

HERTFORD HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on
Monday 5 April 2004
at the Mission Room, Vicarage Causeway, Hertford Heath

Present:

Anthony Oliver (Chairman)
Bob Akers
Andrew Crumpton
Trevor Goodingham
Gillian Thornton

Carolyn Morgan (Clerk)

Also present:

East Herts District Councillor William Ashley and four members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Alison Scarll, Lynn Bonner and Mary Bourne

1A. Declarations of members' interests

None

2. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 1 March 2004

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

3. Matters arising

(a) Newsletter distribution

The Clerk reported that she had received estimates of photocopying costs. Copyzone in Bishop's Stortford were the cheapest and it was agreed that the first edition would be folded A3, to include a copy of the Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting, the information on what the Council did, where its money came from and where it was spent, information on the Village Appraisal session and any other information to fill four sides of A3.

4. District and County Council Matters

(a) Rural Youth Homelessness

William Ashley advised that EHDC has three hostels which cater for approximately 50 homeless people of all ages. Those seeking assistance are able to get advice from Riversmead Housing Association in Hertford in the first instance.

(b) Planning Consultation

William reported that EHDC was being criticised for not processing applications within the statutory eight week period and, as a result, the District Council had lost grants.

(c) Parish Council's planning applications for the wildlife meadow and pond

The Clerk reported that two applications had been submitted that morning, the Chairman explaining that the Parish Council had been entitled to a 50% reduction in fees and that fees of £110 and £55 had been submitted with the application for change of use and the application for permission to excavate the pond respectively.

(d) London Road Traffic Management Scheme

William Ashley reported that the works would start at the end of April and completed by the end of May. The reduction in the speed limit would take longer.

(e) Parking on the part of Woodland Road that leads from London Road

Concern was expressed that parking was causing problems for traffic trying to turn onto London Road. **William agreed to pursue the matter.**

(f) Sports and recreation

William reported that Debbie Evans had offered to come and talk to the Parish Council. It was agreed that she should be invited to a future meeting.

The Chairman reported on Colin Smith's offer of a field at the bottom of Downfield Road for use by off-road bikes. William said that EHDC was very interested in talking to him about the offer. **William will put the two parties in touch.**

(g) Downfield Road

When asked about the possible provision of a footpath along Downfield Road, the Chairman explained that the proposal had been considered a few years' ago but the road was not of sufficient width to allow such a path. A better solution might be for the Highways Authority to purchase a strip of land behind the hedge.

5. Reports

(i) Chairman

(a) PREP

The Clerk read a letter the Chairman had received from PREP. The Chairman reported that the Parish Council was doing many of the suggested actions. He had seen the Landscape Character Assessment for this area and would be following it up. PREP had also offered advice and help regarding Parish Plans. The Council would take advantage of that offer.

(ii) Planning Committee

(a) The following application, which was not objectionable, was noted:

- *1 Old Forge Row: lean-to conservatory.*

(b) The following appeal against refusal was noted:

- *The Grange, The Roundings: construction of a tennis court*

(iii) Playing Field

(a) Survey of field

As reported to the Annual Parish Meeting, the NPFA inspection would take place in the morning of 7 April 2004.

(b) Football Club proposal

The Clerk reported that Sodexo had revised their quotation and that it now was £98 per cut (a three-fold increase). She had asked two other contractors for quotations. Stephen Forbes said he would let the Clerk know who cut the school's playing field.

The members had a copy of the Football Club's recent proposal that they take over the maintenance (apart from the grass cutting) at nil cost to the Council. Members agreed, formal terms to be drawn up as soon as possible. In Part II, members considered the implications for the Playing Field Manager and agreed to terminate his contract, making a payment in lieu of notice.

Members agreed to leave the question as to any lease to the Football Club until the NPFA's report had been received.

(iv) Highways and byways

(a) Potholes

The Clerk reminded members that they, and members of the public, could report potholes via the Internet or telephone.

(b) 20 mph speed limit in residential areas

Andrew Crumpton enquired as to whether or not such speed limits could be introduced in residential areas. **The Clerk will make enquiries.**

(v) Allotments

Bob Akers reported that £135 had been received in rents, that there were about one and a half plots that could be taken and that there had been a small amount of vandalism.

(vi) Wildlife Meadow and Pond

As reported earlier, planning applications have been submitted.

It was agreed to hold the opening ceremony on Sunday 4 July at noon. Daphne Stroud would ask the Mercury photographer to come, other invitees would include the Cutler family, Nigel Copping and William Ashley, the CMS and the Wildlife Trust.

