

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 13 JULY 2015 AT 8.00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chairman, Cllr Mrs C Adams
Cllrs. C L Atkinson, F A Delderfield, Mrs A V Heaviside, J V Keyes and B S Marshall.

Apologies for absence: Cllrs. R L Bass, A J Gable and J C Gegan.

99.15 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Twelve members of the public were present and questions were asked about: **Planning Appeal, Rose Stables, Captains Wood Road:** Residents were concerned about an appeal against proposed development of 2 gypsy pitches (MAL/14/00769), and requested the Council to make representations at the appeal hearing. Particular concern was expressed about there being no formal objections on Highways grounds. The Chairman advised that the question of representation will be discussed later in the meeting and the particular point about Highways should be taken up with Cllr R L Bass.

Another issue is rubbish apparently stored on the site about which the District Council had apparently agreed to take enforcement action. The Chairman advised writing to the Environment Agency and the Council would check the position with the Maldon District Council. Mr Williams agreed to provide the Clerk with further information.

Planning Appeal, Land North East of The Bull Public House: A question was asked as to whether the Parish Council supports a new application for development on land north east of The Bull Public House, and in particular the highway aspects of the proposal. The Chairman advised that the application will be discussed later in the meeting.

100.15 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr B S Marshall declared a personal interest in planning application FUL/MAL/15/00501 under agenda item 16 (ii) and did not take part in the discussion. There were no other disclosures.

101.15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 15 June 2015 were confirmed and signed.

102.15 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Bent Sign: Cllr Mrs A V Heaviside has made a report on-line report about a second bent sign.

Walkable Verge: Cllr J V Keyes advised that he will take up the matter of vegetation growth with the Local Highways Panel when he attends a meeting.

Planning Enforcement: Cllr J V Keyes advised that he will further take up with the District Council whether they have a proactive mechanism in place to ensure compliance with the on-going conditions set down by the Inspector in the case of a gypsy pitch at the end of Captains Wood Road (MAL/13/00920).

Members' Details: The Clerk had circulated the updated list of Members and their contact details with the agenda.

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

There were no reports.

104.15 PARISH YEOMANRY

Members had no nominations to put forward for the Parish Yeomanry and it was agreed to place an article in the Parish Magazine inviting nominations.

105.15 MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

Cllr J V Keyes had previously asked if the starting time of Council meetings could be moved forward to 7.30 pm and it was agreed to consider this suggestion. There had been a regular booking for the Hall which prevented this earlier start on a Monday but the position was now changed and it was agreed to start the Council meetings at 7.30 pm from the September meeting.

106.15 MEMBER TRAINING

Cllr J C Gegan had provided copies of papers he received at a member training event held at Heybridge. It was agreed that any questions Members had would be raised at the next meeting when he is present.

107.15 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

A draft retention policy for the Council's records was considered and agreed and the Clerk will further develop the categories as papers are sorted. A copy is appended to these minutes.

108.15 AMENITIES

Report of the Chairman of the Committee: Cllr C L Atkinson has secured the gate at THRG which had been forced and has asked for quotes for painting the War Memorial Bus Shelter. The slide at the Jubilee Recreation Ground needs a new ladder and the Clerk will try to identify the equipment manufacturer. Some garden refuse has been dumped on the bank at the Jubilee Recreation Ground seemingly by a Hall road resident. Two Chestnut trees have been planted at the Cricket Field and Bull Green grass cutting is not up to Standard. The Buckthorn bushes need watering. The Clerk is still trying to locate a supplier of rubber chip safety surface material and a repairer of the zip-wire. Cllr Atkinson's report was received and adopted.

Verge Cutting: The Clerk reported a complaint about verge cutting where orchids are present near the sewage pumping station in Maldon Road opposite the entrance to Prince of Wales Road. The Parish Council's contractors (Maldon District Council) have to cut a small strip of verge nearby and may have exceeded the area or it might be cut by Anglian Water.

109.15 FINANCE

Finance Report: The 1st quarter finance report was received and noted. One of the items under non-recurring projects was for replacing the worn out steps from the School Road side with an alternative. The Chairman questioned this approach and cost and whether the entrance is needed especially as the entrance from Maldon Road has been improved. It was agreed to place a notice explaining that the Maldon Road entrance should be used and see if this is effective.

Investments: The Clerk reported that H M Treasury is to redeem its 2½ Consolidated Stock at par of which the Council holds £57 worth. It was agreed to place this in reserves.

