

# FURNEUX PELHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting held on Thursday, 5 September 2019, at 8:00 pm in the Furneux Pelham Village Hall.

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

**In attendance:** F Forth, Parish Clerk and 4 members of the public.

Prior to the meeting starting, the Chair welcomed Andy Naish from the Environment Agency for the community resilience item (ref 19/68)

## **19/64) Apologies**

None.

## **19/65) Declarations of interest**

None.

## **19/66) Adoption of previous minutes**

Following discussion, the Clerk revised the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph of 19/56 Car park maintenance to add "excluding those that have always paid" to the end of the opening sentence.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019, including the amendment described above, be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

Cllr J Sinclair requested that the vote be recorded. The vote was as follows:

- those for the motion: Cllrs S Bratt; R Gale; H Smart and P Watmough;  
and
- those against the motion: Cllr J Sinclair.

## **19/67) Report on outstanding matters**

The Clerk highlighted that she was in process of producing a document that would encompass the annual work programme of the Parish Council as well as detailing the matters outstanding for each meeting.

Specific to this meeting, the outstanding actions related to Whitebarns Lane, the magazine, Cllr vacancy and the car park. All of these matters are detailed as specific items on the agenda.

## **19/68) Community Resilience**

Andy Naish from Environment Agency provided information on the "communities prepared" project which supports those at risk of flooding. The project is led by a charity - Groundwork - and has national lottery funding.

Note - a number of handouts were provided which will be added to the Parish Council website.

The aim of the project is to support those at risk to establish a group and plan a response to a flood. The support is through training modules and/or the supply of personal protective equipment, for example road closure signs. It was considered that this could be the next step for those residents at the old brewery site, where an investigation project took place last year, and would require collaboration and support from the Parish Council.

The Chair outlined that there was a management company, consisting of residents, in place for the old brewery site. It was agreed that the next step would be to organise a telephone conference between Andy and the management company to enable further details regarding the project to be discussed.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- the project can be tailored to the needs of a communities so not necessarily just for flooding as could cover snow, fire etc;
- the Parish Council does not have an emergency plan; and
- those residents at risk of flooding probably did have the information required.

**Action: Chair to initiate contact between Brewery Management Company and Andy Naish**

## **19/69) Whitebarns Lane**

The Chair reminded those present that this was a long running issue with the outstanding issue being whether the conveyance between East Herts Council (EHC) and Clarion carried an enforceable obligation to maintain the roads adjacent to Whitebarns Lane. He also stated that he'd been back through the Parish Council minutes, back to 1955, to identify how the Whitebarns development had progressed and whether there were any reasons for why it was not connected to the main road. This did not elicit any information on ownership of the Lane or a liability to maintain.

Cllr G Williamson (EHC) had been provided with these notes. This information is now with EHC's Head of Service for Strategic Finance & Property for further investigation, the aim being to identify further avenues to explore. Cllr G Williamson (EHC) stated that the options for the body with responsibility for the Lane were:

- EHC as successor body to Braughing Rural District Council;
- Clarion;
- Herts County Council; or
- no-one.

The following points were also made in the subsequent discussion:

- the matter could be taken through the courts, but this would take years to resolve;
- EHC officers know that the Lane is used by EHC services, for example the refuse freighters;
- the Lane needs to be repaired to a certain standard before it can be adopted, and the cost provided previously to do this was around £200,000;
- a further option would be for someone to own the Lane, repair it and charge a toll;
- it is not clear at land registry who owns it and whilst it is normal for the homeowners with frontages on to unadopted roads to be responsible, in this case, there are no properties that front on to the Lane.

**Action: Chair with Cllr G Williamson (EHC)**

### **19/70) Magazine**

The Chair reported that since the last meeting, a note to all residents regarding the future of the magazine, prepared by the Vicar, had been delivered. The note referred to the fact that the church would not be competing or contesting the new magazine proposed by Braughing Parish Council, but she was seeking volunteers for editing a new magazine and an adverts manager, that would cover both Furneux Pelham and Stocking Pelham. The Chair highlighted that 2 people had responded to the Vicar, offering support/help but had not taken on the specific roles mentioned.

