

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Clavering Parish Council held on Monday 19th February 2024 at 7:30pm at the Clavering Christian Centre, Stortford Road.

Present: Cllr S. Gill (Chairman), Cllr F Bullen, Cllr R Couchman, Cllr K Elliston, Cllr F Smither

In attendance: Four Parishioners and Essex County Councillor R. Gooding (in part)

The meeting was opened at 7.32pm

Apologies had been sent by the Clerk, Miss L. Kwame

230 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all and thanked all attending.

She informed the meeting that she had been contacted by a villager, who moved to the village in 2018, expressing concern that Colehills Close could not be accessed due to Lower Way being flooded. Cllr Gill observed that she was not able to help out with accessing the area for the parishioner and also that the known flooding of the area should have been picked up on reports when the house was purchased.

She advised that the council meeting would be recorded and the minutes would be written up from the recording.

231 Apologies for absence

Cllr Ryan was not present; she had advised that she hoped to attend but may be delayed due to work commitments.

The Chairman took Items 232 and 233 in reverse order.

232 Declaration of Interest

Cllr Elliston declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Item 240 (Grant Request from Friends of Clavering School) as an employee of Clavering Primary School

Cllr Gill declared a Registerable Interest in Item 238 (Grant to the Jubilee Field) as the Council-appointed Trustee of the Jubilee Field of Management

233 Public Participation Session

It was advised that a new defibrillator has been sited on the outside of the bowls/tennis pavilion. This had been registered with the Ambulance Service.

Keep Clavering Rural advised that there had been confusing comments by UDC about the Protected Lane status of Lower Way after a recent appeal hearing by the Inspectorate, and stated they would be submitting a robust comment on the removing of a tree relating to UTT/23/ 3215/FUL.

234 District and County Councillors Reports

The District Councillor gave over a report at the informal meeting of 12th February 2024. County Councillor Report given after Item 240

235 To approve and sign minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 8th January 2024 were approved and signed. P: Cllr Elliston S: Cllr Bullen In Fav: Unanimous

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 8th January 2024 were approved to be signed with the following amendments made by hand in the minute book and initialled accordingly P: Cllr Smither S: Cllr Bullen In Fav: Unanimous

Item 183. Delete repeated 'that' P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Bullen In Fav: Unanimous

Item 184. Delete repeated 'spoke on' P: Cllr Smither S: Cllr Elliston In Fav: Unanimous

Item 185. In second paragraph 'is' should be 'if' P: Cllr Smither S: Cllr Elliston In Fav: Unanimous

Item 192b) Delete 'per month' and insert 'per annum' P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Elliston In Fav: Unanimous

Item 193. After Item 193 insert 'Councillor Couchman returned to the room' P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Bullen In Fav: Unanimous

Item 196. Correction made to spelling of Cllr Elliston. Correction to spelling of Roast Green by deleting 'ose'. P: Cllr Elliston S: Cllr Smither In Fav Unanimous

Item 202. Delete '\$' Insert '4' P: Cllr Elliston S: Cllr Smither In Fav: Unanimous

The minutes of Extraordinary Meeting on the 31st January 2024 were approved to be signed with the following amendment made by hand on the minute book. P: Cllr Elliston S: Cllr Bullen In Fav Unanimous

After 5.1d) Insert 'Cllr Elliston returned to the meeting room' P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Smither In Fav Unanimous

A report of the informal discussions of councillors on 12th February 2024 was received. No queries were raised on the report.

236 Clerk's Report

Moved to the March Meeting, with the Chairman asking the councillors contact the Clerk by email with any urgent questions they may have.

Cllr Couchman stated he had not received a reply to his amended motion submitted in the previous week, and it was ascertained that he would no doubt receive a reply before it was placed on the March agenda as he requested. The Chairman will verify that the email had been received.

