

LITTLE WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held online on 7 July 2020 at 7:30pm

Present: Councillors Edith Robertson (Chair)
Antony Kingham
Melanie Williamson
Michael Eve
Chloe Tron
Rupert Watson
Clerk Suzanne Walker
City Councillors Councillor Knight
Councillor Steele
County Councillor Councillor Aldridge
4 members of the public were present

Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

20/86 Apologies

Councillor Denny has not been able to attend meetings online due to technical issues and has sent apologies. It was **agreed** to accept her apologies for the purposes of section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 so that she may remain a member of the Parish Council.

20/87 Declarations of Interest

None.

20/88 To consideration and approval of Minutes 2 June 2020

The minutes of the meeting of 2 June 2020 were formally **approved** by Councillors as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

20/89 Public Forum- to receive any representations from the public

One member of the public spoke in relation to the recreation ground. It had been noted that an organised football club are training on the field and she stated that they are from the Oakwood Football Academy which is displayed on their shirts. She complained about 20 – 30 youngsters on the field playing football each day and they use bad language and use the hedge to urinate. She is concerned that local people will not want to use the area.

Another member of the public spoke asking when the tennis court will open again and suggested a combination lock for those who wish to play tennis. There is a hole in the fence and she frequently sees young people in the court and that locking it only keeps out the people who wish to play tennis.

She also raised the issue of the recreation ground allotments – two plots are in complete shade and the tenants would like the branches cut back and also there are a lot of stinging nettles by the shed and have found a lot of debris that needs to be cleared from the site. It was agreed that the issues will be discussed and that permission will be required from the City Council to attend to the trees.

Councillor Aldridge advised that the Essex Welfare service which has been organising volunteers is now Essex Wellbeing service and will continue to assist residents with health and isolation issues. The Park and Ride has opened at Sandon only with amended fees and consideration is being given to a park and

pedal service to encourage people to cycle rather than use the bus which ties in with the green agenda being funded for the next 18 months. Regarding the footway initiative and he asked for information regarding pavements to be re-sent so he can put it forward for the scheme. There is a Locality fund available to Parish Councils and community groups and charities. The Registrar is now fully functional for weddings and funerals. Police have been dealing with some events where many people have been attending.

Councillor Knights confirmed that he contacted the officer at the City Council regarding cricket club issues but as no progress had been made so he contacted the cricket club representative directly. The expectation was that the club would clear the pavilion by the end of last weekend but this has not happened so he will continue to try and communicate with them. The City Council is meeting with a contractor to look at the site to replace the concrete blocks with suitable gates.

Councillor Steele confirmed that he has been in communication with the Clerk regarding issues regarding the re-opening of play areas and the position of the City Council. He also advised that there are travellers in neighbouring Parish. The position of Essex County Council is that at present they are not looking to move travellers on due to the Covid situation

20/90 New Planning Applications

- 20/90.1 20/00708/REM - Land at Great Oaks, Main Road, Little Waltham - Reserved matters application for the demolition of an existing workshop and a proposed new dwelling, with approval of all matters sought – **No comments**
- 20/90.2 20/00841/FUL - Hobbits, Leighs Road, Little Waltham - Proposed single story side extensions, internal alterations, landscaping, and associated works together with the erection of a horticultural style greenhouse – **Agreed** to support the comments of the Conservation Officer.
- 20/90.3 20/00842/LBC - Hobbits, Leighs Road, Little Waltham - Proposed single story side extensions, internal alterations, landscaping, and associated works together with the erection of a horticultural style greenhouse - **Agreed** to support the comments of the Conservation Officer.

