

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 15 JULY 2019 AT 7.30 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chairman: Cllr. F A Delderfield.

Cllrs. Mrs C Adams, C L Atkinson, A J Gable, J C Gregan, Mrs A V Heaviside, J V Keyes, B S Marshall and Maldon District Cllr R H Siddall.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R L Bass,

080.19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of a meeting of the Council held on 10 June 2019 were amended, confirmed and signed.

081.19 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

The Chairman reminded Members that, in common with other local authorities, this item is placed high on the agenda to give Members the earliest opportunity to declare known interests in items set out for later discussion; notwithstanding that they should also declare interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting. There were no disclosures.

Members were also reminded to review and update their interests recorded in the Register of Interests and which they are required to declare under the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's Code of Conduct.

082.19 ADJOURNMENT FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK

One member of the public was present who spoke about their concern for safety on the highways in connection with the School; and two members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

083.19 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS OF OTHER BODIES AND GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

The Essex Association of Local Councils sent a County Update (circulated); notice of the Annual General Meeting and Conference on 19 September; and notice of the Maldon Thurstable 100 Member Councils meeting on 25 July.

Maldon District Council advised of the Crouch Valley Festival of food and Drink on 20/21 July at Burnham.

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex advised of the winners of the Community Safety Hero Awards.

Cllr R Siddall is to hold his first District Council Surgery at Tom's Farm Shop.

It was agreed that Cllr Mrs A V Heaviside's articles on the proceedings of the Parish Council should be sent to the Tiptree Magazine which is circulated in this Parish.

084.19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Grass cutting of verge alongside Jubilee Recreation Ground: Cllr C L Atkinson advised that this is now being carried out following his discussion with the contractors Maldon District Council.

085.19 PLANNING POLICY AND STRATEGY:

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group: The report of the latest meeting on 2 July was received and noted.

Update on progress and the way forward: A detailed update was received (copy attached) which Mr Paul Mutton from the Steering Group was invited to discuss. An offer of a grant of £6,500 for technical support has been made and Clerk advised that it has just been received.

A household questionnaire would be required on housing needs which the RCCE could organise for £1,700 which would need to be funded by the Parish Council, which the Clerk advised could be covered by the existing Neighbourhood Plan budget provision. The Chairman explained that Maldon District Council should be able to supplement this with existing data which they have to maintain.

A community Open Weekend will be held at the Village Hall on 7 & 8 September at the Village Hall to share the work carried out so far and seek feedback and views.

The Chairman and Members thanked Mr Mutton for attending and his update, and the Steering Group for their continuing hard work on the neighbourhood Plan.

086.19 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Sewage Overflows: Mr Gower had sent a copy of his latest correspondence with Anglian Water about sewage overflows in Hall Road during and after heavy rainfall.

Maldon District Conservation and Design Awards: Nominations are invited for the latest round of awards. The closing date is 5 August.

Planning Appeal Notice: Notice was received in respect of Plot adjacent to land on the south east side of Captains Wood Road.

Planning Enforcement: A letter about an enforcement investigation at the Stables, Colchester Road was received. The letter advised that significant time can elapse before a conclusion is reached.

Planning Decisions: The Clerk reported on the latest planning decisions.

Planning Committee: The 25 June meeting was cancelled due to the likelihood of not enough few Members being available due to other commitments. Draft comments were subsequently circulated to Members to enable the Council to meet the District Council time limit for responding to planning application consultations. The following comments on applications received to week ending 21 June were agreed:

FUL/MAL/19/00571 Change of use of open paddock area to a ménage with dimensions of approximately 40 x 20 metres. No lighting, standard post and rail fencing. Brook Barn Poplar Grove Farm Poplar Grove Chase - No objections provided the development is for private use and conditions are attached to prevent use livery or riding stables.

HOUSE/MAL/19/00595 Proposed conversion of existing detached garage into annexe for elderly family member. 27 Rookery Lane – No objections provided the loss of parking facilities can be accommodated on site and the development has a condition on use in connection with the main dwelling only and not as a separate dwelling.

