

29th March 2021

At the Meeting of Ashdon Parish Council held remotely on **ZOOM** due to the COVID19 pandemic, on Monday 29th March 2021, at 7.30pm.

Present.

Councillors Mike Elsey (Chairman), Steve Hayler, George Smith, John Thorn and Cory Vost.

Members welcomed Cllr. Vost who was feeling well enough to attend following a long illness

Cllr. Simon Walsh (ECC), Cllr. James De Vries (UDC)

Mrs. Melanie Horrigan, Ms. Jane Gray (Neighbourhood Plan Group. (NPG)

Mr. David Green (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for Absence had been received from Cllr. Player who had undergone a surgical procedure earlier in the day. It was understood that Cllr. Player was feeling much better. Members wished him a speedy recovery.

2. Public Representations

There were no matters arising from the public, no members of the public being in attendance

3. County Councillor's Annual Report 2020-2021

As you will imagine, the past 12 months have been dominated by events associated with the COVID 19 pandemic.

This has placed your County Council at the heart of our collective response to the various lock-downs and recurrent surges and declines in infection rates.

The County Council has had to act swiftly and decisively as each new element of the pandemic presented itself, and this has tested our Officers to the limit and the senior political team, the County Council Cabinet.

Without recounting every twist and turn, I will summarise the key elements of the past year.

The first lockdown meant a number of outward facing services had to be closed in rapid order. Libraries, Country Parks and Recycling Centres were the most obvious, also Essex Outdoors which provides outdoor activities for schools, mirrored the School closures.

In parallel we had to mobilise welfare support for those who were shielding, and ensure all of those residents who were known to social services were supported. Care home residents and vulnerable children were prioritised with extra support drafted in.

Staff furloughed due to closures of other services willingly offered to step into the welfare space.

All the while, our Public Health Officers along side NHS colleagues closely monitored and reacted to changes in case rate trends across the County.

Recognising the risks associated with Care Homes, Essex CC was a pioneer in getting testing kits into those homes and continues to take the lead with testing with rapid testing sites across the County and now collection points available from a number of larger libraries.

Keeping track of the disease has been a main priority as it allows targeted interventions to occur.

We have led on providing extra school meals during holiday times for school children in need, have provided holiday activity days and continue to support young people through our deployment of laptop computers, either donated or purchased, with many 1000s already given out.

We were able to support Foodbanks across the County with funding for supplies or to help with storage and delivery costs.

The County Council was quick to assemble 3500 volunteers to do much of the support work needed, and this in addition to the many 100s of local volunteers who stepped forward to support their neighbours and friends with prescription collections, delivering shopping or getting meals out to those who needed them. The Essex Outdoors Centre at Mersea Island became a 'Meals on Wheels' kitchen getting lunches out across the island and to villages nearby on the mainland.

Using Government support and working with the Districts we have been able to ensure that various grants were made available and distributed to businesses and individuals adversely affected by the lockdowns and forced closures of their businesses.

As you are probably aware, I am on the Cabinet and in the early stages were meeting almost daily to assimilate what was going on and at times making those difficult decisions under emergency powers.

Throughout we were working in the best interests on our residents, and although some were controversial at the time, were done with due consideration and discussion.

Perhaps more difficult was the reopening of our facilities, as we then had more knowledge of the disease, and what was required to ensure public safety. For example, in my area of responsibility making sure recycling centres were safe to use. This caused problems as the onsite capacity had to be reduced, and this was compounded by weeks of lockdown, people with lots of time on their hands having major clear outs and added to that working from home increasing household waste by around 20%!

As we emerge from our present Lockdown we are starting to slowly relax these measures, assessing as we go, and ever mindful that public health is our number one priority.

It would be easy to imagine that with COVID nothing else could go on. But business as usual continued, and despite the pandemic the County Council has notched up some conservable achievements.

Our budget process is now settled for this coming year with a static position on the County Council element of the tax. It takes 12 months of hard work by officers and Cabinet Members to design a budget that is fair and equitable for our citizens, manages to deliver key services across the County and at the same time demonstrates financial

prudence and probity that is the hallmark of this Authority. Our budget is balanced, delivers much and continues to provide good value for money.

The Essex Climate Commission has met over the past 12 months and through a series of working groups provided an interim report which carries a raft of recommendations which will help this Council achieve net zero carbon targets well ahead of the Government's own.

Aside from our very successful tree planting programme, we are already decarbonising our buildings by installing solar panels, replacing inefficient boilers and better insulating them. We are also supporting less well-off households with grant schemes to better insulate their homes and encouraging householders to get solar panels and join our energy saving schemes.

