

DEBDEN PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF DEBDEN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
7TH OCTOBER, 2020 AT 8.04 PM (MEETING HELD BY ZOOM)**

<u>Present:</u>	Cllr S. Watson	(StephW) Chairman
	Cllr C. Bunting	(CB)
	Cllr C. Diggins	(CD)
	Cllr A. Gardner	(AG)
	Cllr B Lindsell	(BL)
	Cllr J. O'Brien	(JO'B)

In attendance:

Mrs. C. Griffin, Clerk	(CG)
Dist Cllr S. Luck	(SL) (from 20/321)
10 members of the public	

The Chairman welcomed residents to the meeting.

20/317 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Stuart Walsh (private commitment) and Cty Cllr Simon Walsh.

20/318 Declarations of Interests

To receive disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in items on the agenda

JO'B declared an interest in 20/323 (Henham Raceway) as she is a neighbour.

20/319 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:

- **Now the Planning Officer's report for the village hall application has been published, is the Parish Council worried about the reduction in car parking spaces? Are you aware that the report states extra parking will be available?**

The Council is well aware and are not concerned. We have made no promises.

- **Can you confirm there is nothing detrimental in the 2018/19 Auditor's report.**

There is nothing detrimental that I can recall.

- **Could you confirm there is an Auditor's report for 2018/19**

There is a report; all members of the Council have seen it, but it has not been signed off.

- **Can you tell me what the Council has in place to control the conflict of interests.**

It is in the Code of Conduct and Good Councillors Guide.

- **The Army Covenant Grant deadline was the 30th September. Has there been an extension?**

The grant is still in place. There was no deadline.

- **Can you confirm that a member of your family is connected to a local building company.**

There is no connection. That is a personal matter which I will deal with.

20/320 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 2nd September, 2020

Item 20/303 Delete the following:

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.

and replaced with :

The following questions were raised by members of the public:

- **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?**
- **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?**
- **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?**
- **The £400,000 loan is for the Village Hall, where is the money coming from for the Pavilion?**
- **Three Parish Councillors are raising funds for the Village Hall Trust and the Parish Council. They have a conflict of interest.**

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

Proposed: StephW

Seconded: AG

All agreed

The Clerk advised that in view of the changes the minutes were not an accurate record.

20/321 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/20/2018/HHF Safari, Deynes Road

Two storey extension to the rear, single storey extension to the side, two pitched roof dormers to the front and replacement windows throughout.

Comments: None

UTT/20/2324/HHF The Old Windmill, Mill Road

Demolition of outbuilding and existing extensions to windmill. Erection of glazed links to new single storey extensions. Restoration of windmill cap with clerestory window. Conversion of existing coach house to form ancillary accommodation.

Comments: None

UTT/20/2214/FUL Debden Manor

Conversion and restoration of coach house and flat to one dwelling

Comments: None

Planning applications from Victoria Cottage, Crouch End House and Debden School have been approved.

20/322 To discuss and agree a response to the planning White Paper "Planning for the Future"

Advice is being obtained from various sources on the government White Paper "Planning for the Future".

SL had circulated some views and urged as many people as possible to object. A draft response from the PC will be prepared and circulated in line with the guidance from EALC.

20/323 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. (September) Outstanding Outstanding	
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. (September) Outstanding (Outstanding). Needs clarification	
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. (September) Essex Highways have suggested that residents who can park cars off the road should be	

		<p>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.</p> <p>(October) Speed checks carried out. Results – 26.2 eastbound, 25.8mph westbound which shows good compliance with the 30mph speed limit. Ivy Todd Hill was included and results were 34.1 coming up and 37.3 going down the hill. ECC will endeavour to validate a VAS sign for Mill Road but this could take some time.</p>	
20/273	Remembrance Services – to request a road closure or rolling road on Sunday 8 th November and Wednesday 11 th 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)Awaiting reply from UDC. (October) Road closures approved. Awaiting details of final arrangements from RBL.</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>	

		(September) Asset register needs to be reviewed to ensure values would cover replacement cost. (October) PC and RGT Assets to be split	
20/309	Lay-by at Smiths Green	(September) JO'B and Cllr Luck to discuss.	
20/310	Repositioning of cabinets at Fox crossroads and Mill Road	(September) BL met Gigaclear at crossroads. Cabinet to be moved back 1.5-2.0Ms. Gigaclear to be consulted again regarding cabinet in Mill Road. (October) Gigaclear have been asked for an indication as to when the cabinet will be moved. Awaiting a reply. They concluded that Mill Road cabinet does not block the vision.	