FUL/MAL/19/00651 Change of use of land to form three gypsy pitches with associated access road and hard and soft landscaping. Land North of The Stables Colchester Road – The Council strongly objects to this proposed development and recommends refusal.

The site is outside of any area intended for development and is not a rural exception site. Although the application mentions the definition of travelling households in the DCLG *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* of August 2015, it is not stated whether any intended occupants meet the criteria essential for a traveller site application outside of the development limits. It does state that the pitches will be contiguous with the existing family at The Stables, which have been present on the site since the mid 1990's but the site now includes a permanent dwelling in place of a traveller pitch which is incongruous with a nomadic lifestyle. There is no indication in the application of whether the applicant leads or led, or intends to lead a nomadic lifestyle as set out in Annex 1 of 2015 planning policy as a defining criteria to be taken into consideration.

The application states that the site is *just outside the defined settlement boundary of Great Totham* which is misleading: the nearest points from the new field entrance to the North and South settlement boundaries are 1/3 and 2/3 of a mile respectively and slightly further by road. The application site is in open countryside next to an established traveller site and there are four nearby dwellings; the application disregards Policy C (para. 14) of the 2015 Policy on *traveller sites in rural areas in the countryside* which states that the local planning authority should ensure that *the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community*. The Council believes that this proposed new development along with the existing traveller site would dominate the settlement.

Furthermore, it would have the effect of creating ribbon development along an open stretch of road which could set a precedent and lead to further ribbon development, eventually as far as Roundbush. The access to the application site would present a high risk access for the occupants of three new traveller pitches from and to a busy distributor road with a 60mph speed limit and without footways from a new agricultural field access intended for occasional use, as well as other road users.

The District Council's *Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document* of August 2016 assessed using the land occupied by the original site for additional pitches [not by additional frontage to Colchester Road] and made the following observation about the effect on the landscape: *Totham Wooded Farmland character - wooded ridges and hillsides; small to medium agricultural fields; ancient woodlands; irregular field pattern; more open landscape towards Great Totham makes prospective development more visible; reduced sense of place due to scattered development; Colchester Road impacts on tranquillity; Site on open, rising land so potential for visibility over a wide area; potential for dwellings on a smaller land parcel i.e. just The Stables not the land adjacent, well screened from the open countryside*

The Parish Council agrees with the assessment regarding the impact of additional pitches at the Stables on the character and landscape of Great Totham: this proposed new development would have the same or worse impact. It would be clearly visible from the higher ground in the three directions of west, north and east constituting an unacceptable visible intrusion which would destroy the open space and therefore sense of place of the Parish, which is known for its wide open countryside with the highest ground in the Maldon District.

Whilst the Council agrees with the above assessment detail it notes an inherent weakness in the document as, although it supports the Maldon District Local Development Plan, it does not take a District wide approach to traveller site allocations. Of the thirty-three civil parishes in the Maldon District thirteen (39%) are north of the River Blackwater and twenty (61%) are

south. Nine sites were appraised in the Matrix of which eight (89%) are located north of the River Blackwater and one (11%) to the South. Of these eight north locations four are in Great Braxted (50%), two in Great Totham (25%) and one each (12½%) in Little Totham and Tolleshunt Major. These four parishes form a group within a triangle of 1.65 sq. miles and have shared parish boundaries with Great Totham in the centre.

With this highly concentrated approach in such a small area there is little likelihood of satisfying the Government's aims set out in paragraphs 4 and 13 of the 2015 policy with respect to a number of them especially concerning access to education and health, and protection of amenity and local environment, and promoting peaceful and integrated co-existence.

For the above reasons the Council strongly objects to this proposed development and recommends refusal.

Cllr J V Keyes commented on application FUL/MAL/19/00651 above.

Latest Applications: Comments on planning applications received up to week ending 12 July 2019 were as follows:

WTPO/MAL/19/00693 T4 (oak) fell as dead and rotting. The Oaks Colchester Road: The Council has no comments but support the views of the Tree Officer.

