

FURNEUX PELHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on Thursday, 4 March 2021, at 7:01 pm

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

In attendance: F Forth, Parish Clerk and no members of the public.

21/17) Apologies

Apologies were received and approved from Cllr T Langlois.

21/18) Declarations of interest

None.

21/19) Chair's announcements

The Chair reported on the following matters:

- last year, a resident had raised a concern regarding the sewerage sludge used as a fertiliser locally on fields with the local MP, Sir Oliver Heald (Minute ref: 20/80). A response has now been received from the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), via the MP, which states that there is no evidence of COVID-19 transfer when using sewerage sludge as fertiliser; and
- following on from the Christmas boxes, the Chair now has 10 "Bags of Kindness" to deliver. He will confer with Cllr T Langlois on the recipients but it is likely that it will be those that received the Christmas boxes.

21/20) Adoption of previous minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th January 2021 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

21/21) Report on outstanding matters

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

- pallets yard - the Clerk reported that Cllr G Williamson (EHC) had stated prior to the meeting that there was still no update on this matter;
- road signs and marking - Cllr B Gale reported that a number of Parish Councils had submitted requests for signs and Highways are prioritising warning signs (e.g. stop, give way etc) and will do other signs (e.g. village signs) when resources allow. It is hoped that the missing "stop" and "give way" signs locally will be replaced before the next meeting. In response to a question, Cllr B Gale will identify if "school" signs are classed as warning signs since these are missing on the approaches to the school;

- Parish EV (electric vehicle) charging community hubs project - Cllr B Gale confirmed that he had indicated at the latest project meeting, as per the last Parish Council meeting, that the Parish Council was interested in participating in this project subject to having further information on how the scheme would work. He had also reported Cllr's scepticism about how much the hub would be used in reality and noted that this scepticism is shared by other parishes. The next step is for a site visit as how the project will progress is dependent on this site information. The visit is likely to be in a few weeks time and it was agreed that this would involve the Chair as well as Cllr B Gale.
- Allotment fence - the Chair reported that quotes from local contractors are still being sought;
- Vacancy - the Clerk reported that the vacancy still exists as no applications had been received to fill it. The vacancy will continue to be advertised. Cllr R Rodrigues commented that she is encouraging younger people to get involved. It was confirmed that the minimum age was 18;
- Barleycroft End - Cllr H Smart reported that he had been pursuing the issue about verge opposite Millwrights Cottage with Cllr G Williamson (EHC). He also stated that an aerial perspective supported the need to narrow this verge as the road clearly narrows at this point because of it;
- Parish Council responsibilities - the Clerk reported that the details for a permanent entry in the Pelhams magazine were still being developed and would be in the magazine as soon as possible; and
- Support network - the Clerk reported that the mobile phone had been purchased on a 24 month contract for £7.50 per month. The new number had been reported in the March Pelhams magazine and the Clerk would be passing responsibility for the phone to the Chair next week. To date, no phone calls had been received.

21/22) Annual Parish Assembly

The Clerk proposed that a virtual assembly is held 30 minutes prior to the May meeting which is advertised to encourage attendance or for any issues/concerns to be emailed in for consideration in the coming year. Whilst attendance had been very low in the recent past, this would provide an opportunity for the parish to get in touch.

Cllr H Smart noted that it could be implied, by default, that the lack of attendance provides evidence that the Parish Council is dealing with matters appropriately.

It was agreed that a virtual Annual Parish Assembly would be held and it would be advertised via all available media.

21/23) Herts Staged Rally

The Clerk reported that when the agenda was issued, the intention had been that a Rally representative would provide an update. Unfortunately, the rally had been cancelled as, even if lockdown ended as planned, there was insufficient time to go through all the details which need face-to-face contact before the event.

In addition, the Clerk reported that the intention was that the rally would run next year on the same weekend proposed for this year.

21/24) Finance

a. Update on current financial position

The financial statement for the current position was noted.

b. Expenditure

RESOLVED to approve the following expenditure:

Clerk's pay award	£85.80
Clerk's expenses	£188.97

Cheques and supporting documentation would be signed after the meeting.

c. Standing Order for Clerk's salary

RESOLVED to approve the Standing Order for the Clerk's salary for April 2021 to March 2022 for £269.32 per month

d. Allotment fees

RESOLVED to retain the current fee structure of £35 for a full plot and £17.50 for a half plot.

