

FURNEUX PELHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on Thursday, 3 September 2020, at 7:05 pm

Present: Cllr S Bratt, Cllr R Gale, Cllr T Langlois, Cllr H Smart and Cllr P Watmough.

In attendance: F Forth, Parish Clerk and 1 member of the public.

20/69) Apologies

None.

20/70) Declarations of interest

None.

20/71) Chair's announcements

None.

20/72) Adoption of previous minutes

The Clerk apologised for the delayed issue of the minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 5th March 2020 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd July 2020 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 30th July 2020, to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and associated documentation, be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

20/73) Report on outstanding matters

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

- pallets yard - the Clerk confirmed that there is currently an active investigation and a site visit was undertaken on the 29th July to assess the current situation. The Chair reported that a local resident was considering taking the lack of action on this matter to the Planning Ombudsman;

- road signs and marking - Cllr B Gale reported that still waiting for Highways to action. Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) had agreed to look into this at the July meeting;
- Nature Centre in Stocking Pelham - Cllr B Gale had identified that the Centre had been a joint project between Essex County Council (ECC) and the National Grid, with the Essex Wildlife Trust managing the Centre on their behalf. ECC withdrew its funding and the National Grid were not keen to continue, particular as the Centre is on a vulnerable site;
- Allotment fence - a survey of the fence has identified that the deer and rabbit fencing is ok but about half of the wooden posts (28) have rotted at the base. The options are to take the fencing down and replace the posts or to put new posts close to the rotten ones and attach to the fencing. Agreed that the latter approach to be taken. The Chair agreed to obtain quotes. It was also agreed that if the cost of the work was less than £1,000, the work would be progressed. If above £1,000, this would need to be authorised by the Parish Council at its next meeting. In addition, it was agreed that this work would be funded by the recently received New Homes Bonus;
- Allotment lease - the Clerk reported that this was expected for signature in the next few weeks It was agreed that the Chair and Cllr B Gale would sign the lease on behalf of the Parish Council;
- Car park hedge - the Clerk reported that she is meeting with a contractor on Friday 4th September to organise the hedge cutting; and
- Fish & chip supper - Cllr Mrs T Langlois confirmed that the supper needed to be postponed to 2021 - it had been planned for the 25th September.

20/74) Vacancy

The Clerk reported that co-option forms had been received from a resident after the deadline set for this meeting and these will be held over until the November meeting.

In case anyone else is interested in being co-opted, the deadline for co-option at the November meeting will be the 23rd October. Forms are in the Co-option Policy which is available on the Parish Council website.

20/75) Finance

a. Update on current financial position

The financial statement for the current position was noted. The Clerk highlighted that the Parish Council had received this year's instalment of the New Homes Bonus. As per previous discussions, these monies are set aside for investing in the parish which is why these funds are separately detailed at the bottom of the statement.

In addition, as mentioned earlier (Minute ref: 20/73), given that the work on the Allotment fence would be funded from the recently received New Homes Bonus, the Clerk proposed that the fund that had been established to cover this expenditure should be returned to the Parish Council's general balance. This proposal was agreed, and the Clerk will provide a revised Financial Plan at the next meeting showing the impact of this decision.

b. Expenditure

The following payment, being paid by Direct Debit on the 18th September, was noted:

ICO, registration fee	£35.00
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c. Salary award

RESOLVED to approve the increase in the Clerk's hourly rate, in line with National Salary Award, from £11 per hour to £11.30 per hour. The additional annual cost to the Parish Council is £85.80

20/76) Police

PCSO Leon de Bruyn was unable to attend the meeting but he had provided the following information:

- no reported crimes in the period 26th July to 26th August 2020 in Furneux Pelham; and
- there had been 2 crimes in the neighbouring village of Albury/Upwick where 2 gates accessing farm and fielded areas had been removed, leaving an open access to private land. There had also been a third incident of an attempted theft of gates, however these had been left in place for reasons unknown.

In addition, he had asked if there was anywhere in Furneux Pelham that he could attend and set up a gazebo for a couple of hours at any convenient time to let the community know about Echo and The Community Voice. Cllr suggestions of the Village Hall car park, the school or the pub car park will be fed back to him by the Clerk.

Cllr H Smart reported that the Police had been quick to attend to a fallen tree he had reported, including borrowing tools so it could be cut and removed.

