

FURNEUX PELHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on Thursday, 5 November 2020, at 7:00 pm

Present: Cllr S Bratt, Cllr R Gale, Cllr T Langlois, Cllr R Rodrigues* and Cllr H Smart.

*Following co-option (Minute ref: 20/84)

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

20/83) Apologies

None.

20/84) Co-option of Parish Councillor

The Chair welcomed Romilda Rodrigues to the meeting. Romilda briefly outlined her background and reasons for wanting to join the Parish Council. Following this, it was RESOLVED to co-opt her as a Parish Councillor and she indicated her willingness to sign the appropriate governance documents with the Clerk after the meeting.

20/85) Declarations of interest

None.

20/86) Chair's announcements

The Chair reported that Mick Isard had passed away a few days ago. He had been a resident of Furneux Pelham for many years and had been involved in the Furneux Football Club for over 50 years. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the family to express the Parish Council's condolences.

20/87) Adoption of previous minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd September 2020 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

20/88) Report on outstanding matters

An update in relation to the following outstanding matters was provided:

- pallets yard - Cllr G Williamson (EHC) stated that there was no update at this time;
- road signs and marking - Cllr B Gale would be attending a meeting with Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) and Highways, along with other nearby village representatives, on 18th November to discuss local road issues and this matter will be followed up then;
- Allotment fence - the Chair reported that costings from the contractor for the allotment fence repair are still outstanding. The Clerk reminded those present that this was being funded from the New Homes Bonus

balance so would have no impact on the determination of next year's precept;

- Allotment lease - the Clerk reported that the signed allotment lease had been received although it was currently missing the page signed by Cllrs and this was being chased; and
- Car park hedge - the Clerk reported that the carpark hedge had been cut. In addition, she stated that it had been arranged that the contractor used would automatically cut the hedge each year but would notify her when so that cars can be moved from the carpark beforehand. Cllr B Gale highlighted that it would need an extra 2-3 foot reduction when cut next time to get it back to the original hedge height.

20/89) Vacancy

The Chair reported that Paul Watmough had resigned as a Parish Councillor. Thanks were expressed to Paul for his contributions during his time as a Cllr.

The Clerk reported that the vacancy had been reported to East Herts Council and the period advertising for an election had ended on the 4th November. As yet, no official notification had been received that no election had been called. Once this notification is received, the Parish Council will be able to co-opt.

20/90) Mary Wheatley Trust

The Chair explained the background to the Mary Wheatley Trust, including its purpose and how a Trustee is appointed.

Following discussion, noting that Paul Watmough had been a Parish Council nominated trustee, it was RESOLVED to appoint the following Cllrs as nominated trustees:

- Cllr H Smart, replacing P Watmough; and
- Cllr S Bratt, re-election.

Note - the appointment term is 4 years.

20/91) Barleycroft End

Drive safe scheme

The Chair provided the background to scheme, outlining the requirements regarding safety, visibility and sight lines. Three potential locations had been provided to the Police for assessment:

- with permission, a resident's driveway near the Old Common development;
- the Village Hall forecourt; and
- the frontage at the pub.

These options were discussed and progress will be reported at the next meeting.

Verges

The Chair outlined that there is a partial layby by the Brookside development and a suggestion had been received that the road could be widened at this point if the verges were removed.

Following discussion, it was agreed that this suggestion would be mapped for consideration at the next meeting. In addition, clarification of the ownership of the verge would be needed, suspected to be Highways.

20/92) Finance

a. Update on current financial position

The financial statement for the current position was noted. The Clerk highlighted that two cheques had been cancelled:

- £100 allotment rent - cancelled as replaced by a new cheque covering two years rent (see below) now that the new lease agreement had been signed; and
- £150 cheque for Data Protection Officer (DPO) - cancelled as the GDPR rules changed and a DPO was no longer required but the Parish Council opted to have one. The cheque had been held pending an invoice which was never received. Cancellation of this cheque and reversal in the cashbook results in the negative expenditure sum in relation to data protection requirements in the financial statement.

Finally, it was noted that the Parish Council's laminator would be removed from the asset register since it no longer worked. It was agreed that this would not be replaced as the Clerk has access to another laminator.

Note - laminator purchased in 2007/08 for £54.76

b. Expenditure

The following payments, made within budget allocations, since the last meeting were noted:

Fred Knight, litter picking & grass cutting	£71.62
Major Barclay Farms, Allotment rent for 2019 & 2020	£200.00
Castle Water, Allotment water	£54.39

RESOLVED to approve the following expenditure:

CDA Herts, subscription	£35.00
Tees, Allotment lease legal fees (balance)	£300.00
J Hart & Son Limited, hedge cutting at carpark	£450.00
FM Forth, Zoom licence	£115.10

Cheques and supporting documentation would be signed after the meeting.

In response to a suggestion to alternate future meetings between virtual and physical, the Clerk stated that the Parish Council only had legal powers to hold virtual meetings until May. Legislative changes would be required to enable virtual meetings beyond that date.

c. Initial Forward Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25

The Clerk highlighted that the initial budget document reflects what the expected outturn is and, based on her knowledge to date, what the budget for the next financial year looks like with the initial forward financial plan reflecting the initial budget information, extended for a further 4 years to see the impact.