20/91 Planning Results

The following results were **noted** -

- 20/91.1 19/01562/DOC/1 - Land at Poste House Cottage, Domsey Lane, Little Waltham - Condition 3 - Refuse and Recyclable materials, Condition 4 - Materials should match existing building, Condition 5 - Surface treatment of vehicle access, Condition 6 - Surface water, Condition 8 - Hard and Soft landscaping, Condition 12 - Drawing of any gates, fences, walls, railings or piers – **Conditions discharged.**
- 20/91.2 20/00568/FUL - 10 Church Hill, Little Waltham – single storey rear extension – **Granted**
- 20/91.3 20/05537/CAT - 43 The Street, Little Waltham - T1 Willow - located at back of property - pollard at approx. 8-9m in height - Reason: To reduce some of the weight above the decayed areas within the main scaffold limbs/stem – **No objection**

20/92: To consider issues relating to the new Chelmsford City Council Local Plan

The plan has been adopted. Usually there would be a review after 3 years but it appears the review will take place next year. The issues effecting this parish are the Bloor Homes development and the Garden Village. It has been agreed to maintain the local Parish grouping to discuss issues and consult as the planning process proceeds.

20/93 Correspondence

20/93.1 Essex County Council

2/6/20	Update regarding progress of construction of the RDR
2/6/20	Information regarding re-opening of libraries
5/6/20	Highway Highlights bulletin
5/6/20	Information about locality grant
10/6/20	Information on Family innovation grant funding
16/6/20	Update regarding Track and Trace
19/6/20	Information about sale of Traveller's sites
23/6/20	Update regarding North East bypass plans
30/6/20	Update on Library opening

20/93.2 Chelmsford City Council

2/6/20	Mayor's newsletter
8/6/20	Information about adoption of local plan
1/7/20	Mayor's newsletter

20/93.3 Other

17/6/20	Information on consultation regarding Local Government support following Corona Virus
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EALC weekly bulletins
RCCE Warbler newsletter
Large number of circulars regarding Covid 19

20/94 Amenities report

20/94.1 To consider the issue of opening play facilities and the draft risk assessments in relation to play areas and other Parish Council activities

The general risk assessment in relation to Parish Council activities was considered and **approved**.

In relation to the tennis court the Government confirmed back in May that tennis courts may be re-opened and the court was opened with signage on 23rd May. However due to substantial amount of anti-social behaviour, vandalism and youths gathering and not socially distancing the court was locked up again. Residents have made representations via email and at this meeting that this action only excludes those who wish to play tennis and does not stop people who should not be in the court climbing in. The gate and fencing will be repaired shortly subject to the

quotation being accepted. Upon discussing matters, it was **agreed** that notices will be re-erected stating that the court may only be used for tennis and social distancing must be observed and that the court will be re-opened. It was noted that checks will need to be made to make sure the notices have not been ripped down.

Regarding the play area Councillors considered and discussed the detailed risk assessment for the area. It was noted that an inspection is required and if any repairs are required this will need to be done prior to re-opening. Weekly inspections will then be required which can be carried out by the Clerk and Councillor Kingham once he has attended the RPII course.

Regarding social distancing it was considered not reasonably practicable to have booking systems or wardens. However, it was considered that by having appropriate signage it would reduce the risk. The signage will be checked. There will also be ad hoc monitoring to see if users are socially distancing and review if the measures are working effectively.

Regarding cleaning it was confirmed that Councillors must be satisfied that measures put in place will reduce the risk of spread of Covid 19 to an acceptably low level in order to open the area. It was noted that the City Council is not putting in place an extra cleaning measures.

Having discussed and considered the entire document Councillors **agreed** that the measures that will be taken will be to erect appropriate signage, to check the signage regularly, to purchase metal signage as soon as possible, to advise in signage of the need to socially distance, no food and drink in the area and that it is the users responsibility to clean equipment and use hand sanitiser when using the area – it was considered that as the play area is small and in a rural area and mostly used by local people this will reduce any risk to a low level. In addition, one swing will be removed from each bay and there will be ad hoc monitoring and a review of how the measures are working. It was further **agreed** that the messages will be further communicated on noticeboards, on the website and on social media and to the school. The aim will be to open the area sometime during the week commencing 20th July 2020.

20/94.2 To consider repair of tennis court fencing

The quotation obtained to repair the gate and fencing at the tennis court was considered and **approved**.

20/94.3 To consider the issue of gardening for the GP surgery garden

The quotations were considered and the quotation provided by Perspective Landscape was **accepted**.