Transparency Code: The Clerk reported that he has information about having space for a website on essexinfo.net provided by the County Council for Essex parish councils. This will enable information to be published on-line to conform to the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities as well as provide a Council website. The Clerk will prepare documents for publication and start the account. A part of the site is available for elected Members who have to agree to a set of rules when publishing. The Clerk circulated a guidance note.

110.15 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Rangers Scheme: The finger post at the end of Braxted Lane was reported as needing cleaning.

Parking in Walden House Road: A Walden House Road resident complained about parking in Walden House Road and Great Totham Road. It was noted that the Highways Panel has discussed parking in Walden House Road and Cllr J V Keyes will find out about the present position. It was also thought that the problem could be reported in the Parish Magazine and at Wickham Bishops. The latter has considered a request for a one-way system but think this undesirable.

Speed limit on B1022: Great Braxted Parish Council asked if this Council would support an extension to the speed limit on the B1022 in Great Braxted and this was agreed.

111.15 COMMUNITY POLICING

Speedwatch: Cllr C L Atkinson updated on further speed checks at which several motorists have been recorded as speeding. A further check will be carried out on 30 July. More volunteers are required for the scheme.

112.15 PLANNING POLICY AND STRATEGY:

Pre-Application Consultation: From time to time the Council or individual Members are approached by potential applicants for planning permission who wish to discuss what the Council's views might be should an application be submitted. The Council's formal response, when made, is to say that it is not empowered or resourced to provide pre-application advice but the District Council is (for which it charges). Members confirmed that this policy should be left as it is and retained. Members also recognised that if a Parish Plan is developed then would be planning applicants could refer to the plan for guidance about the Parish and Parish Council's collective opinions.

Representation on Planning Applications: Whilst the Council makes its written comments on planning applications directly to the Maldon District Council there is a further opportunity to make representations during the public session when an application is considered by Committee or Council. With some applications it is felt appropriate for the Council to be represented in public and indeed it has been in the past. There is usually a short time span between receiving a letter about when an application is due to be considered and the actual meeting date and in future the Council will try to identify which applications need Member representation (some are delegated and do not go to Committee) in advance and have a list of Members willing to be called upon to attend if possible.

In the past the Chairman and Cllrs R L Bass, J C Gegan and Mrs A V Heaviside have represented the Council in this way. The Chairman and Cllr Mrs Heaviside agreed to be called upon to continue to do so and Cllrs Bass

and Gregan will be asked if they are also willing to be identified in this way [both subsequently agreed]. It was then thought that it would also be appropriate to be represented at certain planning appeals when a hearing is held (most use a written procedure) and the same volunteers would be asked.

113.15 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Appeal Notices: Notice of appeal was received in respect of MAL/14/00936 for up to 115 houses north-east of the Bull. A hearing is set for 18 August at Maldon and it was agreed to ask Cllr J C Gregan to represent the Council or the Chairman if he is not available.

Notice of appeal was also received in respect for MAL/14/00769 for change of use for two gypsy pitches at Rose Stables, land south of Captains Wood Road. The appeal is notified as a hearing but no date is set yet. It was agreed to ask Cllr J C Gregan to represent the Council if he is available.

Appeal Decisions: An appeal in respect OUT/MAL/13/00786, proposed development of 50 housing units on land opposite 34 Hall Road, was dismissed.

Application 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 10 July 2015 were considered and the Council's comments were as follows:

FUL/MAL/15/00501 Construction of an agricultural storage building to serve farm holding utilising existing farm access to Sheepcoates Lane. Land Rear of Krallis Tan, Sheepcoates Lane Little Totham Essex - The Council has no objection and recommends a condition is applied restricting the use to that stated in the application. The Council recommends approval.

FUL/MAL/15/00526 Variation of condition 2 approved planning permission FUL/MAL/14/01128 (Proposed detached dwelling house). Variation: Minor change to position, height and fenestration. Site Adjacent To Ashcroft Kelvedon Road Wickham Bishops - The Council has no objections and recommends approval.

HOUSE/MAL/15/00549 Proposed new 2 storey side extension and single storey rear extension to existing semi-detached residence. 97 Broad Street Green Road - The Council has no objections and recommends approval.

HOUSE/MAL/15/00576 Extension to existing dwelling. Caper Cottage Goat Lodge Road - The Council has no objections and recommends approval.

FUL/MAL/15/00600 Application for 4 no detached dwellings (follows approval on appeal against OUT/MAL/13/00710) Land South of 2 Kelvedon Road Wickham Bishops - The Council has no objections in principle but is concerned about the number of accesses proposed compared to the outline plan, and the absence of detailed intentions for accommodation of the public right of way.

