

**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Clavering Parish Council held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7:30pm in the Clavering Village Hall, Hill Green,**

**Councillors Present:** Cllr S. Gill (Chairman), Cllr F Bullen, Cllr R Couchman, Cllr K Elliston, Cllr F Smither & Cllr M Ryan

**In attendance:** Three Members of the public

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm

**1 Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed all present and introduced the new Clerk, Lynette Bonfield and explained that Lynette does not have experience in this sector but has transferable skills and very much hopes she will stay. She also reported i) the student supported by CPC for her community section of her DofE award completed the 15 hours of community work and sent an email to the parish council thanking them for the support they gave her; ii) The Chairman was invited to speak informally with members of Quendon and Rickling Parish Council and villagers with Mr Walters of KCR with regard to a possible planning application. Many Councillors are fairly new and they wanted clarification of dealing with applications and to receive some advice and guidance.

**2 Apologies for absence**

No apologies of absence.

**3 Declaration of Interest**

Cllr S.Gill declared a pecuniary interest for agenda item 11, EALC and NALC Membership renewal because she is a part time employee of the EALC.

**4 Public Participation Session**

A parishioner had received a letter in response to the email they had sent regarding the Freedom of Information request. They said that it is not covered by legal affairs and asked if the Council had seen the letter. The Chairman explained that the Council had not seen the response from the Freedom of Information request and this was explained at the last Council meeting. If the parishioner is dissatisfied, they have 45 days to come back to the Parish Council and ask for it to be reconsidered. It is for that reason it has not been passed to anyone else. The parishioner said that the letter might be of interest to the Councillors and would like it circulated and confirmed they won't be appealing.

A parishioner received a letter from UDC saying the Planning application for four houses at the rear of Clarendon House had been rejected, basically it was a nice scheme but in the wrong place.

Cllr Couchman mentioned that he had seen people washing road signs and would like his thanks noted as a councillor and appreciate a thank you put in the minutes. Unfortunately, no one was able to provide who it was so Cllr Gill will put a thank you in the Parish Newsletter.

**5 District and County Councillors Reports**

Apologies were sent by District Councillor Oliver; Essex County Councillor Gooding had not sent apologies.

**6 To approve and sign minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were not approved and signed as Cllr Couchman queried the statement he made in item 263. The minutes state 'Cllr Couchman stated he believed that Mr Balaam would carry out the work at Stickling Green free of charge', however Cllr Couchman feels that is not what he said. This will be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting once the Clerk has listened to the recording and confirmed what was actually said.

**7 Clerk's Report**

A written report of activities carried out by the Chairman/Vice Chairman for business continuity was received. Cllr Couchman asked how the Councillors are going to communicate with the new Clerk, Cllr Gill explained by email or in writing which would be sent to Cllr Gill's address to forward on as the Clerk doesn't have a PO Box number as yet. He asked how he would communicate a data protection request which Cllr Gill said was a

Freedom of Information which would be done by email. He then continued to ask about papers that were provided to him in the private and confidential section of the last meeting and felt that some of it was to discredit and damage his reputation. He said he has a file with all the documents including correspondence with the monitoring officer regarding various complaints made about him which the Councillors are welcome to look at.

## 8 Planning

### 8.1 To be commented on

Planning Ref	Location	Proposal	Comments
UTT/24/0763/FUL	Land to the West of Stortford Road	S73 application to vary condition 1 (approved plans and materials) of UTT/22/1103/DFO (Details following outline application UTT/20/2639/OP for the erection of 31 no. dwellings and 38 no. parking spaces - details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) - proposed changes to approved plans for plot 7 garage, plot 12 garage and two storey garages to plots 2, 5, 6, 13, 14 and 17	UTT/24/0763/FUL

Cllr Gill observed that the developers were putting in external stair cases to the garages which were refused previously. This is meant to be a one storey and only used for internal storage and not living space. For consistency this needs to be noted so it was proposed to reply and be consistent with the house along Wicken Road with external staircases so garage doesn't become a two storey.

