

**DEBDEN PARISH COUNCIL****MINUTES OF A MEETING OF DEBDEN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY,  
2ND SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT 8.05 PM (MEETING HELD BY ZOOM)**

Present:

Cllr S. Walsh	(SW) Chairman
Cllr C. Bunting	(CB)
Cllr C. Diggins	(CD)
Cllr A. Gardner	(AG)
Cllr B Lindsell	(BL)
Cllr J. O'Brien	(JO'B)
Cllr S. Watson	(StephW)

In attendance:

Mrs. C. Griffin, Clerk	(CG)
Dist Cllr S. Luck	(from 20/304)
8 members of the public	

The Chairman welcomed residents to the meeting.

**20/301 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cty Cllr Simon Walsh.

**20/302 Declarations of Interests****To receive disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in items on the agenda**

No interests were declared.

**20/303 Public participation session (15 minutes available if required)**

*Members of the public are permitted to make representations, and give evidence in respect of any item of business included on the agenda and other matters of interest.*

The following questions were raised to which the Chairman replied:

- **The PC are about to give the Village Hall Trust a loan of £400,000. What due diligence has the PC carried out and what have you done to ensure there are safeguards in place?**

We are not giving the Village Hall a loan of £400,000. The PC will be applying for a loan facility of up to £400,000 for a project. We will then go to the PWLB to draw down funds up to that value; we may not draw down on the loan at all.

- **What work have you done to come to the conclusion that £400,000 will be drawn down if needed. What have you done to ensure there are safeguards and what assurances do you have? If the Village Hall has surplus income will that be used to pay down the debt?**

The PC do not have any assurances, they are not required.

The Chairman reiterated that the PC have followed a process and will be applying for a loan facility for up to £400,000 for the project so the facility is in place if needed

- **If the PC draw down from the loan and the Village Hall have surplus income will that be paid back to the Parish Council at some point? If the money is drawn down, is there any assurance it will be returned to the PC?**

No assurance is required. The community have agreed to fund the building. We are applying for a loan and if the funds are required the Precept will be increased. If the Village Hall Trust repaid an amount to the PC the Precept would be reduced. It is a facility for PC's to fund community projects and is designed to be flexible. We have gone through the process and, now the plans have been approved, the PC will be applying to the PWLB for the loan. It is usually in place for twelve months.

- **The £400,000 loan is for the Village Hall, where is the money coming from for the Pavilion?**

The PC has £25,000 set aside for the pavilion. Funding cannot be obtained from Sport England, but Essex FA have supported the project and there are a number of other grant providers. The cost plan is being finalised and should come together in four/six weeks.

- **Three Parish Councillors are raising funds for the Village Hall Trust and the Parish Council. They have a conflict of interest.**

It is not a conflict of interest.

One question had been received prior to the meeting regarding the village consultation to which a reply had been sent.

#### **20/304 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2020**

It was resolved that the Minutes should be signed as a correct record.

Proposed: CB

Seconded: StephW

All agreed

#### **20/305 To discuss planning applications received and receive an update on outcomes and any other planning matters**

The following application arrived after the Agenda was published:

UTT/20/1968/FUL Debden Church of England Primary School, High Street.

Installation of a replacement bunded oil tank, concrete pad and wire anti-climb fence surround.

Comments: None

The Clerk drew attention to the government White Paper "Planning for the Future" which was circulated prior to the meeting. A further report was received from CPRE. Councils and individuals are being encouraged to respond to the consultation by 29th October 2020.

Manchester Airports Authority have now lodged an Appeal following UDC's refusal of their planning application to increase passenger numbers. Responses should be sent

to the Planning Inspectorate, reference APP/C1570/W/20/3256619, by 30<sup>th</sup> September. Full details are on the UDC website [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

Victoria Cottage (UTT/20/1270/HHF) – The Chairman encouraged members to read the Conservation Officer's comments on the UDC website.

A RGT meeting has been held and it was agreed that the PC should proceed with a full detailed planning application and cost plan for the Pavilion.

### **20/306 To receive an update from the Parish Clerk**

The Clerk circulated the following report prior to the meeting.