Attention was drawn to the following key changes:

- after discussion at the September meeting, funds are no longer being set aside for future repairs to the allotment fence as this will now be covered by the unspent New Homes Bonus;
- no increase to the precept is proposed for 2021/22;
- future New Homes Bonus receipts are still considered high risk therefore these are excluded from the budget. Any future bonus be received will be added to the unspent balance for investment in the community; and
- formal notation that the general balance - available to spend line in the financial plans - be maintained at around £4,000. Based on current information, this can be maintained with an ultimate precept level of £5,500 but will, of course, need to be kept under review.

Following discussion, it was agreed that:

- the carpark should be gravelled all the way to the end, including topping up the gravel in the existing area, which would help keep the weeds under control although some hardcore may needed first for where it dips. This is to be funded from the New Homes Bonus; and
- the hourly rate for the litter picking should be increased to the minimum wage level and be maintained at that rate going forward.

20/93) Police

PCSO Leon de Bruyn was unable to attend the meeting but he had provided information that there were no reported crimes between 1st October and 2nd November 2020 in Furneux Pelham. However, there had been 3 recent burglaries close-by (2 in Anstey and 1 in Albury) where outbuildings had been broken into and tools removed from within.

It was highlighted that outbuilding burglaries is a recent crime trend in the area and residents are urged to ensure their outbuildings are secured safely or high valued items removed from within where possible. In rural locations, and with the nights drawing in, it is seen as an opportunity to target these area's due to their remote location and poor lighting.

Finally, a reminder that police focus is being directed towards the covid-19 situation given the second lockdown in place.

20/94) Update from East Herts Council (EHC)

Cllr G Williamson (EHC) commented that the Parish Council's proposed approach to the New Homes Bonus was appropriate. In addition, whilst nothing directly attributable to the Parish Council, he provided an update on the following matters:

- Chappel Lane, Little Hadham - there is a judicial review in progress against the appeal and the outcome of this is not yet known;
- second lockdown - financial support for businesses is expected but there are no details as yet;
- devolution - this is not being progressed in Hertfordshire; and
- planning reforms - East Herts Council submitted objections to the proposed reforms.

20/95) Planning

The Clerk highlighted that since the last meeting, 2 applications had been considered and 2 applications granted permission.

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

20/96) Clerk's information

The Clerk reported on the following matters:

- plans are in hand to enable the staged rally that was planned for this year to be run in 2021 with further details being provided in due course;
- results from the social and internet connection survey were included in the November community magazine;
- the A120 closures due to the bypass work are now not happening as originally intended; and
- the next census is happening on the 21st March 2021 and plans are being developed to ensure that everyone can participate in the census and be counted. How the Parish Council can assist in these plans is being discussed and further information will be provided in due course.

Cllr H Smart expressed interest in being involved based on involvement in previously in this work.

20/97) Councillor updates

Cllr B Gale reported that he had worked with Herts County Council to identify footpath signs that need to be replaced. Contractors will be employed to do this work and it is hoped it will be done by the end of the year.

Cllr T Langlois highlighted that residents in Whitebarns Lane had raised that car tyres are being ruined on this Lane. The Chair reminded those present that the legality of who was responsible for the maintenance of Whitebarns Lane had been investigated for a number of years with a clear resolution not being possible. The Parish Council had concluded its input into this matter when legal advice, reported at the March 2020 meeting, highlighted that the best course of action was that the residents affected should form a limited company to repair the Lane as a community type project. The Chair also noted that a group on social media had been formed which was pursuing local authorities for a resolution.

Both Cllrs Langlois and Rodrigues reported that there is a blockage in the river behind the pub - literally at the end of the pub garden. This is a matter for the Environment Agency and the Clerk agreed to provide contact details to pursue this matter with the Agency.

Linked to this, it was suggested that it should be publicised in the community magazine what the Parish Council can and can't do, with links to where residents need to report issues when not the Parish Council's responsibility. In addition, publicise in the magazine that rubbish should not be thrown in the river.

20/98) Residents comments

A resident thanked the Parish Council for giving consideration to the safety of residents along Barleycroft End.

20/99) Next meeting

Confirmed that the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held virtually on 14th January 2021 at 7pm.

The meeting ended at 8.01 pm.

APPENDIX A

Application number	Proposal	Action
<u>3/20/2017/FUL</u>	Demolition of existing buildings, erection of a replacement dwelling and outbuilding and new entrance driveway at Dingley Dell, The Street.	Application considered
<u>3/20/1960/FUL</u>	Increase to pitch to the Nave Roof, removal of lead on North aisle and replace with felt, removal of lead on South Aisle, replace with felt including repairs to gutter and the removal of lead to North elevation and replace with felt at St Mary's Church, The Street.	Application considered
<u>3/20/1853/FUL</u>	Proposals for 2 stables with hay and tack storage and menage at Land adjacent to Pheasant Hall, The Causeway.	Application considered
<u>3/20/1573/HH</u>	Provision of additional bedroom and bathroom accommodation to self contained residential unit to include roof lights at Johnsons Thatch, East End.	Permission granted
<u>3/20/0647/HH</u> & <u>3/20/0648/LBC</u>	Ground floor extension, to create ground floor WC and new entrance porch at Duck Street Cottage, The Street.	Permission granted