HOUSE/MAL/15/00615 Two storey & basement extension to the side. 1 Foster Road - The Council has no objections and recommends approval.

OUT/MAL/15/00668 Outline planning permission for up to 96 residential dwellings (Including up to 30% affordable) , introduction of structural planting and landscaping , informal public open space and children's play area , surface water flood mitigation and attenuation, vehicular access point from Maldon Road and associated ancillary works . All matters to be reserved with the exception of the main site access. Land North East Of The Bull Public House Maldon Road

The Parish Council strongly objected to the original application for this site and strongly objects to this new application. The site is outside of any area intended for development in the current Maldon District Replacement Local Plan and pre-empted the determination of the Maldon District Local Development Plan presently lodged with the Secretary of State. The proposal is contrary to policies within the above mentioned Plans and the guidance and provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits.

Although adjoining the edge of existing residential development at Staplers Heath and the Bull Public House on about one quarter of the field boundary, for the most part the boundary the proposal site is against open land or the B1022 road with open farmland beyond. This open aspect is echoed and further reinforced by the Cricket Field opposite presenting a wide open vista before meeting the residential development of Seagers. The proposed development would have an intrusive visual impact upon the area and its surroundings as well as a material detrimental effect on the appearance of the wider countryside which is noted for its landscape value as defined as a Special Landscape Area (SLA).

Located within the Blackwater Ridge SLA the site rests on the mid slopes of the ridge about half a mile from the summit of Beacon Hill, the highest point in the Maldon District and third highest in the historic County. Paragraph 3.2 of the applicants Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal explains that as a baseline the Parish *settlement pattern is largely nucleated, with northern and southern areas of Great Totham separated by open countryside and scattered development along the B1022*. Although it omits the third settlement of Beacon Hill it is still a powerful statement. Historically the Parish comprised these three settlements with the North and South settlements being by far the largest with about a mile between them. They are both, possibly uniquely, named separately as Great Totham by the Ordnance Survey. Extending the south settlement generally northwards towards Great Totham North and Beacon Hill as proposed would significantly erode the nuclear balance described as the baseline and thus the nature of Great Totham's charm and character brought about by its historic development.

To describe the impact of this proposed development no better words can be found than those used by the planning inspector in refusing a recent appeal for development in Great Totham of a similar close to boundary site who said: *I find the proposed development would appear as a harsh and dominant residential estate, resulting in an abrupt transition between the rural landscape and the village. It would have an inappropriate and insensitive urbanising effect on the settlement edge which would poorly integrate with and cause significant harm to the landscape setting and the character and*

appearance of the adjoining open countryside. (Appeal Ref: APP/X1545/W/14/3000595). The Parish Council echoes these words in respect of this application.

The Council also argues the importance of protecting and maintaining the present expanse of open countryside emphasising the significance of the Bull Public House, a listed building, in providing a reference point and making a strong statement as to where the settlement begins and ends. The proposal would be unacceptable use of the land by introducing unwelcome domestic activity to the site which would have a detrimental impact upon the rural character and appearance of this part of the Parish and destroy the present open aspect.

The Development would not be sustainable. 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 usually by car. The services and shopping aspects of up to 96 extra dwellings will lead to unacceptable increased traffic.

There are limited employment opportunities in the Village. Most people travel outside to their workplace including to Colchester, Chelmsford and London via Witham which would add to already overstretched roads and public transport. There is no bus service to Witham passing by the application site. Home-working on the other hand is made difficult by the problems with wired broadband which is frequently very slow and often interrupted, and mobile telephone use where signals are often non-existent.

Visibility for access to the public highway in this area is poor. The Council had difficulty in recognising the proposal for the site entrance and exit onto the B1022, a busy County Distributor road, as the plan seems not to represent the situation on the ground and omits the bends causing visibility problems in both directions, one of which is in an area not restricted for speed other than the National Speed Limit. The applicant's Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal does recognise and includes photographs of the same bends however with their hedges seemingly put forward as attenuators to the visual impact.

Access routes to the centre of the Parish are congested at certain days and times and over part of their lengths with parked vehicles reducing sections to a single track including near the junctions. There is increased traffic due to commuting and the B1022 serving as an access route for southbound traffic from the A12 throughout the day and additional traffic can be expected from developments at Maldon, Heybridge and Tiptree.

