

DEBDEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DEBDEN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2017 AT 8.00PM IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, DEBDEN

Present:

Cllr R. Forster	(RF) Chairman
Cllr E. Blackie	(EB)
Cllr S. Luck	(SL)
Cllr A. Roper	(AR)
Cllr A. Tetlow	(AT)
Cllr Alicia Tetlow	(AliciaT)

In attendance:

Mrs. C. Griffin, Clerk. (CG)
20 members of the public

17/168 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr S. Watson (on holiday) Dist Cllr T. Knight and Cty Cllr S. Walsh.

17/169 Declarations of Interests

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

No interests were declared.

17/170 Public participation session (15 minutes available if required)

Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included on the agenda

The issues raised were:

- At the last meeting a comment was made about the Parish Pump.
The Chairman agreed to send a response when he had listened to the recording.
- I have photographic proof, the original plans and have taken a block out of the Post Office wall and the Shop and Post Office is not a “stand alone” building.
We are working on the information given by the Architect.
- The PC has insisted that they have nothing to do with the Village Hall; in March 2015 they fully supported the Hall.
It was not this Parish Council.
- At the last meeting it was stated that the application to the MOD had been made fraudulently. This should be investigated.
This should be taken up with the person who made the allegation.
- An allegation was made that an assault took place after the presentation on 22nd February.
This is not a matter for the PC; it is a private issue.
- A person is innocent until proven guilty.

17/171 To receive reports from District and County Councillors

The Clerk reported that she has received a report from Cty. Cllr. Walsh this evening and this will be circulated. No report from Dist. Cllr. Knight.

17/172 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 1st February 2017

Following an addition to 17/152 it was resolved that the Chairman should sign the minutes as approved.

Proposed: EB

Seconded: AT

All agreed

17/173 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported on:

- (a) The letter received from the Head of Legal Services at UDC which was circulated as an insert in the March edition of the Parish Pump.
- (b) A signed statement which the PC had submitted to the MOD to confirm that the PC fully supports the Community Covenant Grant to fund the rebuilding of the Village Hall on its existing site.

SL said there is still some controversy about the Chairman's role.

The Chairman said he wished he had not chaired the presentation on 22nd February and in a hostile situation he could have behaved better.

The Chairman of the Parish Pump said that when she wrote to the magazine she was writing as a parishioner.

One of the Editors of the Parish Pump, who was present at the meeting agreed that Editors should disclose their interests when writing in the magazine.

17/174 To confirm procedure for dealing with public participation

The following procedure was agreed:

- Members of the public are permitted to make representations, and give evidence in respect of any item included on the agenda.
- The period of time designated for public participation is 15 minutes.
- Members of the public are only allowed to participate during the 15 minute public session and if any attempt is made to interrupt during the meeting the person will be asked to leave.
- A member of the public is entitled to speak only once in respect of business on the agenda and shall not speak for more than three minutes.
- Questions should be confirmed in writing.
- A question raised by a member of the public during the public participation session shall not require a response or debate.
- The Chairman may direct that a response to a question posed by a member of the public may be referred to a Councillor or an employee
- A brief record of the public participation session will be included in the minutes; it will not be a verbatim report.
- The village magazine will include a list of topics raised.

The above will be included in the next edition of the Parish Pump

17/175 To receive an update from the Chairman of the Village Hall Trust

The Chairman of the V.H. Trust reported that the Trust has received a proposal from Simon Langman to re-build the Village Hall on the present site. The Trustees consider this as a potential way forward but the proposal needs considerable further development before the Trustees can be satisfied that it is viable. A copy of the full statement is held on the Minute file.

