MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2013 AT 8.00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chairman, Cllr. Mrs C Adams.
Cllrs. F A Delderfield, A J Gable, J C Gregan, Mrs A V Heaviside and J V Keyes.

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

151.13 THE LATE MR TOM MARTIN
Before starting the meeting the Chairman referred to the recent death of a former Member of this Council, Mr Tom Martin of Great Totham Hall. Tom worked, farmed and lived there with his family for much of his life. He took an interest in the Church and other local organisations and served as a member of the Parish Council for three terms from 1979 to 1991; a total of 12 years.

His father, Tom, was also a Member for several years and served with him at first. Councillors Rodney Bass and Frank Delderfield were with the Council during all of his 12 years and so was the Clerk. Members, the Clerk and the public present stood in silent tribute to his memory and life.

152.13 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.

153.13 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
One member of the public was present. There were no questions.

154.13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
The minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23 September 2013 were confirmed and signed.

155.13 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES
There were none.

156.13 COMMUNITY POLICING
There were no matters to report.

157.13 REPORTS OF MEMBERS OF OUTSIDE BODIES AND NEWS FROM OTHER AUTHORITIES
The Clerk reported on the recent Clerk's Forum when the new tax base figures were presented and it seemed doubtful that parishes will receive any support grant in 2014/15. Surface water flooding was discussed and information was given on the role of the Interim Monitoring Officer, which Cllr F A Delderfield expanded upon. The Chairman reported on her attendance at a recent exhibition about flooding and its prevention. The Clerk has further information on all of these topics.

158.13 FINANCE:
Purchase of Burial Ground: The Clerk will contact Messrs Strutt and Parker at the appropriate time.
Finance Report: A finance report for the second quarter was received and noted.

Finance Working Group: It was agreed to hold a Finance Working Group meeting on 16 December to advise the Council on the 2014/15 Estimates. The Chairman and Cllrs. F A Delderfield, J C Gregan and Mrs A V Heaviside agreed to form the Group and Cllr J V Keyes would be in reserve. Cllr. A J Gable had hoped to attend but probably could not.

159.13 AMENITIES

Report of the Chairman of the Committee: Cllr J V Keyes reported that he had inspected the short posts around Bull Green and six need replacing now and some later. Cllr F A Delderfield suggested a programme of replacement. The report was received and adopted.

Ash Trees at Totham Hill Green: The Maldon District Council Tree Officer has been advised by the Forestry Commission that the ash trees at Totham Hill Green may not be suffering from Chalmara Ash and advised leaving them until next year for further inspection.

Amenities Survey: The Chairman and Clerk have completed a survey of amenities including an assessment of the content of the annual playground inspection report. A summary of the findings is included at appendage 1 and it was agreed to proceed with the necessary work as soon as possible where there is specific or general budget provision. The Chairman and Clerk were asked to identify a suitable person who would be able to carry out small works as and when required. It may also be necessary to ask an Arboriculturalist to carry out a complete inspection of all the Council's trees as several of them are likely to need attention (this does not fall within the remit of the Maldon District Council Tree Officer unless the trees are protected or are suspected of having specified diseases).

160.13 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Rangers Scheme: No further work was identified but following Cllr F A Delderfield's report at the last meeting that the Rangers Service now has a flail machine for hedges it was thought that the whole Parish should be examined systematically and the Clerk will prepare a template of areas of the Parish for Members to examine and describe the problems precisely.

Colchester Road: A report was made of a hole in the carriageway at Colchester Road, opposite the footway into Spring Lane, resulting from some recent utility works there.

161.13 PLANNING POLICY AND STRATEGY

Heybridge Wood: A paper about Heybridge Wood, produced by the Clerk in response to a question from Heybridge Parish Council was received and noted. A copy of the paper is shown at appendage 2

162.13 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT

An invitation to Parish Councils was received under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007. The Act allows central government to remove legislative or other barriers that prevent communities improving their economic, social and environmental well-being. This was noted and suggested that the Act might be considered in relation to a North -South Footpath and the poor Broadband service.

163.13 RURAL HOUSING NEED: Cllr F A Delderfield had received a letter about Meeting Rural Housing Need and how parishes might work with the District Council. An offer was made to have someone attend a meeting and discuss the Parish Council's plans and it was agreed to take up this offer for, say, January.

