

Minutes of the Clavering Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 14th November 2016 at 7.30pm in Clavering Village Hall

Present – Councillors Stephanie Gill (Chairman), Rebecca Stanford (Vice Chair), Richard Carter, Michael Patmore, Robert Clayton, Ron Couchman, Lisa Williams and Victoria Moore (Clerk)

Also, present D Cllr E. Oliver, EC Cllr R. Gooding and 10 Parishioners.

1. Chairman welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr Gill advised the meeting that she had attended the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge, Focus Group for Clerks and/or Chairman meeting on 8th November at the invite of UDC Chief Executive, Dawn French. No comments from Parish Councillors were passed across to take to the meeting. A member of the team of local government peers chaired the meeting. There were six parish clerks, three chairmen, one deputy chairman, one mayor and one deputy mayor in attendance – two of this number also being Uttlesford District Councillors. The meeting findings, conducted under Chatham House Rule, will be a matter of public record with the other findings of the team and will be published shortly.

Cllr Carter requested that the Chairman mention to the members of the public that the Parish Council has positions available.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Barrow.

3. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Clayton declared an interest in Item 17, Stickling Green as he is the owner and resident of a house on Stickling Green.

Cllr Clayton declared an interest in Item 19, May Cottage as he is an owner of a property that has access across a village green. The Clerk advised that she had received legal advice from UDC stating that Cllr Clayton did not have to declare an interest because the business of the meeting concerns unauthorised alterations made to the access and as there is no similar issue relating to his access then there is no reason not to participate in the meeting.

Cllr Williams declared an interest in Item 11, Planning – Blackbird Cottage.

During Item 7 Cllr Gill declared an interest as she is a member of the Countryside Group.

4. Public Participation Session

A parishioner informed the Parish Council (PC) that the drains are not at the correct height following the resurfacing work and this is causing flooding to the roads. The Chairman asked that the parishioner report this to Highways. The Clerk is to send the link to the parishioner.

Two parishioners informed the PC that they were unhappy the October cut of Stickling Green. They were concerned that the October cut rendered it difficult to remove the cuttings, so they will lie there until they rot. The parishioners accept that the Green must be cut otherwise its historic character would change over time from ancient grass and wildflower meadow to scrub land. They advised the Parish Council that generally, the experts advocate a late cut, although additional cutting is often recommended to meet some special need such as reducing the impact of rank growth. Each historic Green is different per its geographical location and the individual make up of its plants and wildlife. In the case of Stickling Green, even the expression “cut once a year for hay” is misleading as it implies that the Green is a hay meadow whereas a more accurate description would be flower rich grassland. What is best for grass in terms of a cutting regime, is not always best for wildflowers, let alone wildlife. The Parishioners would be happy for the Parish Council to accept the written advice dated

2008 from Essex Wildlife Trust that recommends a single annual cut late summer into early Autumn. This advice was based on a local assessment of the Clavering Greens and was presented to the PC as part of an overall Management Plan. It also considers the needs of the rare Scarlet Malachite beetle that is found on Stickling Green. Since Stickling Green has generally been cut a little earlier than October the parishioners suggested that October cutting be trialled for a period of three years, then reviewed in year four and any adjustments made in the light of experience. Essex Wildlife Trust does suggest a July cut every fourth year specifically to discourage grasses that have become too dominant. On reflection, the parishioners withdraw their letter to the Clerk.

Another parishioner asked the PC to consider what the last parishioner had said. He is in favour of a late cut.

A parishioner asked the PC to consider flooding of the Lower Way when making a decision on the Oaklands Planning Application. She informed the PC that a resident has offered to make mulled wine for the carols again and asked that mince pies are donated before the event.

5. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Clavering Parish Council

The following amendments were made to the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 10th October 2016.

Item 3, line 2 to read as employed by the owner of the Bower House

Item 9, line 4 change presented to agreed

Item 17, line 3 to add Parish to Council for clarification

Item 20 was discussed but not amended. Cllr Carter proposed that the minutes were changed to add that Cllr Couchman stated during the discussion that Parish Council was dishonourable. The Clerk had heard this but did not record this in her hand-written notes nor record it in the minutes. Cllr Couchman admitted to saying this. The Chair asked Cllr Couchman if he stood by his written comments. Cllr Couchman stated he did.