OUT/MAL/19/00741 Part outline/part detailed (hybrid) application for mixed use development including:

- (i) Residential development (Use Class C3) for up to 1138 dwellings including 30% as affordable housing (Outline)
- (ii) Residential Care for up to 120 beds (Use Class C2) (Outline)
- (iii) "Neighbourhood" uses which may include retail, commercial, and community uses (Use Classes A1 and/or A2 and/or A3 and/or A4 and/or A5 and/or D1a and/or D1b) (Outline)
- (iv) Primary school and early years childcare facility (Use Class D1c) (Outline)
- (v) A relief road between Broad Street Green Road and Langford Road (Detailed element)
- (vi) Formal and informal open space (including any associated sports pavilion/clubhouse) (Use Class D2e) (Outline);
- (vii) Construction of initial gas and electricity sub-stations (Detailed); and
- (viii) All associated amenity space, landscaping, parking, servicing, utilities (other than as listed in item (vii) above), footpath and cycle links, on-site drainage, and infrastructure works (Outline).

Land At Broad Street Green Road And Langford Road And Maypole Road Great Totham

The Council supports the application in principle subject to the following points:

1. The estate layout and design should comply with the latest vehicle parking standards?
2. Adequate capacity must be available or provided for sewage treatment?
3. Provision for dealing with surface and storm water must be adequate?
4. The construction of the school must be carried out at an early stage and there must be adequate capacity available in local schools to accommodate children in the intervening time.
5. Provision must be included within the application for adequate medical facilities.
6. Provision must be made within the application for burial facilities

7. In addition to the construction of the relief road plans and funding must be in place to deal with the pressure on the existing road network in the wider surrounding area arising from occupants of the development and users of the relief road.

087.19 FINANCE:

Confirmation of Payments: Payments were confirmed for:

Amount (£)	Payee	Service
139.20	Maldon District Council	Play site inspections
410.00	R Clark Landscapes	Paving at War Memorial Bus Shelter & install base around seat at Beacon Hill.
26.91	E-On	Bus shelter & phone box lighting – energy charge 1 April – 30 June 2019
72.60	RCCE	Annual subscription
752.31	C R Potter	Salary/allowance £570.00 Broadband 27 Jun – 26 Sep £182.31

Finance update: The finance update (attached) for the first quarter was received and noted.

Investments: The Council has an investment of £3,975 in a Gilts Stock due for redemption at par on 7 September which can be redeemed or re-invested. If re-investing a request must be made by 29 August. The Gilt produces £141.48 per annum which is paid into our general funds. It was agreed to redeem the stock.

The Council's Internet Website: The Council's website provider is Essexinfont, hosted by Essex County Council at no charge. The service will close on 31 March 2020 and the Council will need to find another provider after closure. The Clerk will carry out some investigations as to the way forward.

088.19 AMENITIES

Report of the Chairman of the Amenities Committee: Cllr C L Atkinson reported that some replanting of the hedge beside the lay-by at Bull Green may need to take place. The Clerk will check the position with Essex Highways.

Jubilee Recreation Ground Access: Work is now completed and following vandalism extra securing of the hold-down pins was required. Members appreciated the action of Mr Noel Tilbrook of Step on Safety, for the generous gift of the anti-slip surface.

Base to seat at the Beacon: We have had good feed-back regarding the new platform. It is now not considered necessary to have more stone.

The report was received and adopted and the Chairman thanked Cllr Atkinson for all the work he has putting in.

Risk Assessments: A note was received from the EALC about the need to risk assess trees under Council management; and a question was asked as to whether the Beacon is safe.

Cricket and Young People: Cllr Mrs C Adams asked if the Council would write to Essex County Cricket Club and refer to the good work carried out with young people in the area by Great Totham Cricket Club; and this was agreed.

089.19 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Localism Rangers Work: A dislodged 30mph sign on the Green near the Compasses was reported. The Clerk had also reported overgrowth on the footway between Rookery Lane and the Compasses.

