

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 23 DECEMBER 2013 AT 8.00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chairman, Cllr. Mrs C Adams.

Cllrs. C L Atkinson, R L Bass, F A Delderfield, A J Gable, J C Gregan, Mrs A V Heaviside, J V Keyes, and Mrs E Parsons.

169.13 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.

The Clerk declared a non-pecuniary interest in FUL/MAL/13/01002 below as he knows the applicant and has had discussions with him on the history of his existing house.

Cllr J C Gregan declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of planning application SCR/MAL/13/01111 below and left the meeting during its discussion.

170.13 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Six members of the public were present. A question was asked about whether the Council would listen to concerns about solar panel applications. Cllr R L Bass said he was aware that the District Council had recently refused an application and the Chairman advised that whilst there is a screening opinion request (now determined) on the agenda for an Environmental Impact Assessment, nothing more can be done until any new application is made.

171.13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 25 November 2013 were confirmed and signed.

172.13 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Seat on Bull Green: Cllr J V Keyes advised that those who had asked him about placing a memorial seat on Bull Green will be putting their request in writing to the Council.

Heybridge Wood: Cllr R L Bass thought that Heybridge Parish Council should be aware that any future public management of Heybridge Wood should be with this Council. The Chairman advised that the enquiry was just information seeking at present.

Overgrown Hedges: The Clerk had drafted a schedule for an overgrown vegetation survey and the Chairman and Cllrs. C L Atkinson, R L Bass, F A Delderfield, A J Gable and Mrs A V Heaviside agreed to look at particular area. The Clerk will produce a more detailed schedule in the new year.

173.13 COMMUNITY POLICING

Caravans in Church Road: The Clerk and Cllr F A Delderfield reported on a complaint about two caravans stationed in Church Road which had been reported to the police and are now subject to planning enquiries.

Speed Watch: In 2011 the Council, through Cllr C L Atkinson, had enquired about taking part in the Speed watch scheme where volunteers carry out surveys and pass in the registration details of offenders to the police. At the time there was a delay in the provision of training. A parishioner has recently approached the Clerk saying that she has some potential volunteers who would be interested. It was agreed to revive the idea of taking part, with Cllr Atkinson the lead Member, and to allow budgetary

provision. The costs are for a speed gun, unless one can be shared, protective clothing and possibly training. Cllr R L Bass advised that some match funding may be available from the Highways Panel.

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

Cllr Mrs A V Heaviside said that new Home Start funding had been put in place for the next two years; and the Clerk reported on a recent Maldon District Clerk's Forum.

175.13 FINANCE:

Finance Working Group: A Finance Working Group met on 16 December and their report is appended to these minutes. The draft estimates for 2014/15 were approved subject to an amount of £100 being included for election costs (and a similar amount in the current year), and the amount for the Speedwatch Scheme reduced to £500 (£250 net) with £250 grant income from the Highways Panel assumed. The Clerk's salary and allowance figure will be adjusted following a discussion later in the meeting. It was agreed that an investment of £8,933.85 which matures March will not re-invested but the cash placed in reserve and used to support further projects. A copy of the approved estimates is appended to these minutes.

It was then **resolved** unanimously to agree to levy a precept of £11,947 resulting in a Parish Council tax of £10 for a band D household.

VAT legislation: A consultation on a review of VAT legislation on public bodies and tax exemption was received and it was agreed to support the option to continue and extend the refund system (option 2).

176.13 AMENITIES

Report of the Chairman of the Committee: Cllr J V Keyes had no report to make. The Clerk advised that Cllr J C Grogan had obtained some information about wood chip supplies for the Jubilee Recreation Ground.

177.13 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Rangers Scheme: No further work was identified but it was noted that two speed limit signs are down and some further work maintenance work needs carrying out near the junction of Captains Wood and Maypole Roads and the hedge cut back further in front of Gun Farm.

178.13 PLANNING POLICY AND STRATEGY

It was agreed that a Working Group would examine whether to carry out some preparatory work which would inform any future consultation on the Parish element of the Local Development Plan and provide an information base for the Council generally and for any future Parish Plan.

179.13 VILLAGE LIBRARY CENTRE

A letter about the future of the Village Library Centre was received. The present volunteer is unable to operate the library weekly unless further volunteers are found. It was agreed to advertise in the Parish Magazine.

180.13 CORRESPONDENCE

A schedule of meetings was received from the Maldon District Council, which will help in planning the Parish Council schedule. An e-mail message was received from Mr C Heaviside with a letter from Priti Patel MP which he hoped the Council would

consider, along with the views of others, in any future planning application for solar panels. An e-mail was received from UK Power Networks explaining the plans they have in place to deal with a forthcoming severe storm.

166.13 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Planning decisions: The Clerk reported on the latest Maldon District Council planning decisions. It was agreed to question the decision to approve the application LDE/MAL/13/00911 - Claim for Certificate of Lawfulness: Creation of a permanent dwelling house, The Stables Colchester Road. The reason for approval is that : The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that sufficient evidence has been submitted to substantiate the claim that on the balance of probability the building indicated in red on the attached plan has been lived in continuously as a permanent dwelling house for a period of 4 years.

This Council's comments on the Claim referred to an application made in 2012 for the *Replacement of mobile home with bungalow* demonstrate that the applicant himself agreed that his home was mobile less than four years ago. Furthermore, the site is designated and allocated as a gypsy/traveller site. Cllr F A Delderfield said he will be taking these points up with the District Council.

