MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 16 JUNE 2014 AT 8.00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Vice-Chairman Cllr. F A Delderfield.
Cllrs. A J Gable, J C Gregan, Mrs A V Heaviside, J V Keyes and Mrs E Parsons.

Apologies for absence: Cllrs. Mrs C Adams, C L Atkinson and R L Bass.

81.14 William Charles Herbert Mills
The Chairman referred to the death on 7 June of Mr William Mills, known popularly as Charlie, aged 92. Mr Mills was a local man who served in the armed forces during the Second World War and was Standard Bearer for the local branch of the British Legion, parading annually at the Church for the Parish Remembrance Day Service. He was made a Yeoman of the Parish on 19 December 1974. Members and public stood in silent tribute.

82.14 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS
Cllr F A Delderfield declared an interest in all planning applications as a member of the Maldon District Council's North-Western Area Planning Committee and confined his role to advising on factual information where appropriate. Cllr J C Gregan declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of planning application FUL/MAL/14/00283 below and left the meeting during its discussion, and a personal interest in FUL/MAL/14/00411 and did not take part in the discussion.

83.14 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
Thirteen members of the public were present. Questions were asked about a planning application later on the agenda for a solar panel installation. The questioners asked if: the Council is aware of the fact that the reduction in the number of panels [from an earlier application] is marginal; will the Council be mindful that the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State is highly relevant; will the Council take account of approximately 100 objections to this application made by the public; and is the Parish Council mindful to change its decision [of support] to a previous application given a greater understanding of the issues.

The Chairman advised that he has received copies of all the objections and the Maldon District Council is aware of the great concern over this proposal. He also advised that the Parish Council are consultees on this application, not the decision makers, and hopes that it will take in the views of the public.

84.14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 19 May 2014 were confirmed and signed.

85.14 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES
The Conservation Volunteers: Cllr Mrs A V Heaviside reported that the *Conservation Volunteers* will carry out a site visit to check out what could be done at Heybridge Pit.
The Compasses Public House: The Clerk had not found from the District Council minutes the reason why an appeal by the owner was successful in de-

listing the public house a an Asset of Community value. It was noted that the pub has recently been refurbished and reopened.

86.14 COMMUNITY POLICING
There were no reports.

87.14 REPORTS OF MEMBERS OF OUTSIDE BODIES AND NEWS FROM OTHER AUTHORITIES
There were no reports.

88.14 FINANCE:
Internal Audit 2013/14: Mr Peter Wrigley had completed the internal audit of the books and papers for 2013/14 and gave his opinion that the statement of accounts and books represent the Council's true financial position. There are no observations or issues for attention. Members expressed appreciation for the work of Mr Wrigley who carries out the internal audit free of charge.
Annual Return 2013/14: The Clerk confirmed the timely despatch of the Annual Return and associated documents to the External Auditors. The Clerk was thanked for preparing the accounts and annual statement.
Notice Board: During external renovation works to the Village Hall the need for replacement of the two notice boards was identified as they are rotten and unsightly. One of the boards is used exclusively by the Parish Council but they are both open and unofficial notices are frequently placed there. Occasionally notices are damaged or lost to weather due to the exposed position. The Hall's Trustees have suggested that one good quality enclosed notice board would improve the appearance of the Hall and there would be enough space for Parish Council and Village Hall notices with half the board being dedicated to each organisation.

The cost would be just over £1,000 (plus VAT) with a small cost for fitting and it was agreed that the Parish Council would make the purchase and the Village Hall will make a 50% contribution to the cost. Although there is no existing budget for this item it was agreed to revise the estimates accordingly using surplus from balances or reserves as appropriate. The Hall will assume ownership of the board when in place. It was also noted that the board on the Green near the Compasses needs replacement soon.

89.14 AMENITIES
Report of the Chairman of the Committee: Cllr J V Keyes reported that grass cutting is being carried out on schedule and the grass looks in good condition. He has noted no further dog fouling at Totham Hill Recreation Ground. The report was received and adopted.
Playground Inspection: The annual playground inspection report was received and there are some items needing attention.
Seat at Spring Lane:. Mr Tony Whiting of Spring lane is currently voluntarily maintaining the area around the VE-Day seat there and has indicated that he would like to affix a small plaque (similar to that already existing) to the seat in memory of his late daughter. The original sponsors of the seat have been consulted and have no objection. The request was agreed and the Council is appreciative of Mr Whiting's work.

90.14 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Rangers Scheme: It was noted that the new walkable verge needs weed-killing and Cllr Mrs A V Heaviside is to speak to owners about the removal of overhanging boughs at the end of Beckingham Road. Cllr J C Gregan reported an overgrown bridleway which Cllr Mrs a V Heaviside is to investigate.

Winter Salt Bag Scheme: It was agreed to take part in the 2014/15 Winter Salt Bag Partnership Scheme if Cllr J C Gregan is willing to operate it. Cllr Gregan confirmed that he is and has registered with the County Council.