There are plans to have more electric vehicles in our fleet and we have been a key partner in the UK's first forecourt electric car charging station near Braintree.

Our Country Parks have had a bumper year as people re-engage with their outside environment. Nearly 1.5 million visits have been recorded over the past 12 months. Unfortunately wear and tear is a consequence and some investment this coming year will be necessary. Our floods team is still regarded as one of the best in the country, and we have several 100 houses 'better protected from flooding'. Our programme continues this year with £2.6 million allocated for further works.

Highways always attracts criticism about road conditions, but it is one of the better performing services in the country. Very wet weather and freezing events can cause the roads to break down very quickly, but our pothole repairs number in the 1000s, and our annual resurfacing programme is all set for another season.

As mentioned earlier, our social services have had a busy time, and will continue to do so, there is still a legacy to deal with, particularly for young people, who have lost out on schooling, socialisation with their peers and many other things besides. Education and Children's services are working closely together alongside our Youth services teams to ensure that this part of our community is fully supported.

Simon Walsh, County Councillor for the Thaxted Division.

4. District Councillor's Report.

Following an entire year spent in lockdown at one level or another, Uttlesford District Council have adapted their working practices and provisions of services accordingly, as many organisations have had to do. Alongside this, officers have been monitoring a number of operational factors associated with these changes. As we progress out of lockdown we are then able to apply things we have learnt and new working practices that have been developed.

There will not be a complete return to the normal we knew, but a new normal, which through things like remote working solutions will allow UDC to be more cost efficient and more environmentally friendly. This initiative has been titled Uttlesford Moving Forward and further details will be announced soon.

5. Declarations of Interest. There were no Declarations of Interest in matters to be raised at this meeting

6. Minutes.

Resolved – that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Zoom on Monday 22nd February 2021, previously circulated, be signed as a true record. (Cllr. Thorn)

7. Matters Arising.

i. Playing Field.

Rectory Lane. It had not been possible to arrange a site meeting with potential suppliers due to Covid Regulations. To be organised when restrictions are lifted.

All Saints Fitness Trail would be opened as soon as possible, restrictions having been lifted.

ii Highways. Traffic Management.

a. Water End/Spriggs Lane. It was understood that the request for weight restrictions and protection measures for the lane would be going to the Highways Panel within the next seven days.

b. Speeding/Speed Watch. The Chairman reported that the police had carried out a speed check some ten days previously. They had been parked in full view of traffic which allowed speeding drivers to slow thus not giving a true representation of the problem. Cllr. Walsh would be taking the problems in the village up with the Police and Crime Commissioner and requesting the possibility of physical speed reduction measures be installed throughout the village. The Chairman requested that a meeting be set up with the Police, Cllr. Walsh and the Parish Council to try and bring the matter to a head. (Action Cllr. Walsh)

Cllr. Walsh left the meeting at this point.

iii. Village Hall and White Horse House.

The Chairman would try and set up a meeting with Mrs. Smith (Chairman Village Hall Committee), Mr. Stuart Hastie and the architect to discuss the proposed plans for the hub/shop/café.

Cllr. De Vries left the meeting at this point

Cllr. Hayler had nothing further to report regarding the village hall.

iv. Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan.

Mrs. Horrigan reported that the committee were working on the Village Design Code. The final draft was being prepared for submission to the Parish Council for approval. The final public consultation would be set up following approval. The Chairman thanked Mrs. Horrigan and Jane Gray for their work. Mrs Horrigan replied that this was a team effort with people throughout the village contributing in the preparation on this vital document.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group –

22nd March 2021

Present: Jane Gray, Melanie Horrigan, Harriet Burrow, Jo Wheatley, Cory Vost.

Apologies: Isabel Blackett

1. First Draft. The first draft of the NP is well underway, with a deadline of the end of the week. The draft is to be sent to Rachel Hogger followed by a meeting with her on 31st March 2021 to discuss the draft.

2. Ian Poole. We have received a quote from Ian Poole to produce the final draft of the Neighbourhood Plan and manage the final public consultation. It will take him 2-3 weeks to finesse our draft Plan, which will then go to the PC for approval.

His quote covered using a questionnaire or having a public meeting in the village hall, so that will depend on Government guidelines when we get to that point.

3. Design Code. Emma Lauze from BEAMs has pulled together information from the character assessment and landscape appraisal and has put together a first draft of the Ashdon Design Code. This will accompany the draft NP for Ian Poole to look at. This also has to go out to formal consultation and also the PC.