Transport Meetings: Information on Transport Meetings was received

Walden House Road: Cllr R Siddall updated on his representations, following further complaints, to the Highways Panel for investigations into highway safety improvements at Walden House Road and the surrounding area in connection with the School and mainly caused by bad driver behaviour. These could include a crossing and speed limit reduction.

Cllr Mrs A V Heaviside suggested the bus should be re-routed and Cllr C L Atkinson shared his observations on parking. He has noted that some cars are left all day, and the driver returns home with another, just to secure a parking space at school finishing time.

Cllr Siddall was thanked for taking this up.

090.19 COMMUNITY POLICING, SAFETY AND REGULATION

Speedwatch Report: Cllr C L Atkinson reported on the latest Speedwatch activity: 43 drivers were reported by the team in a month (one of whom recorded 51mph) and 10 by TruCam checks.

The Team has been approached by a resident at Totham North to see if it would be possible to reduce the speed from 40 to 30 mph on the main road; and they have had reports of excess speed in Walden House Road near the School. The question arises about whether it is possible to have a 20 mph speed limit on this stretch of road near the school like so many other villages?

Community Protection Team Report: The Community Protection Officers reports for May and June were received and noted. It was noted that dog fouling seems under control at present.

091.19 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr B S Marshall had reported fly-tipping in Sheepcoates Lane which had now been dealt with.

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm

Next Meeting: Council 19 August.

PARISH COUNCIL BRIEFING PAPER

GREAT TOTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – UPDATE JUNE 2019

Progress

1. Following the excellent response to the Parish Survey the group has split into teams to write the Neighbourhood Plan and associated policies. Groups are working on:

- a) Environment
- b) Transport
- c) Community
- d) Housing

2. In conjunction with this, a separate team is working on a Village Design Statement (VDS). This paper will capture the history and character of the village and the key elements that constitute both ‘good design’ and which positively contribute to the ‘Arcadian’ environment. When completed, this will underpin the Neighbourhood Plan and will be a guide to which the Parish Council and MDC can refer to when considering development proposals.

3. The team have prepared a short online survey to gather the community view on, amongst other things, how developments should look, their boundaries and materials in construction. No decision has been made on launching the survey as the Steering Group would like to assess the VDS beforehand. If we do decide to proceed with the survey, there will be no extra cost as our contract with Survey Monkey expires on 13 September 2019.

4. A formal offer of £6500 of grant funding has been received. We are now going through the due diligence process prior to receiving the funds.

5. The Village Hall has been booked for the weekend of 7th/8th September to give the community the opportunity to look at the work to date and to comment and question our reasoning. The team are also mindful of sending out too many surveys, see below.

The way forward

6. Following extensive dialogue with Leonie Alpin at MDC and our consultant Chris Bowden, the Steering Group feel it is important to conduct a thorough Housing Needs Survey. This will provide the plan with evidence as to what type of housing, if any, is needed for the village. It would build on and provide specific evidence of what respondents said in our original survey. It would also considerably strengthen our Neighbourhood Plan. There is however an element of risk if respondents to the Needs Survey come back with higher numbers than in the original survey; at worst this could drive the need for a formal site allocation process. The Group feels that this is unlikely and that based on the views from Maldon DC and Chris Bowden, which we would be foolish to ignore, the balance of advantage is to undertake the Housing Needs Survey.

7. The questionnaire would follow a recognised format and will be provided by the RCCE. The questionnaires will need to be delivered by hand but all replies will be sent, in confidence, direct to RCCE for processing. The estimated time to completion would be 3 months. There is, however, a cost involved. Based on a typical 25% return, RCCE estimate the cost to be £1700. Separate grant funding is available but we need early approval from the Parish Council to proceed with the application. If we achieve more than 25% the cost increases.

8. At this stage, there is no pressing need for;

a) Site assessments

b) Rural Exception sites.

9. The team are currently on track to hand over the final version of the NP to the Parish Council in January 2020.