Speedwatch: The Clerk advised that Cllr C L Atkinson has contacted all the volunteers and he has taken part in a Wickham Bishops Parish Council speed check. He is awaiting dates for training.

Bus Shelter: The County asked the Parish Council's views about a request received for the installation of a wooden bus shelter at the bus stop opposite the War Memorial, Maldon Road, Great Totham. The request will be put to the Local Highways Panel, if the Parish Council is supportive. As the bus stop is located in front of some houses, it would be offset so that it is not immediately in line with the fronts of the houses. It was agreed that the Parish Council has no objection provided the design is appropriate for a rural setting

91.14 PLANNING POLICY AND STRATEGY:

Working group: Cllr J C Gregan reported on a working Group Meeting on 3 June which revised the existing work and identified who needs to be done to finish it.

Community Infrastructure Charging: A further consultation on the Community Infrastructure Charging Schedule was received and noted.

Development North of Heybridge: The District Council is arranging a public exhibition about the proposed "North Heybridge Garden Suburb", and has suggested a briefing for the Parish Council in advance of this. Unfortunately the short notice prevents enough members being available.

92.14 COMMUNITY DEFIBRILLATORS

Further to the discussion at the previous meeting Cllr A J Gable provided further information about locations and costs of about £1,100 for each defibrillator which may receive a cost contribution. It was agreed in principle that Community Defibrillators were a good idea and agreed in principle to go ahead subject to Cllr Gable investigating funding and agreeing a suitable location. The scheme would be discussed further under a future agenda item.

93.14 CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence included information about the Essex Wildlife Trust's Annual Meeting, A review of polling districts and places, an invitation to public exhibition mentioned above about the proposed "North Heybridge Garden Suburb", an invitation to Armed Forces Day on 28 June, and notice of a vacancy on the Standards Committee about which Cllrs J V Keyes and J C Gregan expressed an interest in filling.

94.14 PLANNING

Complaint: A response is awaited from the Maldon District Council following a meeting about the issue of a Certificate of Lawfulness in respect of the Stables, Colchester Road. Meanwhile the Chairman had written about an on-going enforcement matter at land off Maypole Road.

Decisions: The Clerk reported on the latest Maldon District Council planning decisions.
Latest applications: The applications lodged with the Maldon District Council to week ending 13 June 2014 were considered and the Council's comments were as follows:

FUL/MAL/14/00283 Installation and operation of a solar farm and associated infrastructure, including photovoltaic panels, mounting frames, inverters, transformers, substations, communications building, fence and pole-mounted security cameras for the lifetime of the solar farm. Land South Of Beckingham Road Great Totham – It was agreed to object to the proposal. The scale and extent of the development will create an unacceptable visual impact upon the landscape character and the location is inappropriate and would create an adverse landscape impact which is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework. There are extensive and significant objections from the local community who consider the proposed development to be inappropriately sited and with the appearance and impact of a large scale industrial development. (Cllr J C Gregan declared an interest and left the room for the duration of the discussion on this application).

OUT/MAL/13/00786 Erection of 50 no. market and affordable housing units and a community pocket park, accessed from existing Hall Road access point. Land Opposite 34 Hall Road. (Amended by submission of additional information). – The Council objects to this proposal and is aware of and has evidence of the following information which applies to the proposal site and therefore negates the application.

In 1984 planning permission (MAL/408/84) was given for six dwellings which extended the Seagers development but which were outside the development limits. In return the Cricket Ground and a small piece of additional land would be sold by the owners to the Parish Council for £1 and the owners would agree not to ask for further development on adjacent land.

On the 10 October 1984 the owners of the land which is now subject to this application entered into an agreement with the Maldon District Council under section 52 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 and the provisions of Section 33 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions) Act 1982.

Paragraph 6, Clause 1 of the agreement states that *The owners hereby agree declare covenant and undertake with the Council that notwithstanding the grant of planning permission aforesaid (B) not to erect, or permit to be erected,* ***or apply for planning permission to erect****, any permanent buildings or structure at any time on the land edged green on the aforesaid plan annexed hereto save for such as may be permitted by Order of the Secretary of State for agricultural purposes…….*

The Parish Council bought the Cricket Field on 18 October 1985 and the deeds were accompanied by a copy of the Section 52 Agreement plan. In the same year on 11 June part of the land subject to the Agreement, and now forming part of the application site, was sold as *the disused gravel pit* and a memorandum to that effect was added to the deeds of the main body of the original land remaining. As the transactions were carried out within a few months of each other by the same solicitors there is no reason to suppose that

the existence of the Agreement was unknown to the (then) new owners.

Regardless of the presence of the Agreement the Council would in any event have objections to the application for the following reasons.

The site is outside of any area intended for development in the current Maldon District Plan and Draft Local Development Plan. It also pre-empts the LDP phase which will consider the villages in detail. Moreover, the local infrastructure would be unable to cope and in any event the site itself is inappropriate for development.

