

LITTLE WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Little Waltham Parish Council held on 2 January 2024 at 7:30pm at the Memorial Hall, Brook Hill, Little Waltham

Present:	Councillors	Antony Kingham (Chairman) Richard Allen Richard Tinson Rupert Watson Lallie Godfrey
	City Councillor	Mike Steel
	Clerk	Michelle Harrison

One member of the public was present.

The Chairman of the Memorial Hall was present.

24/01: Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Burrow and Cunningham.

24/02: Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interests were registered.

24/03: To consider and approve minutes

24/03.1 Minutes dated 5 December 2023

The minutes of the meeting of 5 December 2023 were formally **approved** by the Councillors as a correct record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

24/03.2 Consider amendment to Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting dated 1 August 2023

The Councillors considered an amendment to the minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting dated 1 August 2023, to correct an inaccuracy in the measurement recorded. The Councillors resolved to formally approve the below version of minute 23/133 as a correct record:

"23/133 Public Forum – To receive any representations from the Public

Councillor Burrow explained the background regarding the proposals for the Pylons from Norwich to Tilbury and the fact that the proposals are for 50 meter high pylons to be constructed through the pinch point between Little Waltham and Great Waltham and the fact that this is opposed by the Parish Council. There is a current consultation which expires on 21st August 2023 and the Parish Council has already submitted representations in early July. However, he confirmed that he had attended an engagement event with National Grid on 12th July where more information had come to light where a representative of National Grid indicated that if the Parish Council were to make further representations there is the possibility that instead of the pylons the route could be underground. Also, another route has come to light which although National Grid indicates would have less impact on the heritage and residents of the area they are choosing not to pursue. It was noted that there have been some changes to the proposals in certain areas as a result of representations made so it was considered worthwhile making further representations for this area.

Councillor Burrow then took the meeting through a detailed statement and took questions from residents. The statement sets out 4 options in order of priority. The first preference would be for the whole project to be offshore. The second preference would be for the route to be underground and the issue of heritage, listed monuments, the Conservation area, together with the impact on wildlife and the Little Waltham nature reserve as well as residents

was highlighted. The third option would be for the route that avoids Little Waltham and Great Waltham and that was proposed by National Grid to be used as it would avoid the area and again impact on heritage and the environment. It was noted that the document produced by National Grid recognises that this route would have the least impact on the area. The fourth preference would be to move one pylon closer to or behind the copse in Great Waltham and for there to be 35 meter pylons instead of 50 meter pylons.”

24/04: Public Forum - to receive any representations from the public

Councillor Steel presented his Essex County Councillor and City Councillor reports, which updated the Little Waltham Parish Council on the following:

- DigiGo – the service is being extended for a further two years
- Outcome of the Subsidised Bus Services Consultation
- Fibre to the Premise – Gigaclear are rolling out FTTP to Writtle, Great Waltham and Great Leighs
- Integrated Retirement Community in Little Waltham – Councillor Steel updated the Council regarding his views for this planning application.
- Change in boundaries – Councillor Steel noted that he would be gaining the parishes of Margaretting and Stock, but losing the parish of Great Leighs.

It was agreed by the Chairman to discuss the Memorial Hall items earlier in the meeting as the Chairman was present.

24/11: Memorial Hall

24/11.1 To consider parking issues related to the Memorial Hall

The Chairman of the Memorial Hall had contacted the Council regarding the drive for the Memorial Hall being continuously blocked by cars. The Councillors agreed to support the decision for the Memorial Hall to apply to SEPP for H Bars across the driveway to discourage people from blocking the drive. The Chairman of the Memorial Hall confirmed that he would make the application and would cover any associated costs.

The Councillors agreed that the car park signage for the car park in Little Waltham was not very obvious. It is understood that Chelmsford City Council own and maintain the car park. The Clerk would liaise with the City Council regarding the signage to see if this could be improved.

24/11.2 To discuss registering the Memorial Hall

The Council discussed this matter with the Chairman of the Memorial Hall in detail to understand the current position. The Chairman of the Memorial Hall commented that there was not a definitive boundary and that the land registry documents only had a description of size and width of the Memorial Hall plot.

The Councillors, as Custodian of the Memorial Hall confirmed that they would investigate this matter further. The Chairman of the Memorial Hall confirmed that he would provide the date of the next Memorial Hall Committee meeting date so Councillors could attend and discuss the matter further.