- I have emailed ECC and Cllr Simon Walsh again regarding the encroachment issue at Maple House as my original report has been removed from the ECC website.
- The verge at Smiths Green which was removed is still being considered for repair as part of an ECC planned maintenance programme.
- The VAS (Vehicle Activated sign) at Smiths Green is still awaiting repair. This is owing to a backlog caused by the virus.
- I have received several complaints about the vegetation at Fox crossroads. I have reported to ECC and asked them to deal with urgently as this is blocking the visibility on the left coming from Saffron Walden direction. **Members of the Council will deal with this on a personal basis.**
- I have not yet received the revised agenda for the meeting with UDC and ECC.
- Community Speedwatch Teams have been suspended from operating at the moment.
- I have again raised Bayes House with UDC Enforcement pointing out that a drain should have been installed at the front of the drive. I have received a reply saying an investigation has been carried out and decision made to close the file. I have asked for confirmation that the drain has actually been installed. I have also gone back to ECC to request their assistance. **Awaiting a reply.**
- I was advised by UDC of an alleged breach regarding an unauthorised builders yard at Rook End Lane. An investigation has been carried out and file closed as breach has ceased.
- UDC Enforcement were also contacted regarding a noisy tractor at Pinewood Farm.
- A complaint was also received concerning Stansted Raceway at Debden Green which was referred to UDC. **I have consulted UDC Enforcement Dept, and now in touch with Planning. I have emailed Henham Raceway for full details.**

- The UDC Community Grant scheme is now available.
- If the PC would like to take part in the UDC tree initiative, we need to express an interest.
- The application form for switching the Current Account from NatWest to Unity Trust Bank has been completed. I am now awaiting the return of the Current A/C switching agreement and closure instruction forms from the signatories. **The bank has now suggested transferring the funds from the Deposit Accounts to the Current Account before the switch is made. The PC agreed to transfer both Deposit Accounts to the PC Current Account.**
- I have received a further request for the 2018/19 Auditor's report,
- Henham PC have been in touch regarding Farm thefts. I have passed Dist Cllr Luck's details to them. **Another email was received today from a resident of Debden Green. BL has replied.**
- **I was copied into a letter to the Chairman from the Debden Residents Community Group. The PC confirmed they were aware.**
- **I only put the Agendas and Minutes on the website so there may be a delay in loading other documents.**

AG reported that the "Give Way" signs on the approaches to Fox crossroads have been turned in, are not visible and need turning round. BL will look at.

20/324 To discuss the complaint received from the Information Commissioner's Office regarding an incident at Debden Green and agree a response

The PC felt there had been no breach of data protection. JO'B will liaise with BL and draft a reply to the complainant.

20/325 To agree a procedure for dealing with complaints including Freedom of Information requests

The Clerk had circulated the PC's current Complaints Policy in advance of the meeting. The Chairman advised that an additional draft policy has been obtained from EALC which includes vexatious behaviour in terms of FOI requests, and it was proposed that this draft policy should be sent to the Clerk, added to the existing complaints policy and circulated.

20/326 To discuss a response to the consultation on pavement parking

This item was deferred until the November meeting.

20/327 To receive an update on the lay-by at Smith Green

JO'B reported that she met with Dist Cllr Luck and decided where improvements could be made. More information is now available on the housing ownership and a meeting will be held, by Zoom, with the UDC Housing officer prior to a meeting with Essex Highways.

20/328 To approve the engagement of Brontide Consulting to deal with the disconnection and reconnection of the electricity and water to the Pavilion

It was proposed that Brontide Consulting should be engaged to deal with the disconnections and reconnection of the services to the pavilion.

Proposed: StephW

Seconded: JO'B

All agreed

The Clerk said that some time ago it was stated that all these costs would be part of the Village Hall project.

20/329 To discuss a proposal from Cllr Lindsell to purchase a wildlife camera to aid the recording of abuse on Public Rights of Way

BL reported that there has been a major increase in incidents and urged people to report to the Police and notify him of the crime number. If possible, residents should supply a description of the vehicle, registration number, photograph and anything distinctive, but nobody should put themselves in danger.