237 Planning

237.1 To be commented on

Planning Ref	Location	Proposal	Comment
UTT/24/0217/FUL (Comment by 28 th February)	Uphills Wicken Road Wicken Bonhunt	S73 application to vary condition 2 (approved drawings) of UTT/22/2214/FUL (New access and erection of 1 no. detached dwelling and garage.) - amendments to improve quality of scheme and living environment	No Comment
UTT/24/0312/DFO (Comment by 8 th March)	Hill House Wicken Road	Details following outline application UTT/21/3648/OP for the erection of 1 no. dwelling - details of appearance, landscaping and layout	No Comment
UTT/23/3135/FUL Re-consultation Response by 28 th February	Land East Of Clatterbury Lane	Proposed erection of 5 no. single storey dwellings with associated cart lodge parking, landscaping and new vehicular access	See Below

UTT/23/3135/FUL. Re-consultation. In discussion it was noted: that the new access had been submitted after there had been comment from Essex Highways that the original access location was dangerous, that the oak tree at the development site had ancient tree status and was detailed on The Woodland Trust register for such and should not be felled as was being proposed; that Essex Highways had inspected the tree after the bus accident mentioned in the resubmission and had determined that the tree should not be removed after the accident; parents of the children involved in the accident had spoken out against the tree being removed to accommodate the proposed site access; that the applicant's own ecological submission stated that the tree was a veteran tree and should not be removed.

It was determined to object to the Re-consultation stating that the previous objections by the Parish Council were not withdrawn, that there were further objections under the NPPF re. Biodiversity & Historic Environment (paragraphs 181-186 as applicable) and guidance re. historic trees. It was determined also to state that the council felt the applicant was being disingenuous in stating that they wished to remove a

dangerous tree after an accident to ensure safety of passengers on a bus when Essex Highways had not determined the tree was a danger to users of the highway.

P: Smither S: Cllr Gill In Fav: Unanimous

A discussion would be brought to the next meeting that a proposal to be taken to the Local Highways Panel concerning introducing a measure to protect the tree from users of the highway.

In response to a question, the Chair advised that she understood an application for a TPO was in process for the tree.

237.2 Uttlesford District Council (UDC) Decisions

Planning reference	Address	Proposal	Decision
UTT/23/1430/DOC	Ashcroft Wicken Road Wicken Bonhunt	Application to discharge condition 3 (hard/soft landscaping), 5 (materials), 12 (Biodiversity method statement), 13 (Biodiversity enhancement strategy), 14 (lighting design scheme) and 15 (covered storage/charging points) attached to UTT/20/2762/FUL (approved under Appeal APP/C1570/W/21/3271280)	Discharge Conditions in Full
UTT/23/2538/FUL	Land To The West Of Stortford Road	S73 application to vary condition 20 (Widening of footway) of UTT/20/2639/OP (Demolition of Poppies and erection of up to 31 no. dwellings) in order to remove reference to widening of existing footway and replace with provision of new internal footpath to school	Approved with conditions
UTT/23/2865/HHF	Horseshoes Stickling Green	Proposed stable block	Approved with conditions
UTT/24/0137/DOC	Hill House Wicken Road	Application to discharge condition 1 (reserved matters), condition 4 (landscaping), condition 10 (highways/footway), condition 14 (great crested newt method statement), condition 15 (biodiversity enhancement layout), condition 16 (LEMP) and condition 17 (lighting design scheme for biodiversity) of UTT/21/3648/OP.	Withdrawn

237.3 A written update from Cllr Gill regarding the Section 62A Planning hearing for Land North of Eldridge Close was received. In reply to a question, the Chairman advised that the Inspector was to inspect the site (unaccompanied) on the day of the hearing, 1st February. The update also detailed a report on the UDC Planning Committee Meeting re. UTT/23/25389/FUL (See Meeting Documents Appendix 2)

Cllr Gill (Chairman) left the meeting room

It was determined that Cllr Bullen would chair Item 238. P: Cllr Smither Cllr S: Cllr Elliston In Fav: Unanimous

238 Jubilee Field Grass Cutting Grant

A request for a grant from the Jubilee Field Committee of Management was considered.

Documents, including confidential accounts, had been circulated previously to Councillors.