164.13 COMPLAINTS
Following the Council's observations at the last meeting on a planning application for a proposed Solar "Farm" three people, two of them parishioners, had written to complain about public participation and some of the content of the Council's discussion and decision on its comments.

The Clerk had responded to each of the complaints, clarifying some aspects of understanding, asking for further information to support some points made, and explaining how the Council works and how to go about calling a Special Parish Meeting (a public meeting had been requested). Replies to these responses were received which Members noted.

165.13 CORRESPONDENCE
There were no separate items of correspondence to report.

166.13 PLANNING APPLICATIONS
Planning decisions: The Clerk reported on the latest Maldon District Council planning decisions.
Latest applications: The Council's comments on planning applications lodged with the District Council, for Great Totham, to week ending 22 November 2013 are shown below:

LDE/MAL/13/00968 Claim for a Lawful Certificate for existing use: manufacturing and storage of concrete blocks and similar products. Chigborough Farm, Chigborough Road – Members do recall this activity taking place, especially in relation to making blocks to repair the sea and river walls. One member was actually aware of the site through his former occupation and the Clerk recalls the activity when visiting the nearby nature reserve in its early days.

HOUSE/MAL/13/01025 Convert garage into habitable room. 30 Seagers – Support provided sufficient room remains for parking.

FUL/MAL/13/00918 Erection of 3No. detached dwellings along with associated garages and parking. reduction by 1 dwelling following planning approval MAL/FUL/11/00415. 11 Colchester Road - Noted

FOR INFORMATION ONLY
PDE/MAL/13/01026 Single storey rear extension to be used as a family sitting area, to extend beyond rear wall of the original dwelling by 7 metres, with a maximum height of 3.5 metres with eaves a maximum of 2.34 metres measured externally from the natural ground level. 21 Foster Road - Noted

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. Kestrels 3 Chapel Road - Support

The following application was listed but no details are in hand:

FUL/MAL/13/01002 Demolition of existing bungalow, erection of 2 storey dwelling house with basement, garages. Mackmurdos Beacon Hill

167.13 CONFIRMATION OF CHEQUES
Cheques were confirmed for:

Amount (£)	Payee	Service
390.00	R & G Mann	Hedge cutting contract and extra work
48.00	Society of Local Council Clerks	Annual Subscription for Clerk
207.00	C R Potter	Salary/allowance

168.13 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS
Power Failure Compensation: Cllr J C Gregan commented on some households who were apparently missed from receiving letters about claiming compensation for the recent electricity power failure. It was thought their best course of action is to contact the supplier or perhaps advise the local paper.

Memorial Seat:
Cllr J V Keyes reported that he had been asked about placing a memorial seat on Bull Green and he was advised that those making the request should write to the Council with a proposal.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Appendage 1

Amenities Survey: Work required –25 November 2013

Location and Details	Action Needed
Totham Hill Recreation Ground	
Swings	Part of safety surface needs filling with topsoil and seeding
Netball Frame & Goalposts	Need attention as identified in annual inspection
Green Near Compasses	
Trees	Lower branches need trimming. Leaning tree needs assessing for safety.
Notice Board	The surface has become too hard for pins and needs to be covered with a softer material
Totham Hill Green	
Trees	Lower branches need trimming from oak near pole as they could fall. Ash trees have inspected by Tree Officer who said leave until next years as may not be Chalmara.
Cricket Field	
All Trees	Survey needed. Some trees along front fence need trimming. One has a rotten bough overhanging footway and fence.
Tree fallen near rear fence	Tree needs removing and section of fence replaced.
Jubilee Recreation Ground	
Gaps in Maldon Road and School Road hedges.	Need to be replanted.
Fences along Maldon Road	Short sections needed near War Memorial and near site of old phone box to prevent falling.
Entrance – Hall Road	Replace broken steps with shallow steps and hand rail. Meet with contractors and invite quotations.
Entrance – Maldon Road	Improve existing pedestrian access and surface and tarmac at lower edge of main entrance crossing.
Support pylon at north end of zip wire	Is tilting and needs shifting to upright position
Wood chip safety surface and underlay.	Displaced and uneven and in poor condition; Needs filling and regular raking.
Climbing frame & slide	Missing access ladder needs replacing
War Memorial Bus Shelter	
Shrub bed on Post Office side is very overgrown and so is rear	Clear out undergrowth and roots and replant as shrubbery. Trim back at rear but maintain a barrier.