The minutes were agreed and signed P: Cllr Stanford S: Cllr Patmore In Fav: 5 Ag: 1 Ab: 1

6. District Council report from Edward Oliver

Development in Great Chesterford has not been included in The Local Plan as South Cambridgeshire will lodge a complaint. UDC are currently looking at legality. The two sites in Clavering have not been recommended by Officers. The Traveller site at Five Acres will not be going ahead due to the definition of Travellers changing. The speed limit crossing the ford in Middle was mentioned as it is either 30mph or 40mph depending on the direction of travel.

The news on Carver Barracks will not affect the Local Plan as the barracks will not be sold until 2031 and the Local Plan runs until 2033.

7. Stickling Green Grass Cutting Complaint

The difficulty of finding contractors was discussed as was the lack of a written contract. The PC noted that the cut must fit in with Mr Balaam's harvest. Cllr Couchman confirmed he was not declaring an interest as had been the case previously. Cllr Couchman informed the PC that he had cut the triangle opposite and adjacent to "Endways Cottage" and Mares Tail was found. He believed that Stickling Green should be maintained as a hay meadow and therefore cut in late May/Early June. He apologised for being at odds with the parishioners who made the complaint. He stated he was not aware that Mr Balaam was contracted to cut the greens so Cllr Gill corrected Cllr Couchman by reading from the December 2015 minutes page 1024. A councillor reminded the PC that Tim Gingell previously advised the PC that Ragwort is poisonous to horses and therefore the idea of haymaking should be forgotten. The key issue is that the grass should be removed. The ground should be lean so that nutrients do not go back into the grass. The Clerk is to circulate the letter of advice from Essex Wildlife Trust and move this item to the agenda for the next meeting.

8. **Cock Lane update**

There is no update but will be addressed in Essex County Councillor Ray Gooding's report.

9. **Salt Bins**

To propose the council buys two salt bins and applies for a license to site the bins within 8m of a watercourse. Cllr Stanford and the Clerk to liaise regarding positioning of the salt bins.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Patmore In Fav: 7

10. **Land Drainage Ditch Cock Lane**

There was a discussion about the positioning of a land drainage ditch and the owners of the land. It is thought the land drainage ditch is owned by the Vrylandt's of Curles Manor. Clerk was asked to write to the owners to dig out the ditch.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Stanford In Fav: 5 Ag: 2.

11. **Planning**

UTT/16/2641/HHF and UTT/16/2642/LB Sheepcote Green House, Sheepcote Green

Addition of 2 no. chimney pots to the main chimney stack to increase total chimney height to 1.8m. Increase in height of chimney stack on attached former barn building and addition of chimney pot to increase total chimney height to 1.8m. Creation of doorway in existing partition wall and erection of additional partition wall in first floor bedroom to form WC Comments by 16 November 2016

No Objections

UTT/16/2918/FUL Oaklands Middle Street

Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 3 no. detached dwellings with associated garages Comments by 17 November 2016

The PC objects for the following reasons: development within a conservation area, borders a protected lane, potential archaeological implications, flood risk, bridge access would be insufficient, Water Voles living in the River Stort, development is overcrowded, during construction works there will be no space for storage or contractor's vehicles.

Cllr Williams and Clerk to liaise regarding the PC's objections.

UTT/16/3066/HHF Blackbird Cottage Wicken Road

Cllr Williams leaves the meeting

Proposed alterations to and conversion of garage to residential annexe.

Comments by 29th November

PC objects for the following reasons: the development should not be considered an annex as it contains a bathroom and kitchen and can therefore be considered a standalone property. It is also outside of the area of development

In Fav: 5 Ag: 1

Cllr Williams rejoined the meeting.

UDC Decisions

UTT/16/2352/HHF Valance Manor Lodge, Valance Road

Approve with Conditions

UTT/16/2629/LB and UTT/16/2628/HHF Brockingbury Stud, Langley Road

Refuse

12. **To discuss any other planning applications**

No planning applications were received after the agenda was published and/or shown on the Uttlesford District Council website up until 3pm on the day of the meeting.

13. **CPC Standing Orders**

The PC received and approved the draft Standing Orders amended from the NALC (2013) model Standing Orders.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Stanford In Fav: 7

14. Maintenance of Benches

Clerk to circulate the list of benches to the councillors.

15. Recording of Meeting

The PC received the details of equipment to record the Parish Council Meetings. The PC resolved to purchase Philips Voice Tracer Meeting Recorded with 360 recording to record PC meetings.

