

FURNEUX PELHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 4 July 2019, at 8:05 pm in the Furneux Pelham Village Hall.

Present: Cllr S Bratt, Cllr R Gale, Cllr J Sinclair and Cllr P Watmough.

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

19/48) Apologies

Apologies were received and approved from Cllr H Smart.

19/49) Declarations of interest

None.

19/50) Adoption of previous minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th May 2019 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

19/51) Report on outstanding matters

- a. Whitebarns Lane - see item 19/52 below.
- b. Playground - see item 19/53 below
- c. Barleycroft End - the Clerk stated that a response is still outstanding.
- d. Binding minutes - the Clerk highlighted that she is still trying to identify a business to use to bind the minutes. As this is a low priority matter, completion of this will be reported in due course.

19/52) Whitebarns Lane

The Chair reminded those present that the informal legal opinion he had obtained indicated that there was a case for taking action. However, the hourly rates for engaging a solicitor on this matter were prohibitive and suggested that a letter should be sent to Clarion asking them for their view.

The Chair also highlighted that he had seen a Clarion tenancy agreement in relation to renting a garage only. The only relevant clause was to not cause an obstruction on the forecourt or the right of way. In discussion, this was considered a tenuous link.

Following discussion, it was agreed to continue to pursue the enforceable obligation included in the conveyance between East Herts Council and Clarion

Housing. Initially, this will be through a meeting with Cllr G Williamson (EHC) and the legal officers at East Herts Council.

Action: Chair/Cllr H Smart

19/53) Magazine

The Chair highlighted that there had been a series of meetings regarding the future of the existing parish magazine. It was clear that Braughing Parish Council will be supporting a specific magazine for its area which will not include anything in relation to Furneux or Stocking Pelham but no proposals had been seen.

During discussion, the following points were made:

- view that a magazine for the area needs to continue;
- include an electronic version to supplement a paper one;
- Chair of Stocking Pelham Parish Council interested in discussing a "Pelhams" magazine although acknowledged that Brent Pelham works with other parishes north of it;
- utilising the new Braughing magazine would be the simplest way forward but this would impact on the identity of Furneux Pelham as a village and not necessarily meet its needs;
- considering now so that an alternative can be in place when the existing magazine finishes;
- belief that the church is doing something but unclear as to what this is;
- need to identify the likely cost of compiling own magazine;
- ability to attract advertising may be an issue;
- potentially in line with the Gregorian calendar, the last St Mary's Review edition will be for February 2020.

**Action: Chair - Magazine meetings/meeting with Stocking Pelham
Clerk primarily - costs associated with producing a magazine
(financial and time)**

19/54) Vacancy

The Clerk reminded those present that the Parish Council had insufficient candidates for the election in May. After the election date, there was a "free" period of time to seek to co-opt someone. However, there was a deadline for this - 35 days after the election - and this had now passed.

The Clerk highlighted that the guidance issued by East Herts Council (EHC) states that "If the Parish/Town Council fails to exercise their power to co-opt within seven weeks (35 days computed as under paragraph 3) or if there is no quorum, EHC may order a fresh election to properly constitute the parish council". Clarification has been sought as to whether this means that the Parish Council goes back to the 1st stage of a casual vacancy - advertising to see if 10 electors want to request a by-election - or whether can start at the stage of advertising that the Parish Council is seeking to co-opt someone.

Following a request from the Clerk as to how the vacancy for a Cllr should be advertised, it was agreed that all the methods previously used should be continued: website; parish magazine; Facebook and notice boards.

Cllr R Gale asked what the process was to reduce the number of Cllrs and the Clerk agreed to find out.

Before moving on to the next item, the Clerk highlighted that East Herts Council had notified, in advance of the invoice being sent, that all parishes with uncontested elections would have to pay £51.15. It is likely that this would have to be paid before the next meeting.

19/55) Spruce up the village

The Chair stated that following the suggestions made at the Annual Parish Meeting, held prior to the Annual Meeting in May, a resident was prepared to take forward steps to make the village look more loved. For example, get signs replaced, signs washed, repair street furniture etc. A proposed project outline was tabled, titled "Furneux Pelham - an engaged village community" and covering the following points:

- Aesthetics:
 - Audit and upgrade of physical assets;
 - Environmental projects;
- Communication:
 - Village community newsletter;
 - Better use of Community Morning;
 - Web presence;
- Identify and integration;
 - Village calendar; and
 - Series of village walks.