Updates at the meeting in bold

Minute No	Agreed action	Outcome	Closed
20/268	EALC making contact with Auditor regarding 2018/19 Report	(August)Outstanding EALC approached previous Auditor but matters not resolved. Chairman will contact the Auditor used for 2019/20 audit. <b>(September) Outstanding</b>	
20/269	PC and RGT items to be clarified	Outstanding. It was agreed this needs to be resolved. All grass cutting invoices to be paid by PC. <b>(September) Outstanding</b>	
20/272	20mph Speed limit and speed survey - to obtain further details from ECC on requirement which would have to be satisfied from a highway perspective. Would there be a cost to the PC for the speed survey.	(August) There would be no cost for the speed survey. Providing the speed survey met the necessary requirements an engineer would make recommendations and there would be two options, Option 1 – to put up new 20mph signs which would have to be repeated every 150Ms through the centre of the village (the width of the pavement may not allow this). Option 2 would be a 20mph zone which would mean installing physical measures. The ECC technician would make the recommendations but the PC would have some input. The Police do not enforce 20mph limits.	

		<p>(September) Essex Highways have suggested that residents who can park cars off the road should be encouraged to do so, speedwatch sessions should be reinstated. Local Highways Panel will carry out speed checks in 3 locations and if there is an issue an application will be made for a VAS sign on the approach to the School.(Agenda item 20/294)</p> <p><b>Request to be made to Essex Highways to organise the speed survey as soon as possible.</b></p>	
20/273	Remembrance Services – to request a road closure or rolling road on Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> November and Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> November	<p>Following further communications with the Chairman of the RBL the forms have been completed and sent to UDC. Decision in four weeks. RBL Charity number quoted as there is no charge for charities.</p> <p>(September) <b>No news on the road closures. Services could be changed in view of Covid 19 restrictions.</b></p>	
20/274	Review of Asset Register	<p>Items on the current register were originally entered at cost or estimated value. They are not subject to depreciation. The value of the assets needs to be determined as accurately as possible. The value of some is difficult. i.e. war memorial. I have raised this with our Auditor and also our insurance company and have now asked EALC for some further guidance. Once this is received the register can be reviewed. Current asset register to be split to identify PC and RGT assets. Need to agree replacement costs for insurance purposes. To be discussed further with Auditor.</p> <p>(September)<b>A comparison of values on current asset register against insured values was circulated. PC need to decide if insurance values would cover the cost of replacing.</b></p>	

		<b>PC and RGT assets to be split. Further work necessary.</b>	
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- I have contacted Cty Cllr Simon Walsh again regarding the encroachment issue at Maple House. The Highways Inspector has now referred the case to the ECC Enforcement Team to consider whether action is required.
- The verge at Smiths Green which was removed will be considered for repair as part of an ECC planned maintenance programme. No indication as to when this will be carried out.
- The VAS (Vehicle Activated sign) at Smiths Green has been reported to the Local Highways Panel. They have advised that it requires a new part which is being organised.
- We were advised by ECC that the Gigaclear cabinet on the verge opposite Fox Cottage will be moved further back. I have asked ECC to let me know when this will be carried out and have chased by phone and email. I have also reported the cabinet in Mill Road but have heard nothing further.
- I have not yet received the agenda for the meeting with ECC and UDC.
- I reported the blocked drain in the High Street on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> August. ECC have now advised that after jetting the gullies, they discovered that the drain from the manhole had collapsed. An order has now been raised for a permanent repair.
- I have arranged for the clock on the School to be serviced on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.
- I have asked UDC if they could send the large sweeper to sweep up the shingle at the bottom of Fox crossroads.
- There was a problem with one of the water containers at the allotments which was repaired by one of the allotment tenants.
- A resident has asked for confirmation of the date the Parish Poll was registered.
- Two residents inspected the accounts records under the notice of public rights, made notes and took copies of some invoices and asset register.
- I have had a further request for the Auditor's report for 2018/19 from the resident who requested it last year. Another resident has raised a FOI request for the Auditor's reports.
- I have been asked for the email/letter from Joy Darby, EALC, following the village consultation which was shown to the Chairman of the Parish Pump. A FOI request has been made for all communications between the PC and EALC.

The following issues were raised at the meeting:

- White Paper on restructuring local government. ECC are working on it and we will be receiving more information.
- Switching of bank from NatWest to Unity Trust Bank. StephW advised that she is awaiting information from the Clerk. The Clerk advised that it is the responsibility of the RFO to make the switch, not a member of the Council. The Clerk also advised that NatWest have an incentivised switching scheme to nine different banks which would include free banking. There will be charges with Unity Trust Bank. StephW did not wish to consider the NatWest scheme. The switching to be discussed further after the meeting.

**20/307 To approve a safeguarding policy prepared by Cllr Gardner, circulated prior to the meeting**

It was proposed that the safeguarding policy which was based on a template received from EALC, should be adopted.

