

FURNEUX PELHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday, 3rd February 2022, at 7:04 pm

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

In attendance: F Forth, Parish Clerk and 6 members of the public.

22/1) Apologies

None.

22/2) Declarations of interest or dispensation requests

None.

22/3) Chair's announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

- Uttlesford District Council had refused planning permission for Battles Farm;
- an approach had been received from Much Hadham Parish Council regarding the lack of planning enforcement by East Herts Council. Given there are issues locally, the Chair would write back to express support for any future action;
- Berden was holding a further Joint Village Solar meeting on the 23rd February and the Chair would represent the Parish Council if no-one else was available to go. Cllr E Wills offered to attend; and
- A reminder to be vigilant following a spate of burglaries across local villages.

22/4) Adoption of previous minutes

An amendment was made to correct the reference to the sign in respect of the book swap shelter, following which RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th December 2021 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

22/5) Report on outstanding matters

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

- pallets yard - the Clerk reported that there was no progress in respect of this item;
- road signs and marking - Cllr B Gale confirmed that this is still in progress;

- Parish EV (electric vehicle) charging community hubs project - Cllr B Gale confirmed that the site visit was still outstanding;
- Allotment fence - quote received at the meeting and will be considered at the next meeting;
- Barleycroft End - the Clerk reported that she was not aware of any progress in relation to the items reported to Highways via Cllr G McAndrew (HCC). In terms of the ownership of the verge near the school, Cllr H Smart that the landowner had not been identified;
- Book swap shelter - Cllr E Wills reported that the school would be running a competition for the sign for the book swap shelter; and
- Bank - the Clerk reported that changing the Parish Council's bankers from Barclays to Unity Trust was being progressed.

Finally, the Clerk stated that the gifted land, the Jubilee and the anti-social behaviour items were specific agenda items.

22/6) Gifted land

The Chair reminded everyone of the suggestions that had been received for the future use of the land over recent meetings, namely:

- lease to the Riding for the Disabled Association;
- graze sheep;
- leave to nature - maybe with planted trees to create a woodland rich in wildlife;
- planted trees with a clearing for bench or benches to sit on;
- plant fruit trees;
- develop a nature trail for children;
- rent to dog walkers;
- rent to beekeepers; or
- plant some trees and rename the land "Jubilee field" in recognition of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Note - covenants on the land need to be taken into account when deciding the option(s) to pursue.

The Chair also highlighted that the fly tip needed to be dealt with and a number of options were discussed, following which, Cllr T Langlois offered to obtain some quotes.

22/7) Platinum Jubilee

Cllr E Wills reported that a local resident planned to light a beacon to mark the Jubilee, on Thursday 2nd June, and already had a beacon to use. The resident was not seeking funding from the Parish Council but had queried whether the Parish Council's insurance would cover the event. All Cllrs were supportive.

The Chair highlighted that the church was organising a bring and share lunch for Saturday 4th June.

22/8) Anti-social behaviour

The Chair reminded those present that a neighbourly dispute had been discussed at the last meeting. Since then, the police had been more involved and the anti-social behaviour had diminished.

It was again noted that the Parish Council has no legal power to intervene as such behaviour is a police matter.

22/9) Finance

a. Update on current financial position

The financial statement for the current position was noted. The Clerk highlighted that since the last meeting, and since the report was circulated, the only payments had been her salary.

b. Budget for 2022/23 and determine the precept

c. Forward Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27

The Clerk stated that it was best to consider the budget and forward financial plan together. She reported that, in essence, no changes had been made to the budget and forward financial plan discussed at the December meeting.

She highlighted that the proposal remains to increase the precept by £500 as part of a planned transition to being in a position to achieve the overarching principle of maintaining an "available to spend" balance of around £4,000, with the precept being at a level that, together with the small amount of income generated, is sufficient to cover in-year costs.

The Clerk also stated that there were still some costs that are not fully reflected in the plan as currently unknown:

- costs associated with managing the gifted land;
- cost of the allotment fence (only identified earlier in the meeting as £1,030);
- cost of the sign to go on the bus shelter book swap;
- costs to deal with repair and or replacement of seats and noticeboards; and
- costs associated with any Platinum Jubilee celebration plans.