4. Funding. After discussion with the PC, the Group is satisfied that we have sufficient funding to cover the professional costs required at this stage but we will seek additional funds from Locality to keep costs to the PC as low as possible.

5. Data. JCW to finalise the 'employment' data. Jane to collate the collected data about schools and the Village Magazine is carrying a request for more information on Young People Facilities and Sports and Physical Activity for all residents. We have some data on this from the public consultations but we do need more, the e-mail address for replies is in the magazine: info@ashdonplan.co.uk

v. Community Led Housing.

The Chairman had written to Mrs. Roz Millership, Assistant Director Housing, Health & Communities, regarding the proposed development of affordable housing for Ashdon People adjacent to All Saints Close (Appendix i). No reply to date.

vi. Community Hub/Shop/Café.

The plans had been submitted for Building Regulations.

vii. Superfast Broadband.

Cllr. Thorn reported that Gigaclear were working at Church End. There were still some outstanding issues at Steventon End. Cllr. Thorn to clarify the situation.

viii. Neighbourhood Watch.

Cllr. Thorn reported that the Facebook Group was functioning really well

- ix Village Handyman.

Village seats cleaned and mounted on concrete plinths. New notice board erected at the Village Hall. Litter bins emptied. Functioning well and his efforts were well appreciated throughout the village. Telephone box on Crown Hill needs cleaning.

- x. Litter

Date for next litter pick to be decided at the next meeting when the future was more certain following Covid regulations.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

Various emails distributed to Members. Members are requested to raise any matters received by email under correspondence.

- i. Best Kept Playing Field Competition 2021. 50th Anniversary of the event. Entries by 25th April.

Resolved - that the play area at Church End be entered (Cllr. Hayler)

- ii. Village Transport Representative

Ms. Jane Gray kindly volunteered to take on this role

9. NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- i. UTT/21/0456/HHF. Erection of veranda to cover existing patio area
4. Tredgetts

No Comment

- ii. UTT/20/2896/FUL & UTT/20/2897/LB. Change of use of land from agricultural to domestic. Demolition of garage and storage building. Single storey link to the south range. Internal and external alterations. Amended application
Barn Owls, Newhouse Lane.

Support

- iii. UTT/21/0908/HHF. Proposed single storey extensions and building remodelling including application of new finishes and erection of forward cart lodge garaging
The Nugget, Radwinter Road

No Comment

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS DETERMINED

- i. UTT/20/2790/FUL Application for the removal of condition C.91B of UTT/1364/90
- "The existing dwelling "Glebeside" and the Old School House shall remain in the same ownership and shall not at any time be sold away separately"
Glebeside and the Old School House, Church End.

Conditional Approval

11. ACCOUNTS for PAYMENT

Resolved - that the Accounts (Appendix ii) be passed for payment (Cllr. Smith)

12. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

There were no "Items for the Next Agenda"

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed Chairman

Date

Date of next meeting 10th May. Annual Parish Council Meeting

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MONDAY 29TH MARCH 2021
22nd FEBRUARY 2021 to 29th MARCH 2021

Monies Received	£
H.J. Paintin. Erection of Headstone re Christopher Mellors	50.00
Groundwork UK. Neighbourhood Plan Grant	1650.00
UDC. Grant Cllr. De Vries	809.98
Monies for Payment	£
Huws Gray Ridgeons. Road salt for gritting bin at Church Field	39.00 Ch.No. 102598
Uttlesford District Council. Green waste skip 15 x 70/hr	1050.00 Ch.No. 102599
D. Green. Tel/Broadband	21.00 Ch.No. 102600
E.ON. Electricity February Account	16.88 Ch.No. 102601
Blachere UK. Ltd Christmas Tree lights transformer	60.69 Ch.No. 102602
Cheffins. Valuation All Saints cross subsidy plot	480.00 Ch.No. 102603
K.Williams. Cemetery Records	125.00 Ch.No. 102604
D. Green. 6 months salary	2350.40 Ch.No. 102605
D.Green. PAYE HMRC	587.60 Ch.No. 102606
D. Green. Ink cartridges	61.98 Ch.No. 102607
"BEAMS" Ashdon Design Code ref Neighbourhood Plan	1980.00 Ch.No. 102608

Balances at Bank on 29th March 2021:-

Current Account:-	£1,802.60
Saver Account:-	£1,071.24
Saver Account:-	£50,485.38