Cllr Couchman attempted to discuss the budget for 2024/25 and alter the amount of the £350 agreed Jubilee Field Grant (See Item 192 of the Council Meeting of 8th January 2024.)

After discussion it was determined to make a grant of £950.00 to the Jubilee Field Committee of Management in accordance with the determined budget of 2023/24. (Cheque no. 2185.)

P: Cllr Couchman S: Cllr Elliston In Fav 3 Abst 1

Cllr Gill returned to the meeting room

In response to statements made to her, the Chairman confirmed that if a councillor wished to amend the budget for 2024/25 in relation to the amount detailed for a grant to the Jubilee Field Committee of Management for Grasscutting this would have to be a specific agenda item in a meeting. The agenda item that had been discussed in her absence was limited to a discussion of the grant to be awarded in the current financial year 2023/24 and which carried a budgeted amount of £950.00 in the 2023/24 budget per the agenda statement.

239 Clavering Horticultural Society Tree (CHS) Planting at Dick Ball Meadow

The tree planting plan was considered. The hedge cutting contractors had confirmed that they were able to maintain the hedge if the plan were used. Determined to advise the CHS that the plan was acceptable (See Meeting Documents Appendices 3a and 3b)

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Elliston In Fav: Unanimous

Cllr Elliston left the meeting room.

Cllr Couchman advised that he is now unable to read the Parish Council's Meeting Documents sent to him as a zip file. It was agreed that the meeting documents would be sent to Cllr Couchman as individual documents including the financial documents. Cllr Bullen offered to help Cllr Couchman with the opening of documents sent across.

240 Friends of Clavering School

A request for a Grant from the Friends of Clavering School was received. (See Meeting Documents Appendix 4)

The Chairman advised that a Parish Council has no power to pay funds directly to a school but that, under LGA 1972 Section 137 a Parish Council may make funds available to a school PTA or a registered charity both of which the Friends of Clavering School is.

The Parish Council has not paid funds over to the Friends of Clavering School previously.

A grant given to the Parish as an award for being the 2014 RCCE Village of the Year had been distributed to various parish organisations who had supported the presentation then, including the school which had given a presentation on its 'Forest School'.

Permission was granted to ask a member of the public in attendance what was the permitted class size of Clavering School and the total number of classes.

After discussion it was agreed that a grant could be considered in setting the CPC 2025/26 budget. P: Cllr Smither S: Cllr Bullen In Fav: Unanimous

This will be advised to Friends of Clavering School and more information was to be requested from them including measures being taken to raise funds. The Chair advised that the organisation has been invited to advertise its fundraising events in the Clavering Newsletter to garner support from the community.

Cllr Elliston returned to the meeting room

Essex County Cllr Ray Gooding arrived at the meeting

Item 234 County Councillor report – taken here

Cllr Gooding reported issues locally with utility companies working on local roads and diversions.

He advised that the Essex County Council will have a balanced budget this coming year.

He apologised for not having attended CPC meetings of late and asked if there were any questions for him. The next LHP meeting was due and he asked if there were any other items to come forward for the LHP. The Chair explained that any further matters for the LHP's consideration had not been determined by the Council, but that if traffic calming measures were being considered on the Arkesden Rd then work could be looked at to

protect the ancient tree there. Cllr Gooding agreed to refer back to ECC on this in case there are any further details available.

In response to a question, Cllr Gooding confirmed that the results of the last consultation on booking for the recycling centres have not been published yet, but was expected to be in the next few weeks.

In response to a question on missing and damaged highways signs, Cllr Gooding advised that replacement signs are slow to be put in place and there is a problem with signs, even the plastic ones, being stolen.

Cllr Gooding was thanked for his help with the temporary repairs to the potholes on the B1038 at the Wicken Bonhunt boundary, but it was not known when the repairs would be made permanent.

Cllr Gooding was asked if a document relating to the consultation on parking restrictions on the Stortford Rd could be resent as councillors were having trouble opening it. Cllr Gooding will arrange for it to be resent.

It was also asked if Cllr Gooding could chase a report of missing railings at Middle St Ford, and the ECCH report references were passed to him.