P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Elliston In Fav: 4 Abst: 1

### 8.2 Uttlesford District Council (UDC) Decisions

Planning reference	Address	Proposal	Decision
UTT/23/3135/FUL	Land East of Clatterbury Lane	Proposed erection of 5 no. single storey dwellings with associated cart lodge parking, landscaping and new vehicular access	Refused
UTT/24/0092/FUL	School House Stortford Road	Proposed change of use of the School House from use class E(f) (day nursery) to use class C3 (residential dwelling).	Approved with conditions
UTT/24/0217/FUL	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	Approved with conditions

**8.3 UTT/24/0438/FUL** To note further documentation was submitted by the applicant re. public and Parish Council comments made but latest comments were to be by 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

This has been refused and Mr Walters has already detailed the reasons for the refusal and Cllr Gill agrees it is something the Councillors should read as it gives good foundation for planning applications at that part of the village. The report will be sent to the Clerk and forwarded onto Councillors.

### 8.4 Planning Application with the Inspectorate:

**S62A/20223/0030: Land West of Clatterbury Lane** Outline application with all matters reserved except access for up to 28 dwellings (class C3) including public open space, sustainable drainage systems, landscaping and associated infrastructure. This was discussed and Councillors still have concerns about safety and don't consider the revised position makes it safe. CPC will respond by the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

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

**8.5 Planning at Inspectorate Appeal:**

**UTT/23/2801/HHF: Casa Mia Stortford Road** Raising of roof at rear to create a first floor. Rear extension including raised pitched roof, side dormers, rooflights, solar panels and rear and side fenestration. Demolition of existing rear chimney. To note this Appeal will be determined by written submissions and is proceeding under the Householder Appeal Service so no further written comments may be made.

**UTT/22/1578/OP: Land To The North Of Eldridge Close** Outline planning application with all matters reserved except access for up to 32 dwellings including public open space, sustainable drainable systems, landscaping and associated infrastructure and associated development **Appeal Withdrawn**

**8.6 Inspectorate Appeal Planning Decision: Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/23/3322904 Land West of Colehills Close, Middle Street.** (UDC reference UTT/22/1718/FUL) Erection of 10 no. dwellings, with associated landscaping, access and parking. **Appeal Dismissed**

One additional item which came through too late to determine in this meeting,

**UTT/24/0734/FUL: Clavering Farm and Mill Lane** – redundant green house to be made into a house. Cllr Gill asked the Councillors if they wanted to call an EOM to comment on them, or as it's already gone through as a PAQ3 comments are not required.

All Councillors agreed that CPC would not comment

**9. Uttlesford Draft Local Plan 2021-2041 – Larger Villages Parish Workshop, 21st March 2024,**

Cllr Gill explained there were slides given to the CPC which are confidential and they will be circulated to Councillors after this meeting. Cllrs Bullen provided information on the workshop attended by himself and Cllr Smither. UDC's own plan will be reviewed every five years and would only be going upwards. Our own plan should be designed soonest and indicate the sites. Both Cllrs Bullen and Smither questioned why Clavering had been treated as a larger village and the fact that Clavering has a public bus service which is incorrect and that was duly honoured. It also asked if the housing numbers weren't met within the five years if UDC would say we'd have to have even more, the answer from UDC was inconclusive. The reason why Clavering is classed as a larger village is due to a whole host of factors, our current 'points' are 66 and need to be reduced by 27 down to 39 to be classed as a smaller village with a lesser development responsibility. The factors that create the points were discussed amongst the Councillors.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> April there was a Teams meeting with Cllrs Bullen, Smither and Gill with Dr Andrew Maxted UDC Local Plan Policy Officer and a couple of his colleagues. They wanted to give CPC the opportunity to have 1-1 negotiations and they provided back up information on slides. Cllr Bullen's view is that it will be very difficult with the facilities CPC have to get the points score down to 39. The Cllrs tried to argue that Clavering has no daily transport network but UDC said Clavering would stay as a larger village. UDC are also expecting villages to start their neighbour plan after UDC has finished their local plan which would be 2026 however they then said villages need to start now but to wait for the next report which will be released in July 2024 re-evaluating the housing numbers. Cllr Smither said the information provided at the workshop was very different to what was said during the 1-1 meeting.

