Statements 2017/18.

c. Declare the Parish Council exempt 2017/18

The Clerk explained that the Parish Council now has the option of not being subjected to an external audit as its total income and total expenditure are below £25,000, although it can opt for an audit if it wanted to. On the basis that no audit will be undertaken, the Parish Council is required to formally declare itself exempt.

The certificate of exemption, detailed on page 3 of the Return, demonstrates that the Parish Council is below the required threshold. RESOLVED to declare the Parish Council exempt from a limited assurance review.

For completeness, the Clerk highlighted that the Parish Council had to comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code, covered below.

d. Period for exercise of public rights 2017/18

The Clerk explained that the inspection period, during which local electors can inspect the supporting accounting records and ask questions, is still required even though no external audit is being undertaken. In addition, an objection, relating to the accounts, can be raised with the external auditor.

Full details of the rights of a local elector are detailed on the website and the inspection period will be from the 4th June to the 14th July. This was noted.

e. Compliance with the Transparency Code

The Clerk confirmed that the requirements of the Transparency Code had been complied with, as demonstrated by the documentation circulated with the agenda and available on the Parish Council website.

18/41) Finance

a. Update on current financial position

A statement of the budget to actual comparison as at 10th May, as circulated, was received. There were no matters to highlight.

b. Expenditure

RESOLVED to approve the following expenditure:

Fred Knight, litter picking & grass cutting	£83.00
HAPTC, subscription	£312.49

Cheque and supporting documentation duly signed.

RESOLVED to approve the following limits for payments after the meeting:

Weedkiller for Allotments	£40.00
Clerk's expenses	£110.00
Insurance renewal	£350.00

In terms of the insurance renewal, the Clerk reminded those present that the current insurer, Aon, had pulled out of the market.

18/42) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

a. GDPR Risk Assessment

The Clerk explained the basis of the risk assessment, highlighting that the majority of the factors considered were high risk due to the lack of knowledge, at this stage, regarding arrangements put in place by Cllrs. It was also highlighted that the Regulations attract personal financial liabilities on individuals - Cllrs and the Clerk. RESOLVED to approve the GDPR risk assessment.

b. Implementation Plan

The Clerk highlighted that the Implementation Plan demonstrates that a significant amount of work had been completed, with the key remaining areas to address being:

- identifying the personal data held by Cllrs;
- updating consents held; and
- developing some specific policies.

The Plan was noted.

c. Appointment of Data Protection Officer (DPO)

The Clerk reminded those present that the budget for 2018/19 had included £280 for a DPO. Since then, an alternative had been found for £150 but the proposed bill had been amended to remove the DPO requirement. Despite that, it was still recommended good practice to appoint a DPO and the Clerk strongly supported this given the nature of the Regulations. Following discussion, RESOLVED to appoint the Local Council Public Advisory Service, for £150 per annum, as the Parish Council's DPO.

d. Privacy Policy

RESOLVED to approve the Privacy Notice.

18/43) Allotments

Cllr Mrs D White stated that there were 8 occupied plots and 7 vacant plots, and the fees had been passed to the Clerk. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) had been held in April and a midsummer BBQ has been planned.

18/44) Village Hall Committee

Cllr Mrs D White reported that the AGM had been poorly attended and despite advertising for new Committee members, no-one had come forward. The present Committee is continuing.

18/45) Correspondence

a. Planning applications

Since the last meeting:

- nothing new regarding the appeal in relation to the application to erect 5 dwellings on land at Barleycroft End - appealing the lack of decision by East Herts Council [3/17/0059/OUT];
- further appeal submitted - in relation to the refusal of planning permission to demolish chicken barns and erect 3 dwellings;

- 3 applications considered, 2 applications withdrawn and 2 granted permission; and
- 1 refused permission - this was incorrectly listed on the agenda as a referral to Development Management Committee (DMC) - an East Herts Council administrative error as the correct position was permission refused.

Details of all applications are on the Parish Council website and those since the last meeting are detailed in Appendix B.

It was noted that it was disappointing that permission had been refused in relation to application 3/18/0321/OUT, outline permission for 5 residential dwellings and removal of the Wood Chip Processing Facility, given that the Parish Council had commented on this application.

b. Communications to Parish Clerk

The Clerk referred to the following matters:

- Parochial Church Council - a thank you for the grant of £400 towards the upkeep of the village churchyard had been received;
- New Homes Bonus - information had been supplied on how the Parish Council had invested the bonus it had received since 2011, around £13,000, to East Herts Council upon request, and no feedback as yet;
- flood risk work - update that options remain the same and the informal drop in session will be on Tuesday 29th May between 4:30 and 7:30 pm in the Village Hall; and
- water companies - another dispute is in progress with Castle Water as a bill was received for £450, a waste water charge. Affinity Water, who supply the fresh water to the allotments, has also complained. Currently waiting for Thames Water to make the decision to cancel the non-existent supply.

c. Communications to or from Councillors

The Chair highlighted that an issue had arisen with site access in relation to a planning application that had been resolved by Cllr C Cantes.

