

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 22 APRIL 2013 AT 8.00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chairman Cllr. F A Delderfield.

Cllrs. Mrs C Adams, C L Atkinson, J C Gegan, Mrs A V Heaviside, J V Keyes and Mrs E Parsons.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. R L Bass and A J Gable.

46.13 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for this item. Five members of the public were present. There were no questions.

47.13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 18 March 2013 were confirmed and signed.

48.13 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Clean-Up Day: A successful clean-up day was reported with about 16 volunteers in the south and 10 in the north; it was thought that changing the time was a good move. Cllr Mrs A V Heaviside agreed to report and thank people in the parish Magazine.

Street Sign: The Chairman reported that a request is in place to deal with a damaged road name sign at Beckingham Road.

Code of Conduct: The Clerk confirmed that the new adopted Code of Conduct was circulated with the 23 July 2012 agenda (19 November in the case of Cllr A J Gable) and further copies can be provided. The following guidance documents were circulated with the agenda for this meeting:

- A guide for councillors on Openness and Transparency, produced in March 2013 by the Department for Communities and Local Government and;
- a flowchart to help with declaring Interests, produced by the Essex Association of Local Councils, is enclosed.

Cllr Mrs A V Heaviside felt that Members are aware of their responsibilities and execute them admirably.

49.13 COMMUNITY POLICING

Local Police Re-organisation: A response to this Council's concerns about local policing was received from the Police and Crime Commissioner and was noted.

50.13 REPORTS OF MEMBERS OF OUTSIDE BODIES AND NEWS FROM OTHER AUTHORITIES

There were no reports.

51.13 FINANCE

Quarterly Finance Report: The end of year finance report was received and noted. It was agreed to carry forward £385 for outstanding bills from the Maldon District Council, £7,500 for work at the Jubilee Recreation Ground and War Memorial; and £504 being the balance of the Changing Rooms insurance claim.

Annual Audit: Notice of audit for the 2012/13 financial year was received and the Council's Accounts and Audit Programme noted. It was agreed to ask Mr Wrigley to conduct the internal audit. It was also agreed to convene a Finance Working Group meeting on 2 May, comprising the Chairman and Cllrs. J C Gregan and Mrs A V Heaviside, to examine the financial records.

52.13 AMENITIES

Report of the Chairman of the Committee: Cllr J V Keyes reported that he had picked litter from the recreation grounds. The report was received and adopted.

Heybridge Pit: The Clerk reported that he had discussed with the Revd. Jonathon Pearce an offer he had made of where he and his associates with an interest in wildlife, would examine and advise on the management of the land opposite the Jubilee Recreation Ground (owned by the Parish Council) known as Heybridge Pit. It was agreed to take this offer forward and to invite him to a Parish Council meeting at the appropriate time. The Revd. Pearce had also suggested land off Hall Road might be an appropriate location for a wildlife area.

53.13 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Rangers Scheme: There were no further requests for work to be carried out.

Local Highways Panel: The Local Highways Panel had asked parishes to put forward further schemes for consideration by 3 May. It was agreed to suggest further improvements, previously discussed, to control parking near the Walden House Road junctions with Catchpole Lane and Goat Lodge Road. Members agreed to notify the Clerk of any other suggestions in time for submission by 3 May.

Bus Service 90: Cllr Mrs A V Heaviside reported a reply from Stephenson's of Essex saying that their view has not changed that it is not practical for service No 90 to serve Great Totham North. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Mrs Heaviside for her efforts.

54.13 LOCALISM ACT – COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID

Following information received at the last meeting about the rights to bid under the Localism Act 2011, it was agreed to put together a draft list of community assets for proposing to the District Council who are creating a register. It was agreed to put forward a draft list to check its viability against the criteria for listing. The draft list is appended to these minutes.

55.13 SUPERFAST ESSEX

Further information about the Superfast Essex Broadband Project vision was circulated and noted. It had proved difficult to find an actual programme of work or implementation at present. There was general agreement that the provision of Broadband is poor locally.

56.13 ESSEX ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Last year it was agreed to take up membership of the Essex Association of Local Councils (with affiliation to the national body) and to review this after one year. Members noted a good supply of information and the Clerk had been kept up to date and found the services useful. It was agreed to continue.

57.13 CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence included information about dog fouling from the District Council, general information from the EALC, and the County Council elections. The Chairman would deal with an invitation to a service at Chelmsford Cathedral directly.

58.13 PLANNING

Appeal Decision: An appeal decision was received in respect of MAL/12/00018, development adj. Ashcroft, Kelvedon Road. The appeal was allowed.

Appeal Notice: Notice of appeal was received in respect of road works at Southminster, North Fambridge and Burnham-on-Crouch in connection with a Wind Farm Development

Decisions: The Clerk reported the latest planning decisions made by the District Council. An application for 50 houses off Hall road was withdrawn.

Latest applications: The Chairman confined his role to chairing this item and did not take part in the discussion on account of his position as a member of the Maldon District Council's North Western Area Planning Committee: The Council's comments on planning applications lodged with the District Council, to week ending 19 April 2013 were:

FUL/MAL/12/00909 Proposed demolition of existing public house and erection of 9 No dwellings. The Compasses 12 Colchester Road, Great Totham.