20/94.4 To consider issues raised by Chelmsford City Council regarding upkeep of grass verges

A resident had complained regarding cutting of a verge by Wheeler's Hill West. The City Council say they look at ecological needs such as nesting birds and hedge maintenance and wanted to know if the Parish Council had any views on the issue before reverting to the resident. Councillors **agreed** that they have no issues in relation to the manner in which the City Council are dealing with the cutting of grass verges along Essex Regiment Way or in that vicinity.

20/95 Financial Matters

20/95.1 Payments for approval

The following payments were **approved**

Payee	Item	£	VAT	Total
Clerk	Salary (July)	488.73	0.00	488.73
HMRC	PAYE (July)	118.00	0.00	118.00
Essex Pension Fund	Pension Contribution (July)	182.36	0.00	182.36
S Walker	expenses	28.19	2.40	30.59
RCCE	Subscription	60.50	12.10	72.60
DW Maintenance	Grass cutting	440.00	0.00	440.00
DW Maintenance	litter picking and gardening	622.00	0.00	622.00
EALC	Training (play areas)	40.00	8.00	48.00
EALC	Councillor training	40.00	8.00	48.00

In addition, a slight amendment was made to HMRC payment in May by the payroll company so an extra 20p is due to HMRC and 20p to be deducted from Clerk's next wage payment and this was **agreed**.

It was noted that the saver account with Co-operative bank has been opened and it was **agreed** to transfer money into that account when online payments are made later this month.

20/95.2 Current account balance to be reported at the meeting.

The Clerk reported the balance of the account as at 1st July 2020 was £53,119.84.

20/95.3 To consider Quarterly financial report

The report calculated to 30th June 2020 was considered and **approved**.

20/95.4 To consider issue of Clerk's overtime

Councillors **agreed** to pay 8 hours overtime for extra work carried out by the Clerk over the last few weeks.

20/96 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported as follows –

1. Chelmsford City Council has amended its dates for Play in park which are provisionally booked for the mornings of 4th and 27th August 2020. This is subject to final confirmation of the City Council as to whether the event will proceed which will be advised in July.
The Clerk confirmed the dates have been approved and the event will go ahead. She is just re-checking with the Memorial Hall that the toilets will still be available.
2. As a result of residents' complaints, I have raised the issue of grass cutting of the verge by Church Hill with the City Council. There seems to be some confusion with the responsibility as between the City Council and County Council but this has now been resolved and the grass has been cut.
3. I have been working with the website company to resolve some glitches to enable the new Parish Council email addresses to be set up.

4. Each month I will keep you updated with matters that do not require action at this point in time by the Parish Council but need to be noted as ongoing. This month I can advise

Item	Actions awaited	Date raised
Local Highway Panel – 30mph zone at Chatham Green loop	Local Highway Panel has included this in potential works list for a feasibility study	December 2016
Community Governance Review	Chelmsford City Council wish to progress within a larger review of boundaries in the City Council area	April 2019
Local Highway Panel – application for a crossing at Ash Tree Corner	Submitted to the Highway Panel on 13 November 2019 – validation awaited	November 2019
South Essex Parking Partnership – application for yellow lines on the junction of the B1008 and The Street by the school	The South Essex parking Partnership are recommending that yellow lines be painted on both junctions and the matter is due to go out for public consultation shortly.	November 2019

She also reported that together with Councillor Robertson she had attended a presentation on Microsoft Teams regarding the consideration by Essex County Council to divest ownership of Travellers sites including one in this Parish. The matter is at a very early stage and more information will be provided one received.

The report was **accepted**.

20/97 Affordable Housing project

The survey is live and a link is on the website and Facebook page. The RCCE has confirmed several people have completed the survey showing a need for such housing. The survey will remain available until mid -July and will again be highlighted on social media. Also, the Clerk has let Community groups know. The survey is important to evidence demand for the project.

20/98 To consider the updated Health and Wellbeing Plan

The updated Health and Wellbeing plan was considered and **approved**.