The existing magazine will cease by February 2020 although it was noted that Braughing Parish Council is not making its formal decision on the matter until next week Thursday.

It was agreed that if the church is not able to develop a replacement magazine, that the Parish Council would consider producing a secular version. A resident stated that those involved in producing the Albury magazine were willing to work with the Pelhams to develop a magazine in their format. Key to doing this would be having younger people involved in producing the magazine and pushing advertising space. The uptake of the existing magazine within both Furneux Pelham and Stocking Pelham was high.

### **19/71)      Vacancy**

Since the last meeting, the Clerk had received clarification from East Herts Council that the vacancy as a result of the election can remain vacant until the next election if there is no-one to co-opt. The advice was to leave a general note regarding the vacancy on the website, noticeboards etc.

In addition, the Clerk was informed that a village referendum is required to change the number of Cllrs, and this is costly (around £2,000 +) and not recommended as the national guidance suggests that the Parish Council should have 7 Cllrs anyway.

The Chair reported that, as a result of an advert placed in the parish magazine, a resident had expressed an interest in being co-opted. A number of Cllrs supported this resident and the intention will be to co-opt her at the November meeting, once the required forms have been completed and received by the Clerk.

### **19/72)      Spruce up the village**

The Chair reported that since the last meeting, the resident leading the "spruce up the village" project had walked round to identify what needed doing, apart from Upper East End which would be done in the coming week. This had identified the following action points:

- missing or broken road signs which would be reported to Herts County Council by the project lead;
- missing hydrant signs to be reported by the project lead and a resident clarified that this would need to be reported to local water company (either Affinity Water|Thames Water|Castle Water);

- noticeboards at the Village Hall, in the car park and by the school as well as the wooden seats around the parish need maintenance - repair and preserver - which the Parish Council is to arrange to be done; and
- sprucing up actions:
  - cleaning dull and dirty road signs;
  - trimming branches around signs; and
  - planting daffodils under "welcome to the village" signs.

A number of Cllrs and a resident present offered to help with cleaning signs and planting daffodils. The Clerk agreed to buy the daffodils - 100 required.

### **19/73) Dog poo bins**

Cllr J Sinclair reported that a resident had asked about dog poo bins, having flagged up the volume of dog mess on the football pitch and up Violets Lane.

The Clerk highlighted that emptying the bins is a service provided by East Herts Council (EHC) at a cost of £202.55 per bin (inclusive of VAT), currently, which means that the bin would be emptied and cleaned 65 times a year. In addition, she stated that a dog poo bin costs £100 + VAT upwards as dependent on capacity, and a post and fixings would also be required at an approximate additional £50 cost.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a costed proposal should be provided to the next meeting. The remaining cost to be identified relates to the bins and fixings, and Cllr J Sinclair agreed to investigate this. To identify the potential number of bins required, residents to be asked for their suggestions (via Facebook/website) for where the bins could be placed. Initial thoughts are that placement could be in relation to the beginning of major walks in the parish, with an expectation that only 2 or 3 bins are provided, bearing in mind that the bins need to be sited near roads for EHC to empty.

Finally, the Clerk stated that:

- dog poo bags can go in the normal rubbish bins; and
- elsewhere, a map of dog poo bins has been put up so that residents and visitors can find the nearest one to use.

**Actions: Cllr J Sinclair - identify and cost appropriate bins + fixings;  
Clerk - ask residents where should be placed**

## **19/74) Governance**

### Overall governance principles

Cllr H Smart stated that at the previous meeting, the Code of Conduct was re-approved. Since then, it had come to light that a Cllr had recorded that meeting without informing those present that he was doing so. Whilst the Code of Conduct does refer to the Nolan principles, these are not actually defined in the Code and it was agreed that the ten general principles, which includes and expands Nolan principles, should be included as an appendix. It had been considered that the principle of "openness" had been breached.