241 Castle Water Invoice

Moved to March meeting

242 Clavering Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP)

A written update with recommendations from the NPWP was received. (See Meeting Documents Appendix 1)

It was determined that:

- i) the Parish Council & NPWP host three Neighbourhood Plan Public Exhibitions in March. Hall rental costs £150.00
- ii) the Parish Council agrees to the production and relating artwork/ technical composition task of nine Information Boards as detailed by the NPWP for the exhibitions at a cost not exceeding £600.00
- iii) the Parish Council agrees to the production of the first Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire in the format recommended by the NPWP. 750 A4 double sided questionnaires b/w at a cost of £60.00
- iv) All other recommendations of the NPWP were agreed

P: Cllr Elliston S: Cllr Smither In Fav: Unanimous

It was further agreed that Survey Monkey would be investigated as this may give ability for questionnaire analysis for surveys.

In response to a question raised by Cllr Couchman, it was confirmed that the members of the NPWP was as stated on the meeting documents.

243 Village Green, Parish Land and Parish Assets

- a. The refurbishing of one metal bench at Hill Green and two metal benches in Dick Ball Meadow was due to be have been carried out by the UDC Highways Rangers but their work had been curtailed by ECC. The Parish Council had striven to obtain three quotes. Only one quote was received. It was determined to accept the quote of Mr Sumner (who had refurbished the Village Telephone Box) dd 8th February in the amount of £1,207.67
P: Cllr Elliston S: Cllr Bullen In Favour: Unanimous
Funds to come from General Reserves as the funds in Repairs and Renewals must currently be held for the Tree H&S Surveys required to be carried out by the Parish Council.
- b. There were actions regarding small tree/green waste works to be carried out in the village which had been outstanding, some for over a year. The council had striven to obtain three quotes in 2023 and had even asked for the works to be requoted, with some other small tasks added. Only one quote had been received:

1. Felling and removal and disposal of the diseased Cherry Tree by footpath on Upper Hill Green – revised quote £150.00
2. Cutting of Lime Boles from Trees at Upper & Lower Hill Green and disposal of arisings - £150.00
3. Cutting down of hedge at Hillside to height as demonstrated on site inspection and removal and disposal of arisings - £250.00
4. Cutting back of copse at Allotments and cutting down of three trees on a vacant at the allotment which have grown too tall and removal and disposal of arisings - £300.00
5. To cut back footpath at Stickling Green across parish council owned green from in front of High Elms to boundary at Monks Cottage and to cut down and remove ferns and brambles that have grown up on Stickling Green in front of High Elms, with all arisings disposed of - £200.00
6. To remove and dispose of flytipped green waste and other materials at Colehills Close next to the byway known as Colehills Lane - £150.00

It was determined to accept the quotes and instruct the contractor, P. Abrahams. Budget heading 2023/24 Trees & Hedges P:Cllr Elliston S: Cllr Couchman In Fav: Unanimous

Cllr Gooding and two members of the Public left the meeting

- c. A report from Cllrs Smither and Gill was received regarding the verge at Stickling Green. (See Meeting Documents Appendix 2).

It was agreed that:

1. That the area is brought into the council's grass cutting contract with the current contractor
2. That the area adjoining the driveway to The Studio is agreed to be cut for vehicle sight lines on the same basis as the triangle at Stickling Green
3. That the rest of the area is not maintained on a 3week cut, but possibly only twice a year due to flora present.
4. That the contractor inspects the site and gives an opinion on an overhanging tree which is obstructing the area to the east of The Studio
5. That the contractor is asked to quote to remove some tree arisings present on the green west of The Studio, possibly left by NP Power after tree works were carried out.

P: Cllr Elliston S:Cllr Bullen In Fav: Unanimous

- d. Cllrs Elliston and Smither were authorised to inspect trees adjacent to the views at Hill Green as resident advises there are dangerous branches and to report back. P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Bullen In Fav: Unanimous.

A member of the public left the meeting room

Cllr Bullen left the meeting room

As it was 9.30pm Cllr Gill proposed that Standing Order 3x was suspended to allow the meeting to continue for business purposes.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Smither In Fav 3 Ag 1

244 Risk Assessment Book

No reports.