17/176 To receive an update from the Parish Clerk

The Clerk reported that:

- The ECC Head of Highways and Transport has replied regarding the closure of Byways 35 and 75 at Debden Green. Unfortunately, there is a problem because the byway is not in accordance with the definitive map. To regularise the situation the landowner would need to submit a formal application to divert the path. A copy of the letter was passed to a relative of the landowner.
- Regarding the roadworks, the blocked pipe should have been dealt with two weeks ago but the road could not be closed because of the closure in Thaxted. The engineers ran out of time and have now got to reschedule.
- The road has been patched at both ends of the village and ECC have advised that the centre of the village has been identified for inlay surfacing. This has been included in the 2017/18 budget.
- The sign for Church Lane should be fixed shortly.
- We were informed of a breach of planning control at Raymonds Cottage but the retrospective application has now been approved
- Further correspondence was received regarding the SSE Night Flights consultation
- There was an ECC Transport meeting yesterday.
- I have two dates for the defibrillator training session, 12th or 19th April but at present only three names. This will be confirmed for 19th April and advertised.
- There is a Forum at UDC on 15th March, details have been forwarded.
- The Freedom of Information requests have been circulated.
- A resident has requested the invoices from Mills & Reeve. Both our advisory bodies and the ICO have informed us that the RG Trust is not subject to FOI. The resident is now sending a form to the ICO requesting access to information.
- A resident was given details of our auditor but I have heard nothing further.
- Three letters of complaint have been received and circulated to all members from residents regarding an incident following the presentation by Simon Langman on 22nd February.
- I have complied with all the documentation in connection with the government workplace pension.
- I have spoke to LCPAS concerning my role evaluation. As this is a personnel matter it will be discussed with both Chairmen.

The sign at Fox crossroads has been reported to ECC.

It was confirmed that the invoices for legal advice had been paid from the R.G. Trust bank account and are held in the records for the recreation ground.

17/177 To receive a report on recent communications with the Essex Association of Local Councils

The Chairman reiterated his comments made last month, i.e. that in future all communications with EALC will be through the Chairman or the Clerk.

Another complaint has been received from EALC following receipt of an email from SL. The Chairman pointed out that the accusation SL made was incorrect; EALC were not responsible for giving the advice in 2002, it was NALC following a request from Debden PC.

RF repeated, again, that all communications with EALC should be through him or the Clerk.

17/178 To decide whether to review the PC's Financial Regulations or adopt the NALC Financial Regulations

It was proposed that the NALC Financial Regulations should be adopted.

Proposed: RF

Seconded: AT

All agreed

17/179 To discuss matters relating to the Pavilion - (1) Insurance and (2) Funding applications

(1) The Clerk is obtaining quotations for the PC's policies. As the Pavilion policy expires at the end of March the quotations will be circulated to all as soon as they are received.

(2) RF has contacted the Essex FA, explained that the R.G. Trust own the land and the PC own the building. The pavilion is used by more than one team and we have a licence agreement with the teams. It appears that, providing the funding applications are made in the name of the PC, security of tenure is guaranteed, but confirmation of this is awaited.

17/180 To discuss arrangements for the 2017 Annual Assembly

The Clerk will invite the District and County Councillors plus representatives from the School, Tennis Courts, Football Club, two Churches, Parish Pump, Carver Barracks, Village Shop, Speedwatch and British Legion.

The representatives will be asked to give a short report, not more than five minutes and a copy will then be added to the website. An open forum will follow the reports.

17/181 To receive an update on the CCTV equipment

SL reported that he has been in touch with Sygma and a verbal quotation has been obtained for maintaining the camera; £95 for the first hour, plus £45.00 per hour for any subsequent works. It was agreed that the camera should be serviced

During Sygma's visit they will be asked to assess the situation regarding the proposal to install a camera on the School and make a recommendation. SL is currently in contact with the School regarding this.

17/182 To discuss future plans for the Allotments

No proposals or suggestions were made.

17/183 To consider entering the 2017 Essex Village of the Year Competition

The PC decided not to enter the competition this year.

17/184 To receive a report on the meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner and agree a response to the public consultation

AT reported that it was a very heated meeting. The comments made by the public were taken into account and the Police will endeavour to have more presence on the streets. The new accommodation at the UDC Council offices will open during office hours and there will be a team of officers available 24/7. At some stage, the Police and Fire services could merge.