The Chair also reminded those present that the minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting but focus on decisions. In addition, members of the public have the right to not be recorded.

### Financial Regulations

The Clerk highlighted that after the July meeting, a revised model for Financial Regulations was issued. However, having compared this to the Financial Regulations approved in July, the only change proposed is to add para 6.19 to state clearly that the Parish Council does not have debit cards, credit cards or trade credit accounts.

RESOLVED to approve the revised Financial Regulations.

## **19/75) Car park**

Cllr J Sinclair highlighted that the pothole in the car park needs filling up and making safe. It was agreed that Cllr H Smart would ask Paul Turner for a quote.

The Chair reminded those present that whether the Parish Council should continue to charge for overnight parking in the car park was discussed at the last meeting. The charge is £50 per vehicle which some people have paid, and the Parish Council has not been particularly effective in collecting from other residents using the car park on a regular basis. Charges collected contribute to the maintenance of the carpark. It is also noted that residents in the area parking off-road improves traffic flow.

In response to a question, the Chair clarified that the Parish Council owns the carpark. It was conveyed to the Parish Council by Grange Builders as part of the Brewery Development and includes a covenant that restricts use to activities related to the use of the Village Hall, a separate charity.

Following discussion, which included the history of establishing the £50 charge, the problems of parking in the area, methods of enforcement and data protection issues, it was agreed to continue with the requirement for a permit to be held to park in the car park overnight. This requirement will be advertised together with a letter drop to local residents. Application forms will be included in the "welcome pack" and on the website. Those purchasing a permit will be given a laminated disk to display in their car.

It was noted that a resident who has regularly paid for a car park permit is happy to pay the fee.

**Actions: Clerk - promote permit scheme, prepare letter for nearby residents, improve signage, provide forms to residents and for "welcome pack"; Cllr J Sinclair - undertake letter drop**

## 19/76) Finance

a. Update on current financial position

The financial statement for the current position was noted. There were no matters to highlight.

b. Expenditure

RESOLVED to approve the following expenditure:

Major Barclay Farms, Allotment rent	£100.00
East Herts Council, Election expenses	£51.15

Cheques and supporting documentation would be signed after the meeting.

In addition, it was RESOLVED to pay £130.00 for the Village sign repair once the invoice had been received. It had been expected prior to the meeting.

The payment by direct debit to Affinity Water for the allotments of £27.72 on the 1<sup>st</sup> October was noted.

### **19/77) Update from East Herts Council (EHC)**

Cllr G Williamson (EHC) stated that not much had happened during August due to the summer holidays. He provided an update in relation to the travellers in Little Hadham as EHC had heard today that the High Court had upheld the injunction and ordered the travellers off the site. Sentencing would be later this month. In conjunction with this, the travellers had appealed against EHC's refusal of planning permission for the site and the hearing for this was scheduled for November.

### **19/78) Meeting dates**

The Clerk had circulated the proposed meeting dates for 2020 which were in accordance with the principle of first Thursday of the month except for January which was the second Thursday. These dates are:

- 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020;
- 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020;
- 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020; and
- 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

In addition, the Clerk stated that all these dates are detailed on the Parish Council website.

### **19/79) Planning applications**

The Clerk highlighted that since the last meeting, 1 application had been granted permission and 1 application had been refused permission.

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

### **19/80) Clerk's information**

The Clerk had no additional matters to report this month.

### **19/81) Councillor updates**

None.

**19/82) Residents comments**

The following actions were agreed for matters raised by residents:

- provide car park permit forms for inclusion in the welcome pack; and
- chase quotes for getting the car park hedge cut.

**Action: Clerk**

**19/83) Next meeting**

Confirmed that the next meeting of the Parish Council is on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 in the Village Hall at 8pm. Cllr H Smart gave his apologies in advance.

The meeting ended at 9.38 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.	Permission granted
<u>3/19/0932/OUT</u>	Outline planning application, with all matters reserved except for access, for the erection of 1 dwelling and garage for a farm worker at Greens Farm, East End.	Permission refused