For the above reasons the Parish Council recommends that the application is refused.

COUPA/MAL/15/00694 Prior approval of proposed change of use of agricultural building to a dwelling house (use class C3) and for associated operational development. Barn At Sheepcoates Farm Church Road - The

supports the application if it meets technical and planning legislation requirements and recommends approval

FUL/MAL/15/00613 Single storey extension to form intervention room, planning room and additional WC facilities for pupils. Great Totham Primary School, Walden House Road - The supports the application and recommends approval.

HOUSE/MAL/15/00704 Enlarged front gable to form porch and en-suite bathroom, front dormer window to bedroom, single storey side extension. Oakengate 22 Maldon Road - The Council has no objections and recommends approval.

114.15 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no separate items of correspondence.

115.15 CONFIRMATION OF CHEQUES

Cheques were confirmed for:

Amount (£)	Payee	Service
26.70	E-On	Bus shelter & telephone box lighting – energy charge 1 Apr – 30 Jun
66.00	RCCE	Annual subscription
292.70	Maldon District Council	Grass Cutting - May
417.34	C R Potter	Salary/allowance £340.00 Broadband 27 Jun – 26 Sept £77.34

116.15 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Agenda: Cllr F A Delderfield asked if planning applications could in future be placed higher on the agenda and it was agreed that the Clerk carries out a restructuring of the agenda items.

Parking in School Road: It was agreed that the matter of parking in School Road should for a future agenda item.

The meeting closed at 10.25pm

Great Totham Parish Council

Records Retention and Management Policy (Draft)

Documented information is an important public asset and a key resource to accountability so careful document management is therefore required to ensure the long-term usability of information and also the protection of historical information.

In the course of carrying out its activities the Parish Council collects a variety of information from individuals and organisations most of which, with the notable exception of periodicals and advertising material, is at present retained permanently. Some of the information is never accessed following its initial use, some is rarely accessed and some frequently used.

The position has now become unsustainable due to lack of storage space and the volume making it difficult to find those records which are needed. This report considers Physical (hard copy) records only; information which is (increasingly) transmitted and stored electronically will be the subject of a later report including possibly the conversion of some paper documents to electronic media.

The Council's documents and other records can be broadly placed into four categories:

1. Those formal records produced by or on behalf of the Council in the course of its administration such as minutes, financial records and deeds.
2. Records produced specifically by or for the Parish Council in connection with its duties and functions and usually on specific topics for example; an exchange of letters with the Maldon District Council about an alleged planning contravention or the exchange of letters Essex County Council about a new speed limit.
3. Published records or those with many copies produced by third parties. Examples of these might include the published Essex County Council Minerals Policy or copies of planning applications sent by the Maldon District Council for consultation.
4. Periodicals, advertising material and "junk mail" This information may refer to specific topics which are useful to follow up and generally are time limited.

Some records have legally defined retention limits but generally speaking a policy covering the above groups would allow for most primary documents in group 1 to be retained permanently and most in group 4 to be destroyed as soon as their usefulness is over or judged to be not required at all. Records in groups 2 and 3 would have a considered and defined limit. Inevitably there is crossover between the groups and considerations for retention or destruction of records should include those needed:

- o To fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements.
- o To evidence events/agreements in the case of dispute(s).

- o To meet operational needs.
- o To ensure the preservation of documents of historic or other value.

Conversely, the permanent retention of **all** documents is undesirable and to be discouraged. Disposal, where appropriate, is to be encouraged for the following reasons:

- Under the Data Protection Act 1998 “personal data” processed for any purpose(s) must not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose(s) hence retention which is no longer necessary may be unlawful.
- The sheer volume of records otherwise retained can mean that physical access is difficult and that there is an increased fire risk.
- To promote ‘good housekeeping’ and make best use of limited storage space whilst ensuring information is easily retrieved.
- To provide clarity as to what documents are or are not held by the Council, as required by Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Retention Periods (examples)

Class of Document	Description	Author or Source	Retention Period
Administrative	Minute Books	Parish Council	Permanently
	Annual Financial Statement	Parish Council	Permanently
	Bills & Receipts		Six years after financial year to which they relate
Deposited Document	Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way	Essex County Council	As directed by statute
Consultation	Planning Applications (simple)	(Usually) Maldon District Council	Six years after decision
Consultation	Planning Applications (complex or exceptional)	(Usually) Maldon District Council	Permanently
Advisory	Notice of Road Closure Order	(Usually) Essex County Council	After Closure has taken place

(13 July 2015)