

DEBDEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF DEBDEN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER, 2020 AT 8.14 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)
10 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed residents to the meeting.

20/339 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dist Cllr S. Luck and Cty Cllr S. Walsh.

20/340 Declarations of Interests

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

No interests were declared.

20/341 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:

- **I have received an email from the Chairman advising that the Auditor's Report for 2018/19 does not exist, but at the last meeting all other Councillors said they had seen it.**

Your point has been noted.

- **There has been no announcement regarding the withdrawal of the Army grant following the UDC Chief Executive's letter stating that unless a substantial part of the hall had been built the grant would be withdrawn at the end of September. Is there any news?**

This is a matter for the Village Hall Trust (VHT) and they should respond.

- **Have the PC had communications with them?**

The VHT should communicate to the village regarding the progress of the Village Hall project and the grant. There was not a withdrawal at the end of September and any update will be provided in the December Parish Pump.

- **Have the PC received any communication from UDC or the MOD regarding an extension to the grant.**

The PC were copied to a letter to the VHT but it is for them to respond.

- **There were two dog waste bins on the recreation ground, one has disappeared and the other is now behind the fencing. Could the PC rectify please?**

StephW advised there are three bins on the recreation ground. One red dog bin and two litter bins. Dog waste can be put in all these bins that is UDC policy.

20/342 To approve and authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 7th October, 2020

Item 20/319 Delete the following:

- 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.

and replace with:

Can you confirm that your husband is a director of the company hired to do work on the recreation ground recently.

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

Proposed: StephW

Seconded: BL

All agreed

The Chairman of that meeting (StephW) said she requested that the answers were not recorded in the minutes.

Item 20/323, bullet point 13 Delete the following:

- 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.

and replace with:

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 and then re-open the two Deposit accounts, transferring the relevant balances from the new current account once the switch is complete.

Proposed: SW

Seconded: AG

All agreed

Item 20/325 Delete the following:

- 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.

and replace with:

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 agreed that this draft policy should be adopted, sent to the Clerk, and added to the existing Complaints Policy and circulated.

Proposed: StephW

Seconded: AG

All agreed

The minutes of the meeting of 7th October 2020 were approved with the above changes.

The Clerk advised that the new Complaints Policy could not be adopted at the last meeting because she had not seen it prior to the meeting, it was not sent out with the meeting paperwork and it was not on the Agenda, therefore these changes to the minutes were not correct.

20/343 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/20/2609/FUL Bayes House, Ivy Todd Hill

Change of use of agricultural land to residential garden with associated wildlife planting, native species hedgerows, meadow grass with wild flowers, trees and a copse.

Comments: JO'B to draft a response and circulate.

UTT/20/2655/DFO Land North of Henham Road

Details following outline application UTT/19/3113/OP for the erection of one dwelling, details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

Comments: None

UTT/20/2681/FUL Howe Barn, Newport Road

Erection of storage barn

Comments: None

20/344 To receive the report 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 (October) Outstanding	

20/351		endeavour to validate a VAS sign for Mill Road but this could take some time. (November) 20mph speed limit and double yellow lines to be considered at PC meeting	
20/273	Remembrance Services – to request a road closure or rolling road on Sunday 8 th November and Wednesday 11 th November	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. (September)Awaiting reply from UDC. (October) Road closures approved. Awaiting details of final arrangements from RBL. (November) Two representatives from the PC will be able to attend short Remembrance services. Names to be sent to RBL. In view of the new lockdown the Clerk will request an update from the RBL.	
20/274	Review of Asset Register	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. (September)Asset register needs to be reviewed to ensure values would cover replacement cost. (October) PC and RGT Assets to be split. Asset register sent to StephW	
20/309	Lay-by at Smiths Green	(September) JO'B and Cllr Luck to discuss.	

		(November) Meetings held with UDC and ECC. Update to be given at PC meeting.	
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. (November) Chased Gigaclear several times but still unable to obtain a firm date. Last reply received on 28 th October forwarded to BL. BL will raise as a safety issue with Highways	

- I have emailed ECC and Cllr Simon Walsh again regarding the encroachment issue at Maple House. On 14th October ECC advised that their Customer Services Team would respond. No reply, so have chased again. I have now been advised Enforcement team will be commenting on any possible encroachment. **ECC still dealing with.**
- The verge at Smiths Green which was removed is still being considered for repair as part of an ECC planned maintenance programme.
- It has been reported that the VAS (Vehicle Activated sign) at Smiths Green has been repaired.
- I have not yet received the revised agenda for the meeting with UDC and ECC.
- Community Speedwatch Teams are now allowed to operate. **This has now changed because of the lockdown.**
- I have again raised Bayes House with UDC Enforcement pointing out that a drain should have been installed at the front of the drive. The person I was dealing with at ECC has now left the Essex office but my emails have been passed to his replacement and I am awaiting a reply. **The Clerk reported on a reply received from ECC. The Council felt the reply was not satisfactory and ECC will be contacted again. UDC have been asked to check if a drain at the front of the drive which goes into a soakaway has been installed.**
- The potholes reported near the entrance to Pinewood Farm, Hamperden End, have been reported to ECC.
- The last events for this year at Henham Raceway did not take place. Neither the Planning department nor Stansted Raceway replied to my emails or phone messages.
- The UDC Community Grant scheme is now available.
- The Current A/C switching agreement has been sent to Unity Trust Bank. A letter was sent to Natwest asking them to transfer both Business Deposit Accounts to the PC Current account and then close the Deposit accounts. I am awaiting confirmation from Natwest that this has been done. **One account has been transferred and closed**

but still awaiting confirmation that the second Deposit Account has been closed. Unity Trust Bank have asked why we need two Deposit accounts.