P: Cllr Couchman S: Cllr Gill In Fav: 6 Ab: 1

16. Grass Cutting Contracts

The PC agreed the specifications for the grass cutting contracts. Clerk to make sure the grass outside Wakefares is highlighted on the map to go out to potential contractors.

Contractors are asked to either tender for 1 year, 3 years or both. The PC would prefer 3 years to make budgeting easier. Clerk to write to Mr Burke, Mr Abrahams, Mr Gilbertson and Mr Frans asking them to tender. PC to advertise the contract in the Parish Magazine. Closing date for tenders 1st February 2017.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Stanford In Fav: 7

17. Clerk/RFO Employment

The PC received the recommendations from the Employment Committee regarding the Clerk's employment. In accordance with Standing Order 19a pursuant to 11 it is resolved that the Public are excluded from any discussion on employment matters concerning the Clerk/RFO at this Parish Council Meeting.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Stanford In Fav: 6 Ab: 1

18. ECC report from Cllr Ray Gooding

Cllr Gooding to send the Clerk an email between Mr Cooke and Cllr Gooding to forward to Councillors. Cllr Gooding has had discussions with officers regarding emergency vehicle access to Cock Lane. The road will remain closed for the foreseeable future. Cllr Gooding agrees that better signage is needed at Blacksmith Cottage. The system that allows Parish Councils to apply for highways improvements is competitive. Cllr Gill will forward details to Cllr Gooding that show Highway's improvement budget for next year has already been allocated. Cllr Gooding is waiting for the Autumn Statement regarding funding allocations. ECC are currently lobbying the government. Cllr Gooding will look into the repairs to the damaged railings at both the sharp bend on the B1038 at Curles Hill and the Bower House.

19. May Cottage

All papers relating to May Cottage circulated to all councillors. The PC received legal advice obtained from NALC. The Councillors felt that following the legal advice received they should not meet with the owners of May Cottage and should write to the owners in accordance with the legal advice received. To propose to not meet with the owners of May Cottage.

P: Cllr Carter S: Cllr Gill In Fav: 4 Ab: 2 Ag: 1

The Councillors were concerned with the issue of setting a precedent to allowing driveways over village green and parish owned land if the PC decided to do nothing. It was raised that in future if any planning applications are adjacent to parish owned land that the PC should comment on the planning application. The owners were made aware they were digging up parish land and it was recommended that they stop but continued with the work as they believed they owned the land. At this time, the PC were threatened with legal action over the phone by the owners of May Cottage. The PC did not object to the planning application as the work was within the curtilage of May Cottage. One councillor felt that the PC should not be concerned with setting a precedent but should treat each case individually and seek a negotiated settlement.

Cllr Gill asked permission to continue the meeting. All in Fav.

Cllr Gill read a statement from Cllr Barrow who was absent.

To propose Clavering Parish Council instructs the owners of May Cottage to remove the paving blocks, concrete foundations and brickwork from Parish Land and reinstate the accessway to the condition and dimensions shown in the photograph sent to UDC with planning application UTT/13/0892/HHF. Confirmation in writing that the owners will undertake the work must be received by 15th January 2017 and the work completed by 1st May 2017.

P: Cllr Carter S: Cllr Stanford In Fav: 6 Ag:1

20. Carol Service

The PC agreed to hold the Annual Carol Signing on the Cricket Pavilion on the 21st December.

21. Asset Register

The Councillors updated the Asset Register by removing the footbridge. Clerk to check and amend the valuation of the scanner and computer.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Carter In Fav: 7

During this item the Clerk offered to help Cllr Couchman set up an email account. Cllr Couchman declined.

22. Transparency Code

To approve applying for funds for remaining compliant with the Transparency Code for the period April 2016 through to Mar 2017.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Stanford In Fav: 7

23. Budget

This item was moved to next month.

24. Clerks report

General Correspondence and monthly report circulated.