The Council objects to this application which is contrary to several policies of the adopted Maldon District Replacement Local Plan and Government Guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In terms of the latter, the Council believes that the application fails to measure up to deliver sustainable development in each of its three dimensions of economic, social and environmental underpinning the planning system. Accordingly, the Council recommends refusal of the application and this view is supported and driven by the community at Great Totham North and also by the wider community.

Great Totham is a widely spaced rural parish with two main centres of population and two smaller settlements. Great Totham North is the smaller of the two main centres with approximately 300 dwellings. There are three community assets: a small playground, a URC Church and the Compasses. The main centre, Great Totham South, with its School and one general store/Post Office is 1¼ -1½ miles away and there are no interconnecting footways. So, in considering the planning dimensions, Great Totham North is a discrete settlement.

The Economic Dimension

Paragraph 28 of the NPPF is about promoting a strong rural economy and economic growth in rural areas. Specifically it aims to support the provision

and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities and; promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. The Compasses and a local florists are the only two local services providing employment and income generation through local people and tourists. The Compasses must not be overlooked in terms of tourism. It is in close proximity to the National Cycle Route (150 Dutch cyclists called in for refreshment when travelling to and from the Olympic Games for example) and the more adventurous tourists arriving from the Hook travelling away from the trunk roads call in during the summer.

For most facilities people have to travel. Except for a twice a week morning only outpost of a Witham surgery in the next village, the nearest doctors and dentists are at Maldon, Witham and Tiptree. Many people find employment in London and whilst there is a bus service to Colchester and Maldon there is none to Witham (to use the trains) and a communication, dated 18 March 2013, from the bus company serving the area said there are no plans to serve Great Totham North.

A recent planning decision, at Totham Hill Green, refused an application for four dwellings saying: *The erection of four additional dwellings remote from community services and essential support facilities and inaccessible by a range of transport, would represent an unsustainable form of development and would therefore be contrary to policiesT1 and T2 of the adopted Maldon District Replacement Local Plan and Government Guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.* The proposal site is within the same general area and so shares the same constraints.

The Social Dimension

The social role of a public house cannot be underestimated and paragraph 70 of the NPPF rightly emphasises this. Planning decisions, it says, should: *plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as ... public houses) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*

The Compasses is such a community facility and, the Church apart, is the only social meeting place in the settlement and, if only for this reason, should be retained and preserved otherwise the community will become lifeless and sterile leading to it becoming a "dormitory" settlement. Many of the local community have stressed this point with some who have recently moved in claiming that the rural setting, complete with a pub, influenced them to move here.

The Environmental Dimension

The Compasses has a high value in terms of visual impact. When approaching from the south it stands prominent and slightly angled on a hill and is preceded by the village green causing an attractive and pleasing focal point. From the north the impact is different as the traveller suddenly comes across the long view over the countryside between a surprising old building opposite a fine old house.

The Compasses has been a pub since between 1719 and 1734 so can rightly be termed a heritage asset but it is not listed. However paragraph 135 of the NPPF provides for a non-designated heritage asset to be taken into account in determining a planning application by *having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset*. To demolish the pub and replace it with nine dwellings would destroy the heart of the settlement in visual as well as social terms. It be harmful to the rural setting and appearance of this part of Totham North and would be detrimental to the street scene.

(The Chairman advised that this application would be considered by the North-West area Planning Committee and Cllr R L Bass had offered to represent this Council and speak at the beginning of the meeting. Members were grateful for this offer which was accepted.)

For Information

LDE/MAL/13/00238 Claim for a Lawful Certificate for the land within the site boundary at 1 Totham Hill House which has been used and maintained as residential curtilage uninterrupted for the last 10 years. Totham Hill House 1 Totham Hill Green - Noted

59.13 CONFIRMATION OF CHEQUES

Cheques were confirmed for:

Amount (£)	Payee	Service
2012/13		
607.20	Maldon District Council	Repairs to Beacon
34.19	C R Potter	Postage stamps £6.00 Minutes binding, paper, envelopes £23.44 Materials for THRG gate repair £4.75
2013/14		
126.00	Maldon District Council	Emptying litter bins 1 Apr 12 to 31 Mar 14
11.25	E-On	Bus shelter lighting – energy charge
284.31	C R Potter	Salary/allowance £207.00 Broadband 27 Mar – 26 Jun £71.64 Black Bags £5.67
527.42	Essex Association of Local Councils	Affiliation Fees for Essex and National Associations 2013/14

60.13 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

List of Possible Community Assets

Description	Present Use	Reason for Listing
Totham Hill Green	Registered Village Green	To secure ownership of the Manor to assure present rights.
Green Near the Compasses	Registered Village Green	To secure ownership of the Manor to assure present rights.
The Compasses Pub	Public House	Important social and community facility.
United Reformed Church	Church and Community Centre.	Important social and community facility.
Cricket Pavilion	By Cricket Club (in their ownership)	Use in connection with adjacent Cricket Field (owned by PC)
Honywood School	Meeting Hall	To retain as meeting Hall
Land North West of Village Hall & Cricket Field	Agricultural	Possible extension of Cricket Field/Village Hall area.
Land North of Hall Road	Filled rubbish tip	Possible use as nature conservation area.
The Prince of Wales Pub	Public House	Important social and community facility.
The Barn Church	Church and Community Centre.	Important social and community facility.
Shop/Post Office	General stores/PO	Important community facility.
Land adjoining St Peters Churchyard	Agricultural	Future burial ground extension.
Land north of Primary School	Agricultural	Extension to school playing field.