

PARISH OF HEMPSTEAD

Minutes of the Meeting of Hempstead Parish Council held on Thursday 23rd February 2023

Present: Nick Turkentine (Chair), David Drane, Diana Frost, James Nicholson, Mark Welbourn, District Councillor George Smith, and the Clerk.

The Parish Council meeting started at 8pm

22/109 Apologies for Absence County Councillor Martin Foley

22/110 Public Forum No members of the public were in attendance.

22/111 Declarations of Interest None required.

22/112 Reports from District and/or County Councillors

District Councillor Smith gave a brief update on Uttlesford District Council – UDC budget for 2023/24 now passed, with 3% uplift in Council tax (noted ECC uplift is 3.5%); UDC finances will be balanced by use of reserves in the short term, but savings are more than likely to be required going forwards (possibility of reducing UDC headcount over next 5 years).

County Councillor Foley had sent a report by email prior to the meeting, which Diana Frost briefly summarised – broken VAS sign in Hempstead to be investigated; Highways update to follow, after Local Highways Panel meeting in early March; responses from a residents' petition regarding the recycling centre booking system; and ECC Council tax rise of 3.5% (but appears to be major funding gap which is likely to lead to a cut in services).

22/113 Minutes of Previous Meetings of Thursday 12th January and 2nd February were approved and signed by the Chair.

22/114 Finance

Item 1 – Current Account Balance £1630.31, which will be sufficient to cover costs until end of the FY.

Item 2 – the proposed 2023/24 Budget (Annex A) was unanimously approved.

Item 3 – unanimous approval of remuneration for Clerk's expenses of £440 and £54 EALC Election Briefing, and invoices signed.

22/115 Planning to review and comment on new planning applications and to note any decisions as at 17/02/23.

Shepherds Cottage: UTT/23/0097/FUL. AWAITING DECISION

Little Orchard: UTT/23/0139/HHF. AWAITING DECISION

Stack Field House: UTT/21/2412/OP. AWAITING DECISION

Fairview Bungalow: UTT/22/1872/FUL. AWAITING DECISION

Iswas Cottage: UTT/22/3374/PDE. PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT, APPLICATION NOT REQUIRED

Land at Thatch Cottage: UTT/22/2206/OP. APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

22/116 Asset of Community Value

Information from the Rescue Our Bluebell Inn (ROBINN) public meeting had been added as supporting evidence to the nomination documentation, along with three "witness statements" of community usage provided by long term residents. It was noted that it was disappointing that more residents had not provided statements, despite the very well attended ROBINN public meeting. It was agreed that the nomination for renewal should be now be made as soon as possible, so further evidence would not be sought. *The Clerk to send the nomination in the next day.*

22/117 Parish Council Elections in May

The Clerk and Diana Frost had attended separate briefings regarding the upcoming elections. Pertinent information from the briefings was discussed, including the timetable, photo ID requirements for electors and nomination forms. *It was agreed that councillors would meet in March to complete their nomination forms together and that Diana Frost would take them all into UDC before the deadline. The Clerk to confirm where the Electoral Number for nominating individuals can be found.*

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22/118 Coronation of King Charles III

It was noted that currently the only planned events to mark the Coronation are a village walk on 8th May followed by a Bluebell 2 event at the village hall. The Clerk had received notification that a £700 grant is available from UDC to go towards the costs of events that are open to everyone, with a deadline of 13th April. *It was agreed that a piece requesting any interest from residents to organise celebrations would be included in the next Newsletter.*

22/119 Correspondence

Triangle of land – Following the Parish Council's letter sent on 13th January, an email reply had been received from the owner of the land, stating that on advice they would be putting it up for sale (which has now occurred). The Council is exploring the implications of the sale of this piece of land.

Thaxted Area Parish Meeting – Diana Frost had attended this meeting, which included information on a “cultural engine”, the upcoming local elections and planning issues (Dean Hermitage, UDC Planning Director, was in attendance).

22/120 Census 2021

Diana Frost highlighted some interesting Census data comparing Hempstead with England averages, including the biggest age group being 50-54, household deprivation markers and disability.

22/121 Speedwatch/Police speed checks

The Police visited Hempstead on Thursday, 16th February to carry out a speed check. It was noted that their visit was in the middle of the day, when the road is noticeable quieter. *It was agreed that the Clerk should request that another visit be made at a more appropriate time of day, i.e. commuting times in the morning or evening.*

22/122 Reports from Councillors

Policing/Neighbourhood Watch / Health and Well-being – No update.

Highways and Rights of Way – No update.

Environment – The Clerk had received notice that the Council's grass cutting contractor was no longer able to carry out this service, therefore a new contractor needed to be sought. Diana Frost had been in touch with a contractor who cuts grass for a neighbouring Parish and they had carried out a site visit in order to provide a quote, which is awaited.

Communications – Diana Frost outlined her consideration of all communication channels in Hempstead, and her concerns regarding the usefulness of the village website, now that most of Hempstead's societies and groups had disbanded (now mainly an archive facility). It was noted that the website is important for publishing Parish Council documentation. Possibility was raised of a systemic audit of the website and whether a stand-alone Parish Council website might be something to investigate. It was agreed that further discussions were required.

Village Hall – No update.

Flooding – Essex Highways are still awaiting to clear ditches on Anso Road, with staffing issues causing the delay.

22/123 Matters Arising requiring decisions, to be included on the next Agenda – none.

22/124 Future Meeting Dates: 30th March and 26th April (Wednesday). Thursday, 18th May for Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and Friday 26th May for the Annual Parish meeting.

The meeting ended at 10:15pm