18/46) Residents comments

In response to a question from a resident, the Clerk confirmed that the New Homes Bonus does not occur where a house is demolished and rebuilt.

A resident queried whether an allotment plot could be taken up at any time of the year and this was confirmed by Cllr Mrs D White.

18/47) Next meeting

Confirmed that the next meeting of the Parish Council is on the 5th July 2018 in the Village Hall at 8pm.

The meeting ended at 9:18pm.

Chairman's Annual Report May 2018

I am pleased to report that progress has been made on several of the issues in the Parish Council's Action Plan.

The *Community Morning*, intended to provide a regular meeting place for residents to meet up and keep in touch, has run monthly for the past year, with the enthusiastic support of the Village Hall Management Committee.

The intent to create a small playground at the rear of the Parish Council's car park met with almost universal approval when first floated publicly last October. Grant aid has been investigated and a (currently) small committee of three is intending to make a bid for funding later this month.

The allotments continue to provide a valuable amenity for a group of villagers, thanks to the ongoing efforts of a Councillor and the Clerk.

Further development of the Parish Council website has made the Council's working more transparent and informative, and I urge residents and local organisations to use the electronic calendar to promote and co-ordinate their village events.

The Parish Council has pressed both District and County Councils to provide timely and effective responses to the concerns of residents which lie outside the Parish Council's control. I must report that both the District and County Councils have fallen far short of any reasonable expectations, whether addressed directly or through elected representatives.

The condition of Whitebarns Lane, the compliance of the pallet yard with planning consents, and the safety of both children and residents adjacent to the school at drop-off and pick-up times remain unresolved and, on behalf of the Council, I assure residents that we will continue to press for solutions, despite all three issues being outside our direct powers.

The village has seen many planning applications over the past year. In the absence of widespread village comment, our general policy has been to note each application and rely on the expert application of the relevant planning law. The Council did however express a view on an application to remove the woodchip business and develop housing on the pallet yard site, which we considered had a wider impact on the village. All applications and decisions are now reported on the Parish Council website.

The Parish Council has raised the annual precept, collected through Council Tax, from £3,000 to £3,500. The decision to do so was not taken lightly, and took account of the need to appoint a data protection service as part of the new General Data Protection Regulations, and ongoing uncertainties around the payment of the New Homes Bonus. Despite the increase, Furneux Pelham continues to have one of the lowest precepts in the district.

I should like to record my personal thanks to the Vice Chair, other councillors, and of course to Fiona as the Parish Clerk for their hard work and support throughout the year.

On behalf of the village, I am proud to have the opportunity to pay tribute to the quarter century of exceptional service which Chris Cantes has given through his membership and, in particular, his enthusiastic chairmanship, of the Parish Council. Chris has decided to stand down for personal reasons and I hope you will all join me in saying a big 'thank you' and in wishing him well for the future.

Finally, I would like to thank those residents who have supported the Council and engaged with us to create a better and more sustainable community within the village, which I hope will increase in the year to come.

Thank you.

Stephen Bratt May 2018

Planning activity since the previous meeting:

Application number	Proposal	Action
<u>3/18/0954/OUT</u>	Outline planning permission for two detached 4 bedroom dwellings; all matters reserved at Land adjacent to The Spinney, Whitebarns.	Application considered
Appeal ref 18/00029/REFUS E <u>3/17/1657/FUL</u>	Demolition of chicken barns and erection 3 new dwellings at Land at East End Farm, East End.	Noted
<u>3/18/0514/OUT</u>	Outline planning for the erection of 1 three bedroomed dwelling at Wych Elm, Barleycroft End.	Application considered
<u>3/18/0336/FUL</u>	Erection of 2 5 bedroom detached dwellings and garages at The Spinney, Whitebarns.	Application withdrawn
<u>3/18/0321/OUT</u>	Outline permission for 5 Residential Dwellings and removal of Wood Chip Processing Facility - all matters reserved except for sale and access at Pallets Unlimited, Barleycroft End.	Permission refused
<u>3/18/0318/HH</u>	Single storey front extension to include a new storm porch along with a first floor (voided) extension above storm porch; new render and new timber framed window to enlarged opening to front elevation of house to match existing (Amendments to planning application ref: 3/17/2718/HH) at Perry Mill House, The Causeway.	Application considered Permission granted
<u>3/18/0118/SDDPN</u>	Change of use from B8 (storage and distribution) to residential (C3) to create 3 dwellings at East End Farm, East End.	Application withdrawn
<u>3/18/0074/HH</u>	First floor side extension, part two storey rear extension and front porch with proposed render wall materials; demolition of garage and erection of replacement at 4 The Street.	Permission granted