**10. Clavering Neighbourhood Plan Working Party**

Cllr Gill updated the Councillors, there are three exhibitions not attended as well as had been hoped, 66 attended and to date 45 questionnaires have been returned. To deliver the questionnaires and information to all the villagers would require a lot of paper. The Working Party suggested getting three quotes to set up a new website to put the Neighbourhood Plan which would include the information boards. A slip of paper would then go out saying to refer to the website. £1000 was put towards the NP set up initially and there is still over £550 which could go towards starting the website. This was discussed and Councillors felt that having a separate website that the steering group would update rather than the Clerk would be better, with a link from the CPC website. Cllr Smither suggested that the questionnaire could have a request to print a hard copy included for those not able to access a website.

Propose that the Clerk be instructed to seek quotes.

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

**11. EALC and NALC Membership**

EALC Fee £332.72 NALC Fee £84.24 Total due: £416.96

Cllr Ryan chaired this item due to Cllr Gill's declaration of interest. Before Cllr Gill left the room Cllr Ryan asked her to explain what the NALC and EALC do. She explained that the NALC look after all the associations around

the country providing much information for Councils including model standing orders/HR/Policies and contract for Clerks. A Council has to be a member of the EALC to access the NALC. The EALC provide training and official advice which would cost a lot more if we were not a member. Cllr Gill then left the room.

Propose that CPC renew the NALC and EALC memberships.

P: Cllr Ryan S: Cllr Bullen In Fav: 4 Abst: 1

Cllr Gill returned to the room

#### 12. RCCE Membership 2024

Membership Fee £ 49.75 plus VAT £9.95 Total £59.70 (Costs have reduced as the RCCE Membership is now banded and Clavering PC is in a lower band as it is not a Village Hall Trustee).

Propose that CPC renew the RCCE membership.

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

#### 13. RCCE Village of the Year 2024

Information and guidelines for entries already circulated to Councillors by email, latest date for applications – Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June. This was discussed and with everything the CPC currently has to do it would be better to leave this until 2025.

#### 14. Village Green, Parish Land and Parish Assets

- a. Cllrs Elliston and Smither have inspected the tree adjacent to The Views at Hill Green and spoken to the owners who are concerned. The tree is on the village green, there is bank erosion, it doesn't bloom until late and moves a lot in the wind. There would need to be access to their own land to deal with it. Cllr Elliston will send photos.

Proposed that the Clerk contact three Tree Surgeons to obtain quotes for either removal or pollarding of this tree and advise on a second nearby tree with a low branch.

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

After further discussion, proposed that the Clerk has delegated authority to instruct for the removal or pollarding of the tree at The View, Village Green boundary, after receipt and consideration of three quotes, up to a value of £1500 in accordance with our financial regulations.

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

- b. With regard to the Dick Ball Meadow Hedge yearly cut it was decided at the last meeting to investigate further, the Balaam farmers have been advised of this. Cllr Gill has also been approached by someone who saw it in the Newsletter who is involved with countryside groups and has volunteered to look at it as well to see this there are any grants we can get. This work will have to wait until later in the year due to nesting season. The Stickling Green work to date we have not received back confirmation of how the work would be carried out, the earth would not be taken away and whether there would be any costs involved.
- c. Noted that the request from the Landscape History Group for help with the maintaining of the Listening Bench has been withdrawn.
- d. Regarding the area in front of and surrounding the Pump at Stickling Green, Cllr Gill received a phone call, in the absence of a Clerk, to see if we needed a contractor. She was advised that it will have to be done with a brush cutter every 6 weeks for this season until we re-evaluate. Cllr Couchman then commented on the path being cleared by a volunteer group from Uttlesford and finger posts put in, however Cllr Gill confirmed that the path had already been cleared by the contractor. She wasn't aware of the finger posts being put and it's usually covered by Highways, so Cllr Couchman said he would find out who the volunteer group were.
- e. An email from a parishioner concerning the drain at the Horse Pond has been received (Appendix 1), this was discussed. The drains are the responsibility of the Highways. Cllr Gill explained that Horse Pond is not the responsibility of the Environment Agency as it is owned by CPC. It was decided that we need to contact Highways to look into this issue.