Proposed: StephW

Seconded: BL

All agreed

**20/308 To receive an update from the Parish Clerk following further discussions with Essex Highways regarding improving the management of traffic through the village**

The Clerk reported that Essex Highways suggested that residents who can park off the road should be encouraged to do so and speedwatch should be reinstated. A speed check will be organised by the Local Highways Panel at three locations and providing this confirms there is a speeding issue an application will be made for a VAS sign in Mill Road. ECC will be asked to proceed with this.

BL raised the possibility of a 40mph limit from the bottom of Ivy Todd Hill up to the village. As there is now a 40mph on the hill into Thaxted the Parish Clerk will contact Thaxted PC for information.

**20/309 To receive a report from Cllr O'Brien on the meeting with Dist Cllr Luck regarding a lay-by at Smiths Green**

Dist Cllr Luck reported that JO'B had obtained land registry details and he has contacted the UDC housing department. UDC would support and may be able to contribute to the cost. Dist Cllr Luck and JO'B will discuss further and take forward.

**20/310 To receive an update on communications with Gigaclear regarding moving the cabinets further back on the verge at Fox crossroads and Mill Road**

BL reported on discussions with Gigaclear at the crossroads this morning. It is recognised this is a bad junction and they do not want to risk any liability. Therefore, the cabinet will be moved 1.5–2.0Ms further back, hopefully in the next three weeks. The vegetation also needs cutting back regularly.

Gigaclear have responded on the Mill Road cabinet although it appears they have looked at the wrong cabinet. A plan was sent and the Clerk will follow this up and meet with Gigaclear when they return to the village to ensure that any further cabinets are located in a suitable position to avoid any more problems.

**20/311 To receive a further update from Cllr Lindsell on Byway issues.**

BL reported that Byway 37 and 75 will be subject to a TRO order for six months from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020. This is a full motorised closure (no scramble bikes).

Details are awaited on how the entrances will be blockaded. CB advised that concrete blocks are not acceptable as access is necessary.

Essex Highways will also supply road planings for Byway 63 and local farmers will spread on the surface.

The Chairman thanked BL for all his efforts. BL thanked everyone involved in the meetings with the various authorities which had achieved a successful outcome.

This is the first time Debden has been granted a TRO. However, it was stressed that it is important people continue to report any issues when they occur.

CB advised that GLAS expect the motor cycle groups to challenge the TRO's.

**20/312 To approve payment schedule, circulated prior to the meeting**

The following payments were approved for payment:

Ace of Spades	£300.00	Grass cutting – July (3 cuts rec. grnd plus play area)
C. Griffin	£409.66	Net salary + expenses (£22.50)
Hundred Parishes	£10.00	Annual membership fee
Came & Co	£1,233.37	Insurance
<u>Direct Debits</u>		
E-on	£55.60	Street lights
A & J Lighting	£23.86	Street lights

The Clerk pointed out that one invoice for grass cutting has been outstanding since 31<sup>st</sup> July as it had arrived too late for circulation with the August paperwork and three invoices have been received since the September meeting documents had been circulated.

It was proposed that the following payments should be made and a revised schedule circulated.

Ace of Spades	£168.00	Grass cutting (RG) – August
Ace of Spades	£96.00	Grass cutting (Playground) “
Proposed: SW	Seconded: StephW	All agreed

It was agreed that in future any invoices which arrive before the meeting should be paid and added to the payment schedule in order to retain good relationships with suppliers/contractors.

**20/313 To receive Reports from District and County Councillors**

The report received from Cty Cllr Simon Walsh had been circulated.

Dist Cllr Luck reported on the Restructuring of Local Government (R4U do not think it is a good time to restructure local government), reforms to the planning system, UDC investments, RBL, Byways, Rural Crime prevention (meeting arranged on 5<sup>th</sup> October), Hare coursing, planning issues, drains in Thaxted Road.

Please encourage residents to respond to the Reforms to the Planning law and the Restructuring of local government.

**20/314 To discuss any urgent matters of interest to the Parish**

314.1 The Chairman reported deposits of gravel at the crossroads at Debden Green crossroads and Fox crossroads. The Clerk advised that the UDC sweeper had been to Fox crossroads but will arrange for a visit to Debden Green.

314.2 The Chairman drew attention to the bank at Bayes House, Ivy Todd Hill which is eroding and becoming dangerous. The Clerk will ask ECC to inspect and report back.

**20/315 items for the next agenda**

No items were requested.

**20/316 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> October at 8.00pm by Zoom. Questions from residents to be sent to the Clerk by 10.00pm on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October. EALC will be contacted for an update on the holding of meetings.

The meeting closed at 21.47.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated: 07.10.20

DRAFT



DRAFT