It was reported by a Speedwatch volunteer, who was present at the meeting, that the village team do not receive any feedback from the Police.

A response will be sent to the consultation requesting Police presence in the village.

17/185 To discuss planning applications received

The following application has been received, no comments submitted:

UTT/17/0400/FUL 18 Smiths Green

Proposed new two storey, two bedroom house on land adjacent to 18 Smiths Green with formation of a new shared access off Thaxted Road

UTT/17/0483/HHF 12 Smiths Green

Erection of single storey rear extension.

The following have been approved subject to conditions:

UTT/16/3337/FUL Land at Ivy Todd Cottage, Ivy Todd Hill

UTT/17/0005/FUL 55 and 56 Wash Cottage, Thaxted Road

17/186 To approve quotations for work on trees at the Allotments and in Mill Road

As the quotations have not been received this matter will be included on the agenda for the April meeting.

17/187 To receive an update on the Accounts at the end of the financial year.

The Clerk reported that she was awaiting bank statements but there would be approximately £3,000 more in the PC bank accounts than at the end of 2015/16.

17/188 To approve accounts for payment

It was proposed that the following payments should be approved.

Proposed: AT	Seconded: EB	All agreed
Debden Parish Pump	£250.00	Annual contribution
C. Griffin	£399.89	Net salary + expenses (February)
C. Griffin	£629.10	Dell Laptop (from Transparency Code Funding)
* P.A & E.L. Eddy Agricultural Contractors	£84.00	Hedge cutting – recreation ground
* Ridgeons	£13.97	Post for new litter bins.
* R. Forster	£20.90	Grease gun for playground

* Payments from Recreation Ground Account.

Transfers will be made from the Deposit Account to both current accounts.

17/189 To discuss any Urgent matters of interest to the Parish

189.1 The footbridge in the corner of the recreation ground behind Maltings Cottages needs replacing with a board on top of the existing bridge with a non-slip surface. The Chairman will send a photograph and the Clerk will contact the Footpath Warden.

189.2 AT will spread some of the road planings in the car park and cut the hedge at the back.

189.3 The Chairman will obtain quotations for improvements to the notice board.

189.4 SL advised that he asked for the following items to be included on the agenda but they were not added, therefore he raised the following issues:

1. The protocol for closing meetings was requested. Examples had been shown to SL by the Clerk and it was confirmed by AT that this had been custom and practice in the past. In future the meeting will be adjourned or suspended.

2. The PC minutes in the Parish Pump should be just bullet points and I think this policy should be adopted for the whole meeting. At present there are things which are controversial. When asked by the Clerk what he was referring to SL said that her “spin” comes in sometimes. The Clerk objected to the comment and requested a retraction. This was also requested by the Chairman but SL refused. EB pointed out that all members have a chance to read the notes before they are submitted and if you object you should make a list of the items you are not happy with and circulate to all members.

3. The minutes of a previous meeting contain a statement that Cllr Luck will be subject to a Code of Conduct. This came from a member of the public who should not have been speaking and the Chairman should have controlled the meeting. The Clerk pointed out that she was asked to minute the statement that is why it was included.

4. From the information I have the PC meetings have been unlawful since last year. The PC should be self regulating and they did not abide by the Standing Orders. EB asked SL to submit his problems in writing to the Council to give members the opportunity to look at them. Once they have looked at the evidence they will decide whether this should be included on the agenda.

5. I am concerned that the Chairman does not understand the concerns of the residents as we have received three letters asking us to consider whether the Chairman should resign. The Chairman reiterated that he has taken advice and this is not a matter for the PC.

17/190 Items for the next agenda

To approve quotations for work on trees at the Allotments and in Mill Road.

17/191 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 5th April, at 8.00pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 10.10pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated: 05.04.17.