She concluded that providing these unknown costs were not excessive, the Parish Council was in a good financial position for the next year.

Finally, the Clerk reminded everyone that once the current balance of unspent New Homes Bonus is spent, the Parish Council will be able to apply for funds from the pot being held by East Herts Council. This was believed to be in addition to applying for a community grant.

RESOLVED to approve the budget for 2022/23 and determine the precept at £4,500.

RESOLVED to approve the Forward Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2026/27.

22/10) Police

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

- two specific crimes:
 - an external picture hung on the wall of a residential property in Brookside has been damaged; and
 - between October 2021 and January 2022, a caravan kept at a compound storage facility had been broken into and damage caused within;
- as noted by the Chair earlier, there has been an increase in residential burglaries over the past 2-3 weeks within East Herts and other surrounding areas. Entry is gained at the rear of properties, so residents are encouraged to secure their properties and take the necessary crime prevention measures needed e.g. light timers, external lights, CCTV etc; and
- in future, crime reports will include neighbouring parishes which will provide trends across the area.

Finally, the Clerk highlighted that any relevant information received from the police was included in "The Pelhams" magazine.

22/11) Update from East Herts Council (EHC)

None.

22/12) Planning

The Clerk reported that since the last meeting, two applications had been considered and four applications had been granted permission.

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

22/13) Councillor updates

Cllr E Wills was looking into refreshing the website, perhaps creating a community website linked to "The Pelhams" magazine. It was noted that the Parish Council website was in place to satisfy specific legislative requirements.

Cllr E Wills also highlighted that a number of the winter salt bags had been distributed and that he still had a supply.

Following a recent road accident due to the state of the roads, it was highlighted that awareness should be raised that issues with the roads needs to be reported to Herts County Council.

22/14) Clerk's information

None.

22/15) Residents comments

Road signs

A resident highlighted that the road sign for Manuden was totally obliterated. Cllr B Gale stated that he was reporting all missing signs again but that reporting by residents as well would help to secure action.

Allotment

A resident highlighted that there was a rodent problem at the allotments which was being addressed using bait. In discussion, it was identified that appropriate action was being taken to ensure that the presence of the bait was highlighted to allotment holders.

Whitebarns Lane

A resident provided an update regarding the state of the Lane, reporting that a contractor had filled the potholes with loose chippings which were then tamped down.

Solar farms

A resident reported that a proper acoustic report on the existing battery facility was being obtained. Up to now, testing equipment had been purchased from Amazon and used. It was noted that Stocking Pelham can be badly effected, depending on the direction of the wind.

22/16) Next meeting

Confirmed that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on 3rd March 2022 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 8.03 pm.

Planning applications since the last meeting detailed below:

3/21/0036/FUL & 3/21/0037/LBC - Conversion of barn to create 1, 5 bedrooomed dwelling with associated parking and landscaping; demolition of outbuilding; external alterations to roof, insertion of 8 roof lights and alterations to fenestration; creation of steps to front and patio to rear; internal alterations to include removal and creation of walls and doors, kitchen and creation of bathrooms at first floor and insertion of new staircase at Chapel House Barn, Tinkers Hall Farm: **Permission granted**

3/21/2679/HH - Removal of conservatory; construction of single storey rear extension; new ground floor side window opening at Old Mill House, The Street: **Permission granted**

3/21/2820/VAR - 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. Variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) of planning permission 3/20/0985/HH - Addition of boiler room and replacement of window with door at South View, Violets Lane: **Permission granted**

3/21/3166/FUL - Demolition of stables. Construction of replacement two bedroom, single family dwellinghouse at Land Adj To Hall Cottage, The Street: **Application considered**

3/21/3181/VAR - Erection of a three bedroom dwelling and cart lodge. Variation of appeal condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission: 3/20/0705/FUL (allowed on appeal APP/J1915/W/20/3258799) - For an alternative design and layout for the dwelling and cart lodge at Land Adjoining Spring Paddocks East End: **Application considered**