- Questions were raised by members of the public present at the last meeting regarding the PC's request to remove answers to the questions raised. EALC consulted on this. **EALC advised that they did not instruct the Council not to include the answers given to residents in the Minutes. Why would you not record the answer? There may be occasions when you cannot answer a question but, if you do, the answer should be recorded.** Comments also received about the changes to my report in the minutes.
- The abandoned car on the recreation ground was reported and chased as it has still not been removed. UDC have now informed me they have carried out basic checks (which I had already done) and as it has road tax to May 2021 it does not meet the criteria to be classed as abandoned and they are unable to assist with the removal of the vehicle. **UDC did not remove the car. It appears the owner has returned and picked up the car.**
- **EALC were contacted regarding the item on the last agenda concerning the Complaints Policy. It could not be approved as the Vexatious policy was not circulated properly and there was no reference to it on the agenda.**
- **I have received an email from Cty Cllr Walsh regarding Henham Road and he is suggesting a Surgery, by Zoom, with the Cabinet member for Highways. The Clerk will organise.**

20/345 To review the Budget/Actual figures for the period April to September 2020 and discuss the Budget for 2021/22.

The Clerk circulated the figures in advance of the meeting. There were no major deviations. The Clerk pointed out that no grants have been paid to the Recreation Ground Trust this year. The exercise on reviewing the PC Asset register needs to be completed.

Members will submit proposals to the Clerk for the 2021/22 budget prior to the next meeting. BL requested expenditure of £250 to be included in the PC budget for maintenance costs for benches etc.

20/346 To approve the revised Complaints Policy

The Chairman said this was adopted at the last meeting. This was confirmed by StephW who chaired the October meeting.

20/347 To discuss and agree a response to the consultation on pavement parking

It was agreed that:

- The consultation would be publicised in order for individuals to respond.
- JO'B will draft a response from the PC and circulate.
- If Councillors are aware of offenders they could approach individuals politely.

20/348 To receive an update from Cllr Lindsell on Rural Crime and Byways

BL reported that the TRO's are in place on the two Byways. There are blocks at entrances with gaps to allow horses through. Unfortunately, the scramble bikes have ignored the closures. BL stressed the importance of reporting all sightings with a copy to him together with report numbers. Rural crime has been quiet this month in our parish. The group continues to work with all agencies and have a focused approach on dealing with these issues. Excellent progress has been made in the last six months.

CB advised that there was an error in the Parish Pump – the Byway from Rook End Lane to Waldegraves is not closed.

Following a question from the Clerk, BL confirmed that he is aware of the legislation on the use of cameras and the camera he has purchased is on private land with the landowner's permission.

20/349 To receive an update on the lay-by at Smith's Green following a meeting with UDC and ECC

JO'B reported that Cllr Luck has liaised with residents and arranged a meeting with a UDC Housing officer which StephW attended. This was followed up with a further meeting with UDC and Essex Highways and we are all working together to reach a satisfactory answer and further information will be available shortly.

20/350 To consider submitting a request to ECC for double yellow lines in the High Street from, Little Garth to the Plough Public House sign.

It was proposed that a request should be submitted to ECC for double yellow lines in the High Street from Little Garth to the Plough Public House sign.

Proposed: JO'B Seconded: CD All agreed

The Clerk advised that as we have a new lockdown, speedwatch is not allowed to operate.

20/351 To consider submitting a request to ECC for a 20mph speed limit from the entrance to Highfields through the village to the entrance to the Recreation Ground

It was proposed that a request should be submitted to ECC for a 20mph speed limit from the entrance to Highfields through the village to the entrance to the Recreation Ground.

Proposed: JO'B Seconded: CD All agreed

The Clerk advised that there will be a public consultation for these requests.

20/352 To consider a request for a donation to Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

If our budget allocation for donations allows, it was proposed that we provisionally approve a donation of £50.00.

Proposed BL Seconded: SW All agreed

20/353 To approve payment schedule, circulated prior to the meeting

The following payments were approved for payment:

Debden Village Hall	£231.00	Reimbursement of 50% of planning fee for the Village Hall
Royal British Legion - Debden Branch	£60.00	Donation to 2020 Poppy Appeal.
C. Griffin	£412.26	Net salary + expenses (£25.10)

The Clerk advised that after the payment schedule was issued two Invoices have been received:

Ace of Spades - £180.00 grass cutting (October)

Ace of Spades - £48.00 cutting playground (October)

It was agreed that these should be added to the above schedule and paid.

Proposed: StephW

Seconded: AG

All agreed

20/354 To receive Reports from District and County Councillors

Reports received from Dist Cllr Luck and Cty Cllr Simon Walsh had been circulated prior to the meeting.

20/355 To discuss any urgent matters of interest to the Parish

355.1 CD reported that she has been asked if the PC could provide a link to our meetings from the PC website or Facebook. AG will organise. Clerk to send AG a reminder when agenda is circulated.

355.2 The Chairman thanked StephW for organising the planting of the flower tubs which look wonderful. StephW said they are being looked after by volunteers and they will replant in the Spring and Autumn.

355.3 The phone kiosk in Thaxted Road will be straightened on 15th November.

355.4 AG raised the purchase and arrangements for a Christmas tree in the village.

355.5. The Clerk advised that Cllr Gardner has asked for a booking to be made on a two day EALC training course.

20/356 Items for the next agenda

To approve expenditure for a Christmas tree for the village and agree where it should be positioned.

To approve a booking for Cllr Gardner on an EALC two day Councillor training course.

To discuss and approve the Budget for 2021/22.

20/357 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 2nd December 2020 at 8.00pm by Zoom.

Questions from residents to be sent to the Clerk by 10.00pm on Monday, 30th November 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated: 02.12.20