Latest applications: The Council's comments on planning applications lodged with the District Council, for Great Totham, to week ending 19 December 2013 are shown below:

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

Cllr R L Bass proposed that the Council should object to this application because, although he does not object to the principal or the scale, the design is incongruous with other properties in the area and the applicant should be advised to consider a re-design particularly of the upper storey. The proposal was seconded and lost by 4 votes to 3 upon being put to the vote. Subsequently Cllr J C Gregan said he favoured the design and proposed that the application should be supported. The proposal was seconded and carried by 4 votes to 3. his application. Accordingly the Council's comment is - Support

OUT/MAL/13/01102 Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two detached dwellings each comprising 563 square metres of floor space. Spinney End Maypole Road:

Cllr R L Bass proposed that the Council should object to this application for two dwellings on the site. The proposal was not seconded and the Council agreed to support the application. Accordingly the Council's comment is - Support

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

SCR/MAL/13/01111 Request for a Screening Opinion pursuant to Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England & Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended). Land South Of Beckingham Road – The Council notes that this request has been determined as not necessary and assumes that any new planning application will be accompanied by an EIA as was the previous application.

181.13 CONFIRMATION OF CHEQUES

Cheques were confirmed for:

Amount (£)	Payee	Service
40.00	Essex Wildlife Trust	Annual subscription
248.55	C R Potter	Salary/allowance £207.00 Paper, envelopes, etc £41.55

182.13 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business

183.13 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was resolved to exclude the public for the next item as it contains personal information relating to the Clerk, and the public left the meeting. The Clerk also left for the duration of the discussion.

184.13 Clerk's Salary and Allowance

The Clerk's salary and allowance is £2480 p.a. The total comprises £744 salary and £1,736 office allowance the latter covering the provision of an office space and storage space for the Council's papers, records and equipment along with the running costs, plus telephone and travel. The last review was in December 2009.

It was noted by those attending the Finance Working Group that whilst the allowance element covers the expense the salary element is below that recommended by the NALC and does not reflect the work carried out by the Clerk. After discussion it was agreed to increase the salary element by £800 from April 2014. The estimates for 2014/15 will be amended accordingly.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm whereupon the Chairman extended an invitation to join her at the Bull after the meeting

NOTES OF THE FINANCE WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 16 DECEMBER 2013 AT 7.30 PM AT 19 MILL ROAD

Present: Cllrs. Mrs C Adams, F A Delderfield, J C Gregan and Mrs A V Heaviside.
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A J Gable.

2013/14 Financial Year

The Working Party looked at the estimates for the present year and recommend that the line for election costs which at present shows 0 should have £100 allowed, which would cover a co-option to acknowledge that expenditure on this line always a possibility. If the grass cutting season starts early in 2014 the Grass Cutting line will need reviewing.

The current year expenditure on the new burial ground is unpredictable at present and all or some of it may need rolling over to next year.

The sum of £4,324 redeemed from an investment is shown as transferred from reserves.

An investment of £8,933.85 matures on 7 March 2014 and the Working Group recommends that this is not re-invested but the cash used to support further projects such as the development of a local plan and further improvements to amenities

2014/15 Financial Year

In considering its advice for 2014/15 the Working Party repeated most of the General Administration and Amenity budget lines.

It has already been agreed to review The Clerk's salary and this should be carried out by the full Council.

The grass and hedge cutting contracts are in their third and final years. Both contracts have been executed satisfactorily (some minor points sometimes arise with grass cutting which are always resolved) and both contractors were cheaper, grass cutting significantly, than their competitors. The Working party recommends that both contracts are extended for a further three years with reasonable price increases.

Under non-recurring budgets £1,000 is provisionally included as the Council has previously expressed interest and some potential volunteers have recently approached the Clerk. This sum would cover purchase of equipment, signs and high visibility clothing, although it may be possible to share a "gun" or take over a redundant one. £500 is allowed to upgrade the Council's IT capacity.

Income will be £173 lower this year as the proceeds of the 8% Treasury Stock was not re-invested. It will be reduced by a further 201 if the 2.25% TS is redeemed as recommended above.

If £2,000 of reserves is used the precept would need to be set at £10 for a Band D Household. This takes into account the reduction in the tax base

For Information

Long Term Investments at 23 December 2013

Type.	Interest	Purch Date	Red Date	Red Value £	Purch'e Cost (£)	Indicative Value at 31 March 13	Value in Acc'ts
2.5% Consols	1.44	1930	None	57* (10)	0.00	35.61	10.00
National Savings	45.00	1989	3 mths notice	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
8% Treasury Stock 2013		160707	27 09 13	4,323.50	5,000.00	4,486.92	
2.25% Treasury Gilt 2014	201.00	071209	07 03 14	8,933.85	8,974.24	9,103.59	8,974.24
8% Treasury Stock 2015	1431.58	071207	07 12 15	17,894.93	22,000.00	21,638.55	17,894.93
3.75% Treasury Gilt 2019	141.49	251110	07 09 19	3,773.15	3,975.04	4,409.68	3,975.04
Total	1619.51		Total	37,935.43	42,949.28	42,674.35	33,854

* As this stock has no redemption date it's value is recorded at notional value (£10) in both this register and the receipts and payments book.

** Variable interest rate

With the exception of Consols, long term investments have previously been recorded in the accounts at redemption value, since they are kept for their full life, with gains or losses accounted for at the time of purchase. Following revised accounting advice indicating that long term investments should be recorded at purchase cost with gains or losses accounted for at the time of disposal, the Council is moving to the revised method as investments mature and are reinvested. The 2.25% and 3.75% Treasury Gilt are recorded in the accounts at purchase cost following direct reinvestment of redeemed stock with HM Treasury. The 8% Treasury Stocks 2013 and 2015 are shown at redemption value and their successor stock will be shown at purchase value upon reinvestment.