(vii) Village Appraisal

Carolyn Morgan reported on a meeting between Alison Scarll, Shirley McGinty, and two members of the Rural Enterprise Project held on 1 April. The Village Hall had been booked for Friday 21 May for a drop-in session between 2.00pm and 8.00pm. It was hoped that as many members of the Parish Council as could attend, would do so for at least part of the afternoon/evening. Letters were to be sent to all village organisations not only asking them to encourage their members to attend but also to see what issues they felt important as a group.

(viii) School

Alison Scarll had reported that the school was trying to get new pupils and had suggested that there be a link from the Council's website directly to the school's. This was agreed.

Andrew Crumpton reported that a new Headteacher had been appointed.

(ix) The Clerk

(i) War memorial cleaning

The Clerk advised members that she had received three quotations of £920, £950 and £1250. Members considered the details in Part II and accepted the quotation of £920 from J D & Son Ltd.

(x) Village Hall

Members considered the Village Hall's request for financial assistance in providing a notice board in memory of Joan and Brian Bishop to contain the village map and other village information, and agreed to contribute £422 as requested.

(xi) Village Green

Nothing to report.

6. Correspondence received

- (a) Action Against Rural Crime: invitation to meeting on 29 March. The Clerk reported that she had attended the meeting and now had a pager which gave information on potential criminal activities in the Hertford area.

- (b) NALC: Parish Information March 2004 - Consultation on "Planning Policy Statement 1" and "Community Involvement in Planning", Consultation on statutory directions to the Environment Agency and Waste Collection Authorities on the unlawful disposal of waste - noted
- (c) EHDC: Invitation to Hertford Community Voice meeting on 1 April 2004 - noted
- (d) HCC: Email address and telephone number for highways fault reporting - noted
- (e) Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust: Newsletter - noted
- (f) CDA for Herts: Winter Newsletter - noted
- (g) EHDC: East Herts Housing Conference 21 April 2004 9.30am to 3.30pm at Tewin Bury Farm
- (h) Hertfordshire Branch of the Royal Society of St George - advertising their existence - noted
- (i) ODPM: Consultation on regulations and guidance relating to the arrangements by which local authority monitoring officers may investigate allegations of misconduct by members - noted
- (j) dti and defra: Partnership in rolling out broadband to rural communities noted
- (k) HCC: Travelwise bulletin Spring 2004 - help with travel plans for schools, etc - noted
- (l) HCC: Draft Northern Hertfordshire Area Transportation Plan - noted (with amazement and amusement).

7. Financial matters

(a) Accounts for the years ending 31 March 2002 and 2003

The Clerk reported that she was meeting with the Internal Auditor shortly regarding the 2003 accounts. The accounts for the year ending 31 March 2002 had been submitted to the External Auditor.

(b) Financial Regulations

These were agreed subject to the limit on which tenders had to be sought being raised to £7000 (approximately half the precept) and the correction of a couple of typing errors. When amended, they were to be passed to the Chairman and Trevor Goodingham for final checking.

(c) PAYE

The Clerk reported that she had taken advice from the Inland Revenue and had registered the Parish Council as a PAYE employer. She had been inundated since with paperwork which she needed to check through.

The Chairman reported that the Clerk had written to him and confirmed that she declares all her income from the Parish Council to her tax office and does pay tax on it.

(d) Accounts for payment

The following accounts were passed for payment:

(i)	EHDC: fee for change of use application (approval of payment made)	£110.00
(ii)	EHDC: fee for permission to excavate the pond (approval of payment made)	£55.00
(iii)	EHDC: Licence for Mt Pleasant children's play area	£5.00
(iv)	MJK Ronald: Professional services - internal audit for 2001/2002	£125.00
(v)	East Herts Signs: "No dog mess please" signs	£41.24
(vi)	M Lee: Playing Field Manager duties Dec 2003 - Mar 2004 & PILON	£88.00
(vii)	C M Morgan: Photocopying Jan - Mar 2004	£31.66

(e) Income received

(i)	Mrs Walker - re-imburement of cost of tree work	£300.00
(ii)	EDF Energy - wayleave payments for 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003	£18.40

(f) Balances

The Clerk reported the following balances:

(i)	Current Account	£552.41
(ii)	Deposit Account	£11253.99

8. Parish News Items

The following items are to be included:

- (a) Parish Council newsletter
- (b) Village Appraisal
- (c) Opening Ceremony of Wildlife Meadow

9. Date of next meeting

Monday 10 May 2004 at 7:30pm in the Mission Room.

Bob Akers presented his apologies.

10. Exclusion of the press and public

The Chairman asked that the press and public leave the meeting during discussion of two remaining items of business because of their confidential nature.

The meeting closed at 9:35pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____