Following discussion, it was agreed to support this project. In addition, the following suggestions were made:

- make better use of the Community Coffee Morning by inviting guest speakers, for example, Citizen's Advice, Police Community Support Officer, Ward Cllrs from East Herts Council and Herts County Council;
- make more use of calendar on the website although accepted that the community Facebook page is used more;
- publicise the Parish Council more through regular posting on the community Facebook page and submitting reports to St Mary's Review; and
- develop a series of local walks and publicise these.

In addition, in response to a question, the Chair clarified that the village sign was in the process of being repaired. It had taken some time to find a carpenter to undertake the work and the carpenter being used was not able to complete the repair immediately therefore currently not clear when it would back in place.

Note: during this item, the meeting was suspended between 8:48 pm and 8:54 pm whilst an urgent matter was dealt with.

19/56) Car park maintenance

It was agreed that the Clerk would ask Fred Knight to spray the weeds in the car park.

It was unclear who had cut the road side edge of the car park hedge and agreed that the remaining work to cut the hedges would take place in September. The Clerk would make arrangements for this work to be done.

It was noted that, recently, there were more people parking in the car park without permits, excluding those that have always paid. The Parish Council needs to decide whether to rigorously enforce the requirement for a permit or to consider it a village asset which reduces the parking problems in the road. The revenue from the parking permits is used to cover the maintenance costs. To date, no issues have been reported from users of the Village Hall that they cannot access the car park.

It was confirmed that the notice board in the car park contains the disclaimer. Potentially, consideration should be given to putting up signs that state "Permit holders only".

Finally, it was agreed to consider this point at the next meeting.

19/57) Road closures

The Chair highlighted that the recent consultation event in relation to the A120 bypass, held in the Little Hadham Village Hall, had highlighted that there would be several weeks where the road to Little Hadham from Furneux Pelham would be closed. During the closure, the proposed diversion would add 16 miles to journeys to Bishop's Stortford. Whilst accepting that the bypass was a good thing, the Chair raised whether, on behalf of residents, the Parish Council should make representations against this lengthy diversion. Following discussion, it was agreed that no further action would be taken.

19/58) Finance

a. Update on current financial position

The Clerk tabled a financial statement for the current position. There were no matters to highlight.

b. Expenditure

RESOLVED to approve the following expenditure:

Village Hall, Hall hire	£36.00
Clerk's expenses	£132.49

Cheques and supporting documentation duly signed.

In addition, the Clerk reported that the insurance renewal had been completed at a renewal cost of £344.66.

c. Donation requests

Furneux Football Club

Background to the request was provided, including that the Club had been playing on the brewery's field for 50 years. A donation of £200 was sought in order to cover the charge being levied on the Club by Greene King for the use of this site. Following discussion, and clarification on how the Club was run, RESOLVED to donate £200 to Furneux Football Club. The Parish Council were thanked by the Club's representative who was present for this item.

Furneux Pelham Parochial Church Council (PCC)

It was noted that no donation had been made to the PCC in the last financial year, £400 donated during 2017/18 and, prior to that, £800. Whilst, it was recognised that the church had recently had its lead roof stolen, the Parish Council has no legal power to donate funds to repair the building itself and the request had been made for support to

maintain the churchyard. Following discussion, RESOLVED to donate £500 to the Furneux Pelham Parochial Church Council.

19/59) Governance documentation

The Clerk outlined that the governance documentation had been reviewed and the results of that review had been summarised and circulated with the agenda. Minor amendments had been identified to ensure that documentation is in line with best practice or to reflect the position of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED to approve the governance documentation as amended by the Clerk.

19/60) Update from East Herts Council (EHC)

Cllr G Williamson (EHC) had given his apologies and provided an updated in relation to the Westland Green Travellers which was noted.

19/61) Correspondence

a. Planning applications

Since the last meeting, 1 application considered and 1 application refused permission.

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

b. Communications to Parish Clerk

The Clerk had no matters to raise.

c. Communications to or from Councillors

Cllr P Watmough reminded everyone present that Brookfest Music Festival was on this weekend.

19/62) Residents comments

A resident passed on their thanks for the hedge being cut along side the road, from the Village Hall car park to The Brewery Tap.

19/63) Next meeting

Confirmed that the next meeting of the Parish Council is on the 5th September 2019 in the Village Hall at 8pm.

The meeting ended at 9:39 pm.

Planning activity since the previous meeting:

Application number	Proposal	Action
<u>3/19/1047/FUL</u>	Conversion of existing garage to habitable use ancillary to main dwelling at Tinkers Barn, The Street.	Application considered
<u>3/19/0896/HH</u>	Demolition of conservatory and erection of single storey side extension at Clay Chimneys House, Furneux Pelham.	Permission refused