25. Finance

Credit Received		£0
Balance at NatWest Bank as at 31.10.16		£15,533.27
Payments		
Chq No	Payee	Total
1555	EALC - S Gill Training	£85.00
1556	EALC - V Moore Training	£50.00

1095

1557	EALC - S Gill Training	£75.00
1558	EALC - Charles Arnold Baker Book	£63.50
1559	EALC Our Common Land Publication	£10.00
1560	Victoria Moore Expenses	£22.94
1561	Corsto Web Design	£116.95
1562	Clavering Village Hall	£150.00
1563	Victoria Moore Wages	£414.63
1564	Victoria Moore Wages - Office Payment	£18.00
1565	Clavering Horticultural Society	£96.00
Total of Cheques to be paid		£1,102.02
Total of Outstanding Cheques		£150.00

Chq No/s:	1549	£25.00
	1553	£50.00
	1554	£75.00
After above Cheques		£14,281.25

Clerk to claim overtime for attending courses

To agree to sign cheques

P: Cllr Stanford S: Cllr Carter In Fav: 6 Ab: 1

To agree to purchase Microsoft Office.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Stanford In Fav: 7

26. Representative reports

Allotments report given by Cllr Patmore

Cllr Patmore and Cllr Clayton met with Thames Water. Thames Water agreed the kerbstones needed resetting. They are going to resurface the roadway up to the road before the end of the 1st week of December.

Village Hall report – Moved to next month

Jubilee Field report - See Appendix A

Passenger Transport report – See Appendix B

27. Risk Assessment book

The hedge at Pond Cottage was trimmed by Highways.

Hedge on the side of the allotment has been cut on the Nobles Side but not on the allotment side.

28. Items for next agenda:

Budget

Specifications for the grass contracts incl. Stickling Green regime.

Benches

Temporary VAS sign outside shop – Clerk was asked to speak to the Clerk Berden Parish Council.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.15pm and thanked everyone for attending.

Date of next Full Council meeting is Monday 12th December at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Signed.....12th December 2016

Appendix A

Jubilee Field Report - PC Meeting 14th November 2016

The Jubilee Field AGM took place on 18th October 2016, followed by a Committee meeting.

Attached are the accounts for the year ending 30.9.2016, and it should be noted that the reserves include a donation of £10,750 which was given over with the main aim of generating income, and £150 remaining from a grant to the Countryside Group.

The past year saw the installation of a new roundabout in memory of Tim Gingell, which was facilitated by additional grants sought. The Trustees carried out extensive tree safety and maintenance work in Simon's Wood, and continued to inspect the playground on a monthly basis under RoSPA advice. Fundraising continues. The field is used by the Bowls and Tennis Clubs, as do Norse Training and a lads-and-dads football group, while the Scouts also rent space in pavilion.

The appointed Working Party is looking at the Trust Deed and the possibility of converting the Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to limit Trustee liability RCCE guidance has been sought.

Village organisations trustee members were reappointed, with the exception of the Bowls Club, and trustees were also co-opted. From those, the following were elected: Charlotte Balaam - Chair, Colin Howland – Vice Chair, Lynne Cooley -Treasurer and Amy Green –Secretary, though the latter advised she may have to step down in the year for personal reasons.

Future fundraising will include the Christmas Cake raffle, January Quiz, Easter Grand Draw, cake bake at Village Fete, and hopefully a gin tasting evening. The undertaking by the Parish Council to donate the cost of 10 grass cuts per annum will aid fundraising.

As I represent the Parish Council, it was rather disconcerting in the meeting to learn that the Jubilee Field Treasurer had been misled to believe that the Parish Council had withdrawn its agreement to make a donation re. grasscutting. There was then a requirement to explain that this year's PC donation would come from PC general reserves and then will be raised via an increase in the precept next year. It was more disconcerting when a Councillor attending the AGM stated that the PC had previously agreed to consider taking the cost of the Jubilee Field grasscutting into the PC's own grass cutting contract and that Cllr Clayton had been appointed a Trustee. Luckily, another councillor in attendance and the PC Chair were able to correct this.

Appendix B

It came to light that there had been great confusion at Essex and though I was on a distribution list for Passenger Transport in Uttlesford, I had been chopped off it seems!

The DART meeting had taken place on 11th October, with an Uttlesford meeting on 21st October.

All minutes have now been passed to the clerk, as well as me!, and she has circulated these.

The 11th October Meeting had been attended by Clavering Users.

The next meeting is Tuesday 6th October, 10.30 - 12.30pm. Venue possibly Saffron Walden Town Hall.

I am unable to attend as I am at a Councillor Training Course. Any volunteers?

Leading on from the 21st October Meeting.

The outcome of the last survey has yet to be announced, but it could be that the Saturday 59 bus, which was reinstated to serve Clavering, may be removed, and the route serviced by DART.

Date and venue of next meeting not yet announced.

After the last Parish Council meeting, I received an amended school bus timetable from Essex County Council for immediate circulation, so placed this in the PC Newsletter.

Cllr Stephanie Gill