The group is now more connected and organised and we are sharing information with other areas. There is a lot of work going on in the background. BL expressed particular thanks to Dist Cllr Luck for all his efforts,

The winter Byway closure is being processed.

It was proposed that the wildlife camera, cost £59.99 should be purchased.

Proposed: BL

Seconded: StephW

All agreed

CB advised that the Police are sending extra patrols to the two Byways this weekend.

20/330 To receive an update on arrangements for the Remembrance Services and approve a donation to the Royal British Legion in respect of the Poppy Appeal

The Chairman reported that the Poppy Appeal will be very different this year. the Clerk reported that at the moment UDC are very concerned because there has been a huge increase in cases of Corona virus, therefore, plans that are in place now could be changed. There will be no parades they are trying to encourage just small groups to meet, they are liaising with the Church and the Police. Various authorities have issued plans but it is difficult to make any firm arrangements at the moment.

A resident advised that at the moment the Remembrance service with the School is scheduled to take place on 11th November.

It was proposed that £60.00 should be donated to the 2020 Poppy Appeal.

Proposed: StephW

Seconded: CD

All agreed

20/331 To decide how the donation of £1,817.30 from Debden Pre-School should be spent.

AG reported on various activity boards, ranging from £370 to £1,400. It was proposed that 2 activity boards should be purchased, further details will be sent to the Clerk.

Proposed: AG

Seconded: StephW

All agreed

These could be installed by a local contractor.

20/332 To review the PC Asset Register and agree to place Recreation Ground Trust Assets on a separate list

The Chairman reported that at a recent RGT meeting the RGT Assets were identified. Details will be sent to the Clerk for the two registers to be drawn up. The valuations

will then need to be checked to ensure that the insurance cover is adequate. Everything on the RGT asset register will be dealt with and paid for by the RGT.

The Clerk advised that the External Auditor will require an explanation next year.

20/333 To consider a request for a donation from Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

The Clerk will scan and circulate the letter received. Decision deferred.

20/334 To approve payment schedule, circulated prior to the meeting

The following payments were approved for payment:

Ace of Spades	£168.00	Grass cutting – September (2 cuts - recreation ground)
Ace of Spades	£96.00	Grass cutting – September (2 cuts - playground)
C. Griffin	£417.46	Net salary + expenses (£30.30)
HMSO	£289.80	PAYE (July/Aug/Sept)
ICO	£40.00	Annual data protection fee
B. Griffin	£15.60	Ionis fees (May - September)
A. James	£175.50	Service and repairs to School clock
Came & Co.,	£50.00	Insurance - Administration fee
Plater Claiborne	£2,520.00	Drawings to discharge conditions on outline plan for Pavilion
<u>Direct Debits</u>		
E-on	£55.60	Street lights
A & J Lighting	£23.86	Street lights

The Clerk advised that an Invoice has been received today from Plater Claiborne for producing drawings for planning application to discharge conditions of outline planning permission. Clarification to be obtained and circulated once received. The PC will then decide if this should be included on the schedule.

Proposed: StephW

Seconded: AG

All agreed

20/335 To receive Reports from District and County Councillors

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

Dist Cllr Luck reported on footpaths, Henham Road, ECC, ECC funding, District Councillor funding (donation to Book-a-ride already and First Responders) Debden School, Drains, Fox crossroads, Bayes House (will liaise with the Clerk) Rural Crime, Farm thefts, Planning, Conservation officers, UDC financial situation (recent investments will provide a surplus). White Paper on Planning for the Future (please encourage residents to respond to the consultations, with a copy to MP and PC).

20/336 To discuss any urgent matters of interest to the Parish

336.1 The Clerk read an email received today from Cty Cllr Simon Walsh on Henham Road. SL said there is additional damage now at Hamperden End.

336.2 The Clerk advised that the “abandoned” car on the recreation ground is taxed, but has no MOT although there is an extension on MOT's owing to the Covid virus. This will be reported.

20/337 Items for the next agenda

To agree a response to the consultation on Pavement Parking.

To consider a donation to the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.

20/338 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 4th November at 8.00pm by Zoom.

Questions from residents to be sent to the Clerk by 10.00pm on Monday 2nd November.

The meeting closed at 21.59.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated: 04.11.20

DRAFT