Councillor Steel and the member of public left the meeting.

24/05: To receive reports from Councillor's attendance at external meetings

Councillor Allen attended the Chelmsford Community Garden Council meeting with the Patient Participation Group. Councillor Allen reported that it was a useful meeting and it appeared that the delays were with the Integrated Care Board. Councillor Allen would attend the next Patient Participation Group meeting.

24/06: Clerk's Report

The Clerk noted the following:

1. The Clerk deposited the £222.11 from the Christmas Event into the Unity Current Account. This money will be earmarked to be spent on the community.

2. The Clerk has applied for the PHAB grant for the gym equipment on the Playing Fields, as requested by the Council. The Clerk will provide an update when available.
3. Street Lighting – as requested by Councillor Cunningham the Clerk has investigated the best way to report multiple issues with the street lighting in Little Waltham. It has been confirmed that we need to identify each street light defect location, this can be by email (by identifying the location of the street light) or by using the online reporting system, which has a map.
4. The Clerk investigated the current account offered by Unity Bank, and the interest rates. Unity Bank only offer one current account, so the amount of interest is not variable. The Clerk also reviewed the interest rates for the Unity business savings account, these range from 2.77%-5.20% AER (Annual Equivalent Rate). However, many of the higher rate accounts require over £100k and the funds are tied in for set periods of time.
5. The Clerk has been investigating the best email solutions for the Parish Council with Myers Scott. This will be presented to the Council shortly for their consideration.
6. After numerous issues with the Christmas Tree, the Clerk has raised a formal complaint with The Good Elf. The Clerk is awaiting a response and has requested the formal complaints procedure, so this can be followed.
7. The Clerk has applied for the PO Box, so we should have the details shortly.
8. The allotment invoices have been delayed in order to use the PO Box address on the invoices. The invoices will be issued in January 2024, once the new address has been provided.
9. Please note the following items are currently on hold:
 - a. Rebranding of the Parish Council
 - b. To consider planters in the village and surrounding the village gates
 - i. To receive update on 20s plenty initiative and further signage
 - ii. To consider the installation of Speed Indicator Devices
 - c. To consider crime in the village
 - i. To consider installation of CCTV in the parish
10. The below items are to note as ongoing, but do not currently require any action by the Parish Council:

Item	Actions awaited	Date raised
Local Highway Panel – application for a crossing at Ash Tree Corner	Project for a refuge to cross the road in design phase which may include a filter land for Chelmer Avenue – awaiting funding	November 2019
Essex County Council Bus shelter project	The Parish Council has confirmed ownership status of the shelters and awaiting licence documentation	December 2020
Local Highway Panel applications	Applications for restrictions in the village centre – awaiting response regarding the Origin and Destination survey carried out in January 2023.	April 2021
Byway 51	Essex County Council extended the partial closure order until 15 April 2024	August 2021
Glebe Field Right of Way	Application for right of way to be added to the definitive map. Essex County Council have been directed to determine the Parish Council's application before 12 October 2024 by the Planning Inspectorate.	September 2021
Registration of the Memorial Hall with HM Land Registry	Await confirmation regarding the site plan from the Memorial Hall and confirmation in writing.	November 2021

24/07: New planning applications

- 24/07.1 23/01787/FUL - Field North of Montpelier Farm, Main Road, Little Waltham - Erection of an Integrated Retirement Community (Use Class C2) comprising; a Village Care Centre, 58 bedroom care home, 45 care suites (comprising one and two bedrooms), 100 care apartments (comprising one and two bedrooms), wellness spa, open space and associated works including car parking, access, hard and soft landscaping and associated engineering works – Little Waltham Parish Council would like to protect the open spaces in our local area. However, if this area is to be developed, the Parish Council would support this style of development rather than residential housing. The Little Waltham Parish Council would like to ascertain how the developers would mitigate the extra pressure on local Doctors Surgeries. The Parish Council would also like consideration to be given to the local infrastructure and how this could be improved to manage this type of development.
- 24/07.2 23/01866/FUL - Silver Ash, Cranham Road, Little Waltham - Redevelopment of the existing site to provide 5 units consisting of B2 employment space with ancillary E(g) use and B8 open storage with associated parking, landscaping and infrastructure – no comments
- 24/07.3 23/01880/FUL - Glenroy House, Main Road, Little Waltham - Proposed replacement roof to existing single storey structure – no comments