20/77) Update from East Herts Council (EHC)

Cllr G Williamson (EHC) provided an update on the following matters:

- planning reforms - proposed reforms are a concern at district level, particularly for East Herts given the work that went into the District Plan, approved only 2 years ago. Government are wrongly under the impression that new houses are not being built because of the planning system when it is developers not acting on the planning permissions they have. If reforms happen, control at district level will be lost;
- devolution - the Government will be issuing a White Paper on devolution this autumn. When previously considered, 4/5 years ago, Herts County Council and the 10 district councils all opposed a Herts Unitary. Now, Herts County Council is indicating that a unitary would be appropriate and the district councils are opposing this;
- financial position - whilst the Government has provided some funding to cover the impact of COVID-19, the financial position of East Herts is difficult. The future was already challenging, and work is being undertaken to increase income and to maintain services at current costs; and
- capital projects - the new leisure centre at Grange Paddocks is taking shape and the diggers are in to start work at the Northgate End car park.

20/78) Planning

Planning applications

The Clerk highlighted that since the last meeting (July 2nd), 3 applications had been considered, 2 applications granted permission and 1 application had been withdrawn.

Prior to the meeting, a decision in relation to the application for the erection of a detached two bedroom dwelling and creation of new access on Land Adjacent to Hall Cottage, The Street had been received - the decision being that permission was refused.

Details of all applications are on the Parish Council's website and those since the last meeting are detailed in Appendix A, updated to include the decision referred to above.

Major Reform of the National Planning Framework

Cllr H Smart reported that the major reform of the planning framework is still in its early days and will need to be monitored. Given that Furneux Pelham is within the green belt and is a conservation area, the impact of the proposed reforms locally will be minimal.

20/79) Clerk's information

The Clerk reported on the following matters:

- the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) are recommending that physical meetings only take place if there is a business need to do so. Having completed the relevant risk assessment, the Clerk confirmed that no such need exists for Furneux Pelham therefore virtual meetings will continue for the time being. In any event, the Village Hall is not yet open;
- the latest A120 Bypass newsletter is available and will be circulated. It provides updates on construction work, bat protection and notifies that there will be weekend road closures for the first 3 weekends in October. "The Pelhams" September magazine included details of these closures; and
- the social and internet connection survey deadline was extended to the 14th September. Whilst the final count is not yet known, nor a breakdown by village, over 200 returns have been received.

20/80) Councillor updates

Cllr B Gale reported that a number of footpath signs will be replaced by Herts County Council in the coming months across the parish.

Cllr P Watmough highlighted that there is a tree down on the border of the Village Hall carpark and the vacant plot adjacent to it. The Clerk will raise this with the hedge cutter on Friday 4th September.

Cllr Mrs T Langlois confirmed that she had processed a number of the social connection/internet survey forms for Furneux Pelham and agreed to process those relating to Stocking Pelham as well. There was nothing to report in the wider sense for social prescribing.

The Chair reported that a member of the public had raised concerns with him regarding the risk that COVID-19 is in the sewerage sludge that is used as fertiliser locally on fields. The resident has raised this with the local MP, Sir Oliver Heald, who has passed the details on to the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The resident is seeking for this practice to be delayed.

20/81) Residents comments

On behalf of a resident, Cllr Mrs T Langlois reported that speeding is still an issue along Barleycroft End and this has been reported to the Police via ECHO.

20/82) Next meeting

Confirmed that the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held virtually on 5th November 2020 at 7pm.

The meeting ended at 7:52 pm.

APPENDIX A

Application number	Proposal	Action
<u>3/20/1573/HH</u>	Provision of additional bedroom and bathroom accommodation to self contained residential units to include roof lights at Johnsons Thatch, East End.	Application considered
<u>3/20/1280/FUL</u>	Erection of detached two bedroom dwelling to include rear first floor balcony and creation of new access at Land Adjacent Hall Cottage, The Street.	Application considered Permission refused
<u>3/20/1158/HH</u>	New ground floor porch to replace existing and new rear dormer at second floor level at 2 Whitebarns Cottages, Whitebarns Lane.	Application considered Permission granted
<u>3/20/0985/HH</u>	Erection of a two-storey side extension, erection of a front roof dormer and front porch, a ground floor rear extension and first floor rear infill extension at South View, Violets Lane.	Permission granted
<u>3/20/0965/FUL</u>	Highly sustainable new build detached house at Land Adjacent Village Hall Parking, Violets Lane.	Application withdrawn