#### 15. Risk Assessment Book

- a) To note the Village Hall defibrillator pads were replaced 28<sup>th</sup> March.  
Defibrillators 'rescue ready' 2<sup>nd</sup> April.
- b) Cllr Gill noted that the seat by the Ford in Middle Street needs to be looked at as there are broken slats.  
Instruct the Clerk to seek quotes. P: Cllr Gill S: Cllr Bullen In Fav: Unanimous

Recess of meeting called at 9pm

## 16. Ford Ride London Classique Stage Event through Clavering Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024

This year the women's race goes through Clavering. This was discussed and whether the school will be participating as there may be grants. It was decided that Cllr Gill would put it into the Newsletter; Cllr Elliston will speak to the school and we will contact Lisa Wright (teaches cycle proficiency) to see if she wants to do anything, then we can see if we can access the grants. Cllr Bullen mentioned that Essex Highways need to be contacted to make sure pot hole damage is attended to before the ride.

(See Meeting Documents Appendix 3.)

## 17. Allotments

- i. To note interest has been expressed by a resident in taking on a plot.
- ii. Two existing holders have not paid as at 31.3.24
- iii. A request from a tenant re. a replacement shed (See Meeting Documents Appendix 4) was considered and agreed. P: Cllr Ryan S: Cllr Smither In Fav: Unanimous
- iv. A standby pipe has split another is leaking at a joint; the water will be turned on once this has been repaired. Better insulation requirements for the three standpipes for next winter was discussed and decided to speak with the Council about getting designs for the pipes to be boxed in.  
P: Cllr Smither S: Cllr Ryan In Fav: Unanimous

## 18. Representative Reports

- a) **Allotment Representatives** – Cllr Elliston advised that there is a lot of work going on, particularly by the new allotment holders.
- b) **Footpath Representative** – Cllr Elliston advised of no reports of any problems or issues.
- c) **Jubilee Field Committee of Management representative** – The New Equipment Formal Opening was postponed due to high winds and rains; will be Sunday 14th April at 11am

## 19. Training

- a) Online Financial Training was booked for previous Clerk for Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June via Zoom 1.30pm – 4.30pm. This was discussed as the new Clerk is unable to attend and it was decided that Cllr Gill will ask to move the date forward.
- b) With regard to Councillor/Clerk training, Cllr Gill said the clerk will be taking the ILCA qualification in due course and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

## 20. Finance

- a) **Noted that UDC did not send through the 2023 Green Waste Invoice before the financial year end** (March 2024 Minutes Item 275f)
- b) **Noted that, as agreed at the previous meeting, invoices due from the Villager Hall were paid before the financial year end.** (March 2024 Minutes Item 275f)  
Hall Hire November 2023 £20.00 plus Hall Hire February 2024 £20 Cheque no. 2195 total £40.00  
Hall Hire 11 March 2024 and Hall Hire 21<sup>st</sup> March Cheque no. 2196 total £72.00
- c) **Receipt of the End of Year Accounts** (Appendix 2); Cllr Couchman mentioned that these cheques should also be listed in the boxes below for visibility as cheques already approved and Cllr Gill said this would be done. He also asked about the Internal Auditor and Cllr Gill confirmed that Ann Wood will be completing this and is just waiting for a date to be confirmed.
- d) **Noted that the External Auditor has sent through the AGAR paperwork required to be completed**  
Clavering PC is not required to send its AGAR to the External Auditor (2023-24 income and expenditure both less than £25k) but it may be chosen to do so as a sample set. This will need to be checked and confirmed by Ann Wood, the Internal Auditor.
- e) **Noted that the cheque re correspondence and an invoice from DAS's Solicitors concerning the previously settled dispute was not written before the year end. (March 2024 Minutes 275c)**  
We are waiting on further information before approving the requested payment of £1,037.20. This will be moved onto the next meeting.
- f) **To approve all cheques listed in table**, suspending Financial Regulation 6.4 in respect of cheque numbers 002197 and 002199 as currently there are only two authorised bank signatories, one of whom is the beneficiary of these cheques.  
P: Cllr Bullen S: Cllr Elliston In Fav: 4 Abst: 1