The Clerk was asked to clarify how many plots were being used.

e. Car park fees

RESOLVED to maintain the level of car park fees at £50 for the coming year.

It was noted, in discussion, that a significant number of cars had been parking in the car park.

f. Subscription to HAPTC

RESOLVED to approve the subscription payment to HAPTC of £317.14, due on 1st April 2021.

21/25) Police

The Clerk reported that PCSO Leon de Bruyn had been unable to attend the meeting, but he had provided the following information:

- there were no reported crimes for February; and
- several rural operations had been conducted, focussing on hare coursing, poaching and off-road scrambler bikes in addition to patrols for Covid breaches. Photos of the police on quad bikes had been included in the March edition of the Pelhams magazine.

In addition, the Clerk reported that quarterly meetings between the local police team and local Parish Clerks were being established. These meetings would aim to share incentives, idea's and discuss any issues arising with the first meeting being planned for the end of March.

21/26) Update from East Herts Council (EHC)

The Clerk reported that Cllr G Williamson (EHC) had given his apologies for tonight's meeting and had stated that he had no specific matters to report.

The Clerk also noted, from today's East Herts Council newsletter, that East Herts had sets its 2021/22 budget and Band D Council Tax would be increasing by £5 a year.

21/27) Planning

The Clerk reported that since the last meeting, 1 application had been considered and 1 application granted permission. In addition, the latest planning application relating to St Mary's Church had been circulated prior to the meeting.

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

Cllr B Gale reported that documentation had been received, as a resident, regarding a new solar power farm in the area. The Clerk confirmed that she had received this information for the Parish Council and would forward it on to all Cllrs after the meeting. A public consultation for this project was being undertaken by the company involved, starting on the 5th March and lasting for 3 weeks.

Planning enforcement

The Clerk reported that since the last meeting, East Herts Council had drafted a new Planning Enforcement Plan which significantly changed the approach. Whilst planning law provides East Herts the power to pursue enforcement

action, it is not a statutory duty to do so and East Herts will only take action where necessary in the public interest.

Whereas previously all cases required a site visit, the new approach was to undertake a desktop evaluation and no further action would be taken if this evaluation determined that:

- there was no breach of planning control; or
- it was trivial / minor/ where it would not be expedient to investigate further.

If an investigation was required, it would be considered in light of 3 priorities: significant harm to public amenities/matters in public interest; breach indicates enforcement action required or a catch all option.

The perceived aim was to lower the workload for the Planning Enforcement team as opposed to increasing the team to properly deal with enforcement issues. Whilst there are no documented statistics on current workload, it is believed that few reported cases result in enforcement action.

21/28) Clerk's information

The Clerk reported on the following matters:

- based on the latest newsletter, the March edition of the Pelhams magazine had included a brief update on the A120 bypass project. The latest newsletter would be circulated after the meeting; and
- a reminder that census envelopes were arriving now with details on how to complete the first digital census, with census day being the 21st March.

21/29) Councillor updates

Cllr R Rodrigues suggested that an outdoor table tennis table could be installed at the Village Hall. It was noted that she needed to pass this suggestion to the Chair of the Village Hall.

In addition, Cllr R Rodrigues highlighted that a red bumper had been removed from the River Ash by a resident and she had reported this to East Herts Council as fly-tipping. It was agreed that if the bumper was not removed in the next few days, the Clerk would be notified to contact East Herts Council to progress.

21/30) Residents comments

None.

21/31) Next meeting

Confirmed that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held virtually on 6th May 2021 at 7pm, preceded by the Annual Parish Assembly at 6:30pm.

The Chair also noted that elections for Herts County Council and the Police Commissioner were also being held on this day - physically at the Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 7.56 pm.

APPENDIX A

Application number	Proposal	Action
<u>3/21/0478/FUL</u>	Change the nave, aisles and chapel roof material from lead to terne coated stainless steel at St Mary's Church.	Application considered
<u>3/21/0100/FUL</u>	Erection of 1 three bedroomed dwelling with associated landscaping and parking at Land adjacent Village Hall Parking, Violets Lane	Application considered
<u>3/20/2323/HH</u>	Construction of two-storey rear and single storey side extension; replacement front porch, conversion and alterations of garage and changes to fenestration at The Cottage, East End	Permission granted