GREAT TOTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Members might be interested in the following enquiry from Heybridge Parish Council about Heybridge Wood

Enquiry: I am wondering if you could help. One of the great questions that has arisen from the draft LDP is 'who owns Heybridge Wood'. A few people at MDC have looked into this and are struggling to find the information at Land Registry. Recently our Chairman and I attended the EALC Larger Local Council Forum and talked to Emma Webb of the Good Woods Scheme (through the Conservation Volunteers.) Emma has found the following link of Heybridge Woods which suggests that Great Totham Parish Council may be responsible?

Our Chairman and I spoke to Emma and it is possible that the woods be adopted and maintained by a parish council. Although I can not be certain until it is raised formally at the PC meeting, there has been suggestion that our Members may be of favour in doing this – especially as the proposed area of development outlined in the LDP surrounds the woods.

Before I raise this to Council, I would be grateful if you could let me know if you are aware of any historical connection with the woods and Great Totham.

Reply: Heybridge Wood is located in the civil parish of Great Totham. The Parish boundary from east to west crosses Broad Street Green Road north of the Outreach Centre at the Heybridge/Great Totham village sign. It goes into the field to about half its width between the road and the wood and then turns south west to meet the corner of the wood at its most easterly point. It follows the boundary of the wood continuing in the same direction at first and then following the east and south boundary of the wood until reaching a track at its south-west corner. It then turns south-west for a short distance before turning north-west and continuing over the fields to Maypole Road where it turns north at the Langford Parish boundary. (Part of the route described above is shown on the map extract accompanying the enquiry.)

However, Heybridge Wood was once located in the civil parish of Heybridge. To understand how the boundary changes came about it is necessary to look at the organisation of local administration and how it developed. (I am ignoring manors, vestries, poor law unions etc). For our purposes we can start in the years just before 1894 and focus on our immediate locality. At this time the ancient counties were sub-divided into hundreds for administrative purposes and in the two in Essex which are of most interest to us are the Dengie and Thurstable Hundreds. There were other units of administration, the boroughs, one of which was Maldon; geographically in the Dengie Hundred but not administratively part of it.

Within each hundred the ecclesiastical parishes formed the lower tier of local administration. Heybridge was geographically larger than now and Great Totham smaller. Heybridge extended northwards as far as, and including, Captains Wood, bounded in the west by Maypole Road and in the east by the rear boundaries of the properties on the east side of Broad Street Green Road. The east side of Great Totham, in Scraley Road and Chigborough area, extended southwards to the Blackwater and a small section, between the Mill House and the Maltings but not

including them, gave access to the River. To the east Little Totham included the section where the Mill House and Pub stand. Osea Island was a detached part of Great Totham.

The modern style of local government was created in the late 19th century. County Councils in 1888 followed by urban and rural district councils and parish councils in 1894. Boroughs, including Maldon, remained and Burnham had a new Urban District Council. The other parishes in the two Hundreds plus Ulting and Great and Little Braxted from the Witham Hundred formed the new Maldon Rural District Council as well as each having a Parish Council. Thus, Great Totham and Heybridge had their own Parish Councils, sitting next to the Borough of Maldon.

The position remained the same until the 1934 Essex Review Order came into being. The Heybridge Parish Council was dissolved and the administration went to Maldon Borough. The boundaries also changed and most of the area between Maypole and Broad Street Green Roads, including Heybridge Wood, went to Great Totham. At the same time the area of Great Totham near the river and Osea island went to the Borough with Heybridge. There were other boundary changes I have not mentioned. The administration reverted to Heybridge in 1987 with the creation of the present Parish Council. (As an aside it is worth noting that during the time of the First World War Heybridge had its own Parish Council and was **not** part of Maldon Borough, which may explain some well publicised apparent omissions from the Maldon War Memorial when it was constructed).

The Great Totham Parish Council does not own the Wood so has no particular responsibilities for it other than, as a local authority, the same statutory rights and responsibilities which might apply to any other land or premises not in its ownership within the civil parish. Past owners included Sir Claude de Crespigny, who built up his estate to include most of the land including the woodland, between Maypole Road and Broad Street Green Road. His successors broke up and sold the de Crespigny Estate in 1982. The Council has no actual evidence of ownership of Heybridge Wood but a local source advised that it now belongs to Mr Ted Watson of Langford Hall.

Clive Potter
1 November 2013