24/08: Planning results for note

- 24/08.1 23/01508/LBC – 100 The Street, Little Waltham - Thermal upgrades of existing walls, roof and floor; replacement of non-original single glazing with low-profile double glazing; installation of solar PV array and heat pump; construction of an extension and Demolition of outbuildings – **Application permitted**
- 24/08.2 23/01507/FUL – 100 The Street, Little Waltham - Single storey side and rear extension, Installation of Solar PV Array and heat pump. Formation of access with the provision of off-street parking and associated landscaping work – **Application permitted**
- 24/08.3 23/05633/CAT - 29 - 31 The Street Little Waltham Chelmsford Essex - Fell Twisted Willow located at rear of property, tree has become too large for location – **no objection**
- 24/08.4 23/05629/CAT - Little Waltham Hall Brook Hill Little Waltham Chelmsford - Cypress Leylandii hedge on southern boundary - Reduce height by approx 6m - Reason: allow more light in to the gardens of both Little Waltham Hall and Hallfield House. It will also reduce the hedges to heights which will be easier to manage and less prone to wind damage – **no objection**
- 24/08.5 23/01646/FUL - Land South East Of Baileys Cottage Chatham Green Little Waltham Chelmsford - Retrospective application for the siting of a mobile home for use by agricultural workers in association with the keeping of animals – **Application permitted**

24/09: Financial Matters

- 24/09.1 Payments for approval

The following payments were approved by the Council:

		Net £	VAT £	Total £
Salaries and expenses	December 2023	1,321.93	0.00	1,321.93
HMRC	December 2023	194.19	0.00	194.19
Essex Pension Fund	August-December 2023	1,478.55	0.00	1,478.55
Seagrave Inspection Services	Inspection – November 2023	130.00	26.00	156.00

Little Waltham Memorial Hall	Room Hire Oct-Dec 2023	90.00	0.00	90.00
Councillor Cunningham	Expenses	55.00	0.00	55.00
Myers Scott Ltd	Website maintenance & storage	125.28	25.06	150.34
Motion	Professional Fees	2,250.00	450.00	2,700.00
St John Ambulance	Attendance at Christmas event	105.60	21.12	126.72
Mortimer Contracts Ltd	Fixing tennis net, invoice 2025	120.00	24.00	144.00

Payments made in accordance with the Meeting on 5 December 2023:

		Net £	VAT £	Total £
Michelle Harrison	Payment for PO Box	330.00	66.00	396.00
SLCC	Membership	189.00	0.00	189.00

24/09.2 Bank reconciliation statement

The Council **approved** the balance of the accounts as at 31 December 2023, Unity Current Account at £149,309.82 and the Unity Instant Access Saver Account at £2,456.01.

24/09.3 To approve Budget 2024/25

The Councillors discussed the Budget. The Councillors noted that there was an increase in training and personnel costs within the budget for 2024/25, which is due to increasing the working hours of the Clerk and to cover the required training for the newly appointed Councillor and Clerk. The Clerk will also be working towards the CiLCA qualification, as specified in the contract of employment.

The Councillors **approved** the Budget for 2024/25.

24/09.4 To agree and sign the Precept for Financial Year 2024/25

The Precept demand was **agreed** by the Council and signed by the Chairman and Clerk. It was agreed to submit the Precept demand to Chelmsford City Council in the amount of £55,352.00.

24/09.5 Update on accountancy packages

The Clerk attended an online meeting with Scribe to understand the packages that were available. The quotation provided was higher than the Clerk had expected, due to the level of precept and the set up costs. The Clerk felt that it was important to investigate all possible options and to contact the appointed internal auditor and the SLCC for advice as to the best practice for the size of the parish. The Clerk would report the options to the Council.

24/10: Administration and Personnel Matters

24/10.1 To consider payroll administration

The Council **approved** for the payroll administrator to deal with the submissions to the Essex Pension Fund at the rate of £15 per month, starting from the date the Clerk joined the pension scheme.

24/10.2 To consider Clerk's working hours

The Councillors noted that although the Clerk was contracted to 11 hours a week, it had been agreed for the Clerk to work additional hours in order to fulfil the role and complete the necessary work. The Clerk completes a timesheet, and the salary is agreed by the Council at meetings prior to payment.

The Clerk raised this issue as the hours worked had been considerably over the