245 Representative Reports

Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) – A written update was received. (See Meeting Documents Appendix 2)

Footpath Representative – It was advised EEC Highways advised 18th February that bridge over Footpath 34 had been investigated and assessed and work was scheduled to be carried out.

CLlr Bullen returned to the meeting room

246 Finance

The Chair advised that the Internal Auditor was unexpectedly recently bereaved.
Proposal to pay all cheques. P: CLlr Bullen S: CLlr Smither In Fav Unanimous.

Credit Received	a/c 16513215 Business Reserve 31.1.2024 £0.15 interest a/c 67217796 Business Current 31.1.2024 .60.00 Allotments £5.00 Allotment tap key deposit
Wages s/o	None
Balance at NatWest Bank current account 31st January 2024	£19,192.07
Balance of Clerk's Expenses Account 31st January 2024	£103.20
Balance of NatWest Reserve Account 31st January 2024	£118.31
Balance of Saffron B/S Account 31st January 2024	£30,801.72

Clerk's Expenses Account	Detail	Amount	Total	VAT
10.01.24	Force 36	21.00	£25.20	£4.20
10.01.24	Corsto	£29.00	£34.80	£5.80
23.01.24	Force 36 (Gov.uk 2 year renewal)	£75.00	£90.00	£15.00
Total			£150.00	

Cheques to approve:

Cheque	Detail	Amount	Total	VAT
002178	EALC	£75.00	£90.00	£15.00
002179	Transfer to Clerks Account		£150.00	
002180	Letchwood to replace cheque no.2124 – Letchwood for beneficiary claims non receipt		£140.00	
002181	Mr P.Dodkin Return of tap key deposit Plot 23		£5.00	
2182	P Abrahams Grass Cutting 20 th September		£250.00	
2183	DM Payroll (Oct23-Mar 24 Fee)		£66.00	
Total cheques to be paid			£701.00	
Total cheques outstanding			£0.00	

Balance after cheques			£18,491.07
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247 To advise the Clavering Parish Council Meetings until June 2024

11th March, April 8th, 13th May (Annual Council Meeting) has been now confirmed by the Village Hall Booking Secretary, 20th May Annual Parish Meeting.

248 Items for the next agenda

Donations to Uttlesford Citizens Advice Bureau and Essex and Herts Air ambulance.
Local Highways Panel and possible chicane around the ancient tree.
Motion by Cllr Couchman.

During the vote, the remaining member of the public left the meeting room

249 Payroll

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in accordance with 3d pursuant to Standing Order 19, it is resolved that the Public are excluded from any discussion on this item as it concerns employment. P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Ryan In Fav: 4 Ag: 1
The Chairman reminded councillors that all Employment matters must be considered to be private and confidential.
Payroll numbers for January and the cheque amount of £397.30 (Cheque number 2184) were agreed.
It was noted that CPC must pay tax due to HMRC latest 22nd April 2024 and it should be ensured that the Clerk’s Bank Account should have adequate funds as HMRC do not take payment via pay-in books but via bank account cards.
After discussion, the Chairman was given instructions by the council to investigate certain employment matters.

250 Registered Village Green

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in accordance with Standing Order 11, it is proposed to resolve that the Public are excluded from any discussion on this item as it concerns as this relates to legal matters, and including legal advice. P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Smither In Fav: 4 Ag: 1
The Chairman reminded Councillors that Legal Advice was to be discussed such matters must be considered to be private and confidential.
After reference to documents, including the lease, and previous legal advice received by the Parish Council, Clavering Parish Council’s Good Leasehold title of Upper Hill Green was established.
Councillors were reminded that all legal advice received is considered Confidential to the Parish Council and when forwarded to Councillors will be marked confidential; all such paperwork should be held by the Clerk for reference.

251 Close of Meeting and announcement of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Full Council will be held at the Clavering Village Hall on Monday 11th March 2024 at 19:30.
The meeting was closed at 10pm

SignedChairman Date