g) Noted that the new bank mandate (in hard copy) has been sent to Nat West.

**Cheques to approve:**

P: Cllr Elliston S: Bullen In Fav: 4 Abst: 1

<b>Credit Received</b>	a/c 16513215 Business Reserve 29.2.2024 £0.13 interest a/c 67217796 Business Current £650.22 HMRC VAT returned £142.50 Training Bursary Cheque £45.00 Allotments £20.00 Allotment & tap key £5.00 Allotment tap key deposit
<b>Wages s/o</b>	None
<b>Balance at NatWest Bank current account 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b>	£16,183.95
<b>Balance of Clerk's Expenses Account 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b>	£398.60
<b>Balance of NatWest Reserve Account 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b>	£118.58
<b>Balance of Saffron B/S Account 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b>	£30,801.72

**Cheques approved since the last meeting:**

Cheque	Detail	Amount	Total	VAT
002191	Clerk Salary – February		£213.36	
002192	Transfer to Clerk's a/c for HMRC payment		£145.40	
002193	Castle Water		£34.60	
002194	Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Donation		£54.00	
002195	Clavering Hall Rent Nov23/Feb24		£48.00	
002196	Clavering Hall Rent Mar24		£72.00	

**Cheques to approve:**

Cheque	Detail	Amount	Total	VAT
002197	Stephanie M Gill: Reimbursement of photocopying costs re Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire printed by Prontoprint	£60.00	£72.00	£12.00
002198	RM Design & Print: Artwork & Display Boards Neighbourhood Plan Exhibition	£360.00	£432.00	£72.00
002199	Stephanie M Gill: reimbursement of Postage Stamp costs purchased for business continuity Feb 2024 (£6) and March 2024 (£37.50)		£43.50	
002200	RCCE Membership Fee	£49.75	£59.70	£9.95
002201	EALC/Membership Fees		£416.96	
002202	EALC Training Course Financial Regulations Cllr Gill	£75.00	£90.00	£15.00
<b>Total cheques to be paid</b>			<b>£1,114.16</b>	
<b>Total cheques outstanding</b>	2180: £140.00 2183: £66.00 2186: £228.00 2193: £34.60 2194: £54.00 2195: £48.00 2196: £72.00		<b>£642.50</b>	

Balance after cheques			£14,427.35	
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**21. To advise the Clavering Parish Council Meetings until June 2024**

13<sup>th</sup> May Annual Council Meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> May Annual Parish Meeting.

The RCCE Housing Enabler has been invited to the Annual Parish Meeting and confirmed she can attend as it is expected that she will be able to speak on the headline analysis of the recent Affordable Homes Survey. The RCCE Neighbourhood Plan Provider had also been invited to speak, but no response received to date. We normally invite Cllr Gooding and Cllr Oliver and speak and the Jubilee Field and Village Hall to present something and other village organisations to come along.

**22. Items for the next agenda**

A reminder that 13<sup>th</sup> May is the Annual Council Meeting

**23. Employment**

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: Unanimous

Cllr Gill welcomed the new Clerk, Lynette Bonfield. The Employment Committee met on the 27<sup>th</sup> March confirming employment matters for the new Clerk. Lynette's employment commenced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 which allowed for a handover before tonight's meeting. Councillors were informed of the contract terms including the probationary period per the NALC Model contract.

**24. Close of Meeting and announcement of Next Meeting**

Annual Meeting of the Parish Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 8pm

Signed S.M.G.U. Chairman 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 Date