The Great Totham Primary School is full. 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, and they are generally oversubscribed. There is a Post Office/general store in the Village which is well used but their range is necessarily limited and most shopping involves travelling further afield. The service and shopping aspects of 50 extra dwellings will lead to unacceptable increased traffic.

There are limited employment opportunities in the Village and most people travel outside to their workplace including to Colchester, Chelmsford and London via Witham. to the nearby centre. which would add to already overstretched roads and public transport. The application proposes “units” for home-working and on the one hand people may not then have to travel to work it may, depending on the nature of the business, involve people travelling to them. A local problem exists with wired broadband which is frequently very slow and often interrupted, and mobile telephone use where signals are often non-existent. The employment aspects of 50 extra dwellings will lead to unacceptable increased traffic.

The access routes, School and Hall Roads, are congested over part of their lengths with parked vehicles reducing sections to a single track including near the junctions. Recent re-development of the old school site with insufficient off-road parking and increased car ownership by residents of the Almshouses, with no off-road parking, has caused the problem in School Road. Hall Road is similarly reduced in width and the junction to the B1022 from Hall Road is very difficult as this crossroads has a high volume of traffic, vision is poor and there is conflict with other road users. Those travelling over the crossroads, perhaps to the train station at Witham, will encounter severe traffic congestion in Walden House Road due to the presence of the School. The addition of 50 dwellings would make an already difficult situation for road users intolerable for new and existing residents.

The development would overlook and be overlooked by some residents of Hall Road, Millways and Seagers.

The site is a former gravel pit (one of several in the immediate area) and the excavation was water filled due to the high water table; the application notes that surface water disposal cannot be achieved by soakaways, so surface water drainage will be onerous involving a long system of drains to Spickets or Catchpole Brooks. The pit has since been filled and has a shallow layer of clay and rubble covering a mixture of waste material. The soil investigation report included with the application has identified the filling as “waste material of a

variable nature". Local residents who overlook the site can help here as they report seeing washing machines and refrigerators, tangled wire, large oil drums and many lorry loads of salvage from a large factory fire in London being dumped. This being the case there is likely to be a very unstable base containing an unacceptable level of contamination making the land unsuitable for building.

A positive side of the poor restoration of the former gravel pit is that it has become a wildlife haven. The Council notes that no wildlife survey is included in the application but it mentions "opportunities for new wildlife habitats" on the site but local naturalists report that the site is already such a habitat. Many species of wildlife, particularly small mammals, insects and amphibians, are present (soon to go into their winter dormant mode), some of which are protected species under UK and European law, including the Great Crested Newt. The wildlife aspect is a further reason for refusing the application.

FUL/MAL/14/00357 Siting of a floating cabin used as a holiday let. The Raft At Chigborough Chigborough Farm Chigborough Road Heybridge – The Council supports this application.

FUL/MAL/14/00407 Change of use of land of 2 fields to run boot fairs every Sunday from 7am to 3pm from 26 May 2014 until 26 October 2014 and then every year after that between April to October. Land To The East Of Lee Moor Braxted Park Road Great Braxted – The Council objects to this application because of the additional traffic the changed use would generate in the area causing congestion and further road hazards. The area around the junction of Braxted, Maldon and Grove Farm Roads, and the junction of Maldon/Loamy Hill Roads would be particularly affected.

OUT/MAL/14/00365 Erection of 2 houses. Land Adjacent To 6 Captains Wood Road Great Totham - The Council objects to this application because the restricted width of the site would result in its overdevelopment and produce an unacceptable cramped appearance.

FUL/MAL/14/00441 Erection of single detached dwelling served by re-positioned access. Land Between Mapstones and Ballingdon Maypole Road Great Totham - The Council supports this application.

FUL/MAL/14/00411 Erection of one detached dwelling. Croft Cottage 18 Totham Hill Green - The Council supports this application which, although outside of the settlement limits, is a logical in-filling of good design, in keeping with other properties and one which would enhance the area.

FUL/MAL/14/00442 Proposed extension to the front and side to be used as a granny annexe. 1 Foster Road - The Council supports this application.

For information only NMA/MAL/14/00131 Application for non-material amendment following grant of Planning Permission HOUSE/MAL/13/01039 (Proposed front and rear single storey extensions, existing front porch re-built with new roof and rear lean-to glass roofed veranda with associated internal alterations) - The addition of three new windows in the South East elevation. Kestrels 3 Chapel Road - The Council notes this information.

95.14 CONFIRMATION OF CHEQUES
Cheques were confirmed for:

Amount (£)	Payee	Service
132.00	Maldon District Council	Annual independent playground inspections.
314.75	C R Potter	Salary/allowance £273.00 Paper, envelopes, etc £33.38 Stamps & postage 8.37

96.14 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS
No matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm