

HERTFORD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on
Monday 2 February 2004
at the Mission Room, Vicarage Causeway, Hertford Heath

Present:

Anthony Oliver (Chairman)
Bob Akers (Vice-Chairman)
Mary Bourne
Andrew Crumpton
Trevor Goodingham
Gillian Thornton
Carolyn Morgan (Clerk)

Also present:

Two members of the public

Due to a mix-up with diaries, Sarah O'Reilly of the Herts Young Homeless Group would not be attending this meeting but would attend the March meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Lynn Bonner, Alison Scarll and William Ashley (who had an EHDC meeting).

2. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 5 January 2004

The minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising

(a) Membership of the Open Spaces Society (Minute 625(6)(e))

The Society had provided an outline of its aims, together with information as to the benefits of membership. The Council agreed to maintain its membership of the Society

4. District and County Council Matters

(a) Rubbish and Recycling collections on 29 January 2004

These had not been carried out due to the drivers being diverted to gritting duties. William Ashley had advised that the wheelie bins would be emptied on 5 February and the recycling boxes would be emptied on 12 February. Extra rubbish and paper left in bags would be collected. **The Clerk undertook to put up notices to that effect.**

5. Reports

(i) Chairman

(a) Trees

The Chairman reported that two cherry trees had been felled and the others trimmed. New trees had been planted the following day. Ten bushes had been planted along the Playing Field perimeter. Due to the personal circumstances of the contractor, the willow tree on the green had not yet been pollarded.

The Chairman also reported that four traditional Hertfordshire apple trees had been delivered to Tree Heritage who will plant them for £15 each, to include staking and rabbit proofing. The varieties chosen are Gavin, Bushey Grove, Lane's Prince Albert and Thomas Rivers. At some stage, the Council will need to decide who is to be responsible for pruning, etc.

(b) Publicity for Parish Council matters

Events surrounding the felling of one of the cherry trees led the Chairman to question how the Parish Council can let villagers know what it is doing. He had concerns that few seemed to take and/or read the Parish magazine or notice boards. A number of suggestions were made, including:

- (1) Leafletting local residents. This the Chairman had done with regard to the work on the trees but felt such a method had its limits.

(2) Producing a monthly leaflet of Parish News **The Clerk was asked to contact the distributors of The Star newspaper and the Post Office for quotes for delivery. The Clerk will also see if leaflets can be left in the Post Office and other shops, with the Council providing a suitable container/rack.**

(c) Metamorphosis of HALC

The Chairman drew members' attention to the article in the recent Local Council Review which outlined how the Association had developed contacts with other local associations to give advice on various topics to members of the Hertfordshire Association.

(d) Gaining Quality Parish Council status

The Chairman explained that, in his view, it was essential for the Council to obtain Quality status, otherwise it may lose out on future grants. At least two things needed to happen before such status could be obtained. The first was that all members needed to be elected and not to have co-opted members. In practice, the Chairman would like elections to be contested and the Council agreed that the target number of nominations for the next elections due in 2007 would be 10. **The Clerk was asked to find out what governed the number of councillors a parish council had.**

The second necessity was for the Council to have a qualified clerk. That meant the Clerk needed to obtain the Certificate in Local Council Administration awarded by the Assessment and Qualification Alliance. The Clerk was prepared to work for that qualification. She had done some investigation but did not know yet how much of her time it would take, nor how long. She did explain that getting the qualification would also mean extra work for the Council in that it would need to determine a number of policies and look at other areas of its work.

(ii) Planning Committee

(a) The Chairman of the Planning Committee reported on the following applications, none of which was objectionable:

- (1) Gamels Farmyard, Rush Green - conversion and extension of listed barn to dwelling plus conversion of outbuilding. The Parish Council had not objected to a previous application and the Planning Committee saw no reason to object to this application.
- (2) The Grange, The Roundings - construction of new conservation lake and planting scheme. The Parish Council had not objected to the previous application and the Committee saw no reason to do so now.

(b) The Chairman of the Planning Committee reported that an application had been received for detailed permission for a farmhouse at Elbow Lane Farm. Members would consider the application at the end of the Council meeting.

(c) The following decisions of East Herts District Council were noted:

- (1) East Herts Equestrian Centre, Elbow Lane Farm: Construction of stabling and tack room - permission granted
- (2) 147 London Road: Erection of detached chalet bungalow and garage - permission granted
- (3) 42 Woodland Road: Detached bungalow in rear garden - permission granted
- (4) Land rear of 113-117 London Road: Erection of 3 terraced dwellings, a car port and two new garages - permission granted

(iii) Playing Field

(a) Chat room

The Chairman reported that East Herts District Council did not feel it was qualified to report as requested by Mark Prisk MP. The Clerk had therefore contacted the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents as suggested by EHDC. The Council had received a quotation from the National Playing Fields Association of £350 for

carrying out an assessment and reporting. The Council agreed to proceed along these lines at a maximum cost of £350. **The Clerk was asked to contact RoSPA as a matter of urgency and, when she had received a response, to request whichever organisation seemed to offer the better value to carry out a review of the Playing Field.**

Bob Akers reported that the youths appeared to have moved onto the wildlife meadow, moving logs and using wheel barrows to move chairs from allotments. The Chairman felt that this and the problems encountered in Elbow Lane were all linked. The police were aware.

(b) Football Clubs

The Clerk reported that she had received £200 from Heath United, but had not received the proposals for managing the football field from Hertford Heath Football Club despite chasing. **She was asked write again to the Club and ask that the proposals be with her by 23 February at the latest. She was also asked to contact Sodexo to check the latest date for acceptance of their quotation.**

The Clerk reported that the HHFC had failed to remove a microwave oven that was in a hazardous position in the children's play area despite having been asked on two occasions to do so. She had therefore removed it herself and taken it to the tip. **She was asked to invoice the Club for her mileage.**

(iv) Highways and byways

(a) PPP project

The Chairman reported that no money was available for other than the definitive route. Work had started on clearing that route by the Wildlife Trust. CMS was also organising a working party and it was hoped that the route would be clear by the end of March. The Council would then put in a bid for funding to repair the surface.

It was noted that Haileybury had provided appropriate access for pedestrians along the boundary of Goldings Wood. This was much appreciated by walkers. **The Clerk was asked to write to the Bursar to thank the College for its thoughtfulness.**

(b) London Road Traffic Management Scheme

The Clerk reported that she still had had no response from Hertfordshire Highways. **She was asked to chase them.**

(c) Rights of Way metal posts and signs

The Clerk reported that HCC had advised of proposed works to signs to footpaths 11 and 23 and to bridleway 17. **She was asked to report a surplus post at the end of Heath Lane and an obscured sign in Mount Pleasant.**

(d) Access from Woodland Road to Playing Field

The Clerk was asked to request Hertfordshire Highways look at the barrier. It was difficult to negotiate with a pram.

(e) State of pavements in the village

The Clerk was asked to draw Hertfordshire Highways' attention to the dangerous state of the footways, especially Mount Pleasant and Downfield Road/Vicarage Causeway.

(f) Potholes

The Clerk was asked to report the bad pot holes in Downfield Road and The Roundings.

(g) The Goat PH car park

Her letter to the landlord having achieved nothing, the Clerk was asked to write to Greene King.

(v) Allotments

Bob Akers reported that the new allotment plot had been taken.

(vi) Wildlife Meadow and Pond

The Chairman reported that he had written to EHDC, giving details of the width and depth of the proposed pond and where the excavated soil would be spread. He had also contacted the Environment Agency who had no objections to the proposed pond. He reported that the excavated clay would be stacked to use to puddle those areas of the pond which did not have clay and that the excavated soil would be used to fill up the many holes. Mary Bourne asked if wild flower seeds could be scattered in that 'new' soil. That was agreed. The Chairman reported that the general consensus was to leave the pond, rather than to plant it.

The Chairman showed the meeting the sign which had been printed in fade-proof ink (which will last 75 years) and which had been laminated. He has the design software so that the sign can be reproduced if necessary. It is intended that it be put onto a piece of wood that will be set onto a 15" diameter tree trunk.

In view of the 'interest' of the village youth in the site, it was agreed that the Cutler memorial bench should be fixed with metal brackets set into concrete. Bob Akers suggested that thought should be given to the alignment of the bench to avoid discomfort to the eyes of those using it.

(vii) Village Appraisal

Nothing to report.

(viii) School

Andrew Crumpton advised that Mrs Wackett had resigned from her post as Headteacher, a post she had held for nearly six years. The governors were seeking a new Headteacher as a matter of urgency.

(ix) The Clerk

Nothing to report.

(x) Village Greens

Mr Turner's quotation of £90 per cut of the village greens was accepted.

(xi) Village Hall

The meeting was reminded of the Quiz Night to be held at the Village Hall on 28 February. Tickets could be obtained from Trevor Goodingham (from 4 February).

6. Correspondence received

- (a) Andrew Crumpton: Fires, motorcycling scrambling and general loutish disturbances in Elbow Lane - noted
- (b) PC Scott: Detailed information on police awareness and activity re Elbow Lane - noted
- (c) CPRE: Transport Campaign Group newsletter covering CPRE's forthcoming campaign on the review of the Ten Year Transport Plan; the Air Transport White Paper; regulations for Quiet Lanes; and the transport implications of the Queen's Speech - noted
- (d) CPRE: Planning Update covering the Planning Bill; Strategic Environmental Assessment; GDPO victory; Heritage Protection Review; Proposed revisions to PPG3; Network Rail telecoms masts; Energy White Paper; and PPS7 - passed to Chairman of Planning Committee
- (e) Hertfordshire Environmental Forum: Winter Bulletin - passed to Chairman
- (f) HCC: Staffing arrangements in East Herts District Team (no change for Hertford Heath) - noted
- (g) HCC: Temporary Closure of Hoe Lane between B1502 and Walnut Tree Walk and temporary speed restriction (30mph) on B1502 - noted. **The Clerk was asked to suggest that the work be carried out in the summer holidays in view of the disruption it will cause.**
- (h) CDA for Herts: Newsletter Autumn 2003; Annual Review; information on Compact Week (3 - 9 November 2003) and questionnaire on Compact Working - noted
- (i) HCC: Determination of relevant areas for 2005/6 school admissions - noted

- (j) EHDC: Hertford Community Voice - invitation to meeting on 5 February on council tax and notes of 1 December 2003 meeting on anti-social behaviour - members were encouraged to attend.
- (k) EHDC: East Herts Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership Self Assessment - request that Parish Council complete questionnaire by 13 February - **questionnaire passed to Trevor Goodingham for completion and return.**
- (l) RoSPA: Information regarding Playground Safety inspections - noted.
- (m) CPRE: Hertfordshire's Village of the Year 2004 - deadline for entries 6 May 2004 - noted
- (n) HAPTC: BT Payphones, Legal Topic Note on Nuisance (copy requested), Training: Chairing meetings - 28 February and Development Course for councillors - 17 March - noted.
- (o) EHDC Chairman: Civic Service to be held on 25 April at 10.30am at Haileybury, Hertford - noted.
- (p) HCC: Admissions criteria - passed to Andrew Crumpton.

7. Financial matters

(a) Draft Financial Regulations

These were considered. **The Clerk was asked to find a definition of 'capital project' in relation to parish councils, to draft provisions to cover retendering of contracts such as grass cutting, to ensure that the Council can prove title to all its land, to consider appropriate levels in the contracting provisions (where pages were missing) and to check that the Council had insurance cover for areas such as the wildlife meadow. The Clerk was asked to circulate a revised draft for the next meeting.**

(b) Accounts for payment

The following accounts were passed for payment:

(i)	Deacons Nursery - four apple trees (approval)	£80.00
(ii)	HCC - stationery, gloves for litter pickers	£57.36
(iii)	HCC - footway lighting maintenance Apr 2002 - Oct 2002	£297.75
(iv)	HCC - footway lighting maintenance Oct 2003 - Dec 2003	£201.61
(v)	HCC - energy charges for street lighting Apr 2003 - Sep 2003	£222.63
(vi)	HCC - energy charges for street lighting Oct 2003 - Dec 2003	£111.32
(vii)	The Open Spaces Society - subscription	£27.50
(viii)	Tree Heritage - trees and their planting	£1010.50
(ix)	A Wilkins - wildlife meadow sign	£80.00
(x)	P2 Digital - wildlife meadow sign	£80.00

(c) Income received

(i)	Heath United Football Club - fees for use of pitch	£200.00
(ii)	VAT claimed for period Mar 2002 - Dec 2003	£4047.44

The Clerk reported that she had, on the advice of the Internal Auditor closed the Council's account with the Halifax and had deposited £224.64 into its current account.

(d) Balances

The Clerk reported the following balances:

(i)	Current account	£978.50
(ii)	Deposit account	11253.99

8. Parish News Items

The following items are to be included:

- (a) Move to quality status and need for contested elections
- (b) Elbow Lane Farm farmhouse
- (c) Anti-social behaviour
- (d) Dangerous state of pavements
- (e) New trees

9. Date of next meeting

Monday 1 March 2004 at 7:30pm in the Mission Room. Bob Akers and Andrew Crumpton gave their apologies

10. Any other business

- (i) Mary Bourne questioned whether or not the owner of 1 Mount Pleasant had or needed planning permission for the works being carried out behind the house. **The Clerk was asked to check the position and refer the matter to the Enforcement Officers if necessary.**
- (ii) **The Clerk was asked to report that lamp post no: 48 in London Road was not working.**
- (iii) The Chairman reported that the next meeting of PREP was to be on 6 February at 7.00pm in Braughing. Simon O'Dell of HCC would be speaking. As the Chairman was unable to attend, Trevor Goodingham volunteered to go in his place.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____