20/99 To consider anti-bullying Policy

The anti-bullying policy was considered and **approved**. It was noted the Parish Council already has a complaints policy and vexatious complainants' policy.

20/100 To consider participation in Essex County Council salt bag scheme

It was **agreed** to participate in the scheme and order fresh salt to go in the salt bins for this winter.

20/101 To receive an update in relation to issues raised regarding grazing land adjacent to Brook Hill.

The Diocese has entered into a grazing lease with a couple who intend to bring goats and horses to graze. Concern was raised by residents over the position and appearance of the fencing. The Clerk approached the Public Rights of Way officer at

Essex County Council who carried out an inspection and was content with the positioning of the fence posts. An inspection is awaited from the conservation officer at Chelmsford City Council as the area is within the Conservation Area. The lease is for one year at a time. It was noted the fence has now been removed. Councillor Watson confirmed that he had emailed the Arch Deacon to make it clear that the land is a community amenity and a response is awaited.

20/102 To discuss issues in relation to anti-social behaviour and Police attendance in the Parish

Residents have addressed the Parish Council at this meeting and via email over concerns regarding anti-social behaviour at the recreation grounds. The Clerk has urged residents to complain to the Police who have attended once. The Clerk continued to communicate with the Police who suggested that the Parish Council make a payment to the Police to cover overtime and guarantee some form of attendance within the Parish. The Clerk had spoken to the Clerk at Danbury Parish Council who are taking part in the scheme and who confirmed that it did result in increased Police presence to assist with resolving an issue of anti-social behaviour in their Parish but at a cost to their residents via an increased precept. Little Waltham Parish Council is a much smaller Parish Council and has not set aside money in the budget for such a scheme so any provision could not be made until the next budget cycle. The Clerk has sent photos of drug paraphernalia and activities to the Police who did say they would try and attend this weekend but may not as pubs were reopening so the Clerk does not know if they attended or not. Residents are reporting as well. Councillor Steele stated he could take the issue up with the Police and Councillors asked the Clerk to forward the information she had received from the Police to him. There is a separate scheme for Parish Councils to pay for a Special Constable. Upon discussion Councillors considered it unacceptable to have to pay money to obtain a Police presence. It was noted action point 2 in Police and Crime Commissioner's action plan states anti-social behaviour is a priority. Councillors **agreed** that the Chairman write a letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner asking if he is aware and condones the proposal that the Parish Council pay money for Police presence. Councillor Aldridge suggested that the area commander Scott Hynes be invited to a future Parish Council meeting and be made aware of the letter to the PCC. Councillors also **agreed** that the efforts of the Parish Council are communicated to residents via social media.

Regarding the issue of the football club the Clerk confirmed that the urination in the hedge is a public order offence but the Police can't deal with issues of social distancing. If a commercial business is using the area for football this would be an issue to refer to the City Council as there is a question as to whether some form of payment should be made.

Councillors discussed the football posts as some residents had complained about them being moved around and used. It was noted that there is a distinction between anti-social behaviour and playing football. If the posts are removed it will penalise local children who wish to play football. It was **agreed** to monitor the situation

20/103 To receive update regarding Cricket Club and leasehold arrangements

20/103.1 To discuss progress of legal paperwork

No progress to report.

20/103.2 To discuss prospective use of pavilion

The landlord of the White Hart had today left a message for the Clerk requesting permission to use the pavilion to sell fruit and vegetables. He is concerned about having to keep his 28 staff on furlough and it is not clear if this is a short-term measure of a long-term business. In any event formal planning permission would be required. Until such time as the lease and legal formalities have been resolved the Parish Council is not in a position to provide such consent and in any event has agreed to consult with residents on use of the area in the long term.

20/104 Matters to be raised by members for the next agenda.

A controversial planning matter received so the Chairman proposed to call an extra ordinary meeting Tuesday 28th July which was agreed by all and it was noted that at that meeting issues surrounding the play area and police issues could also be discussed.

It was further agreed to continue meeting using Zoom and to review arrangements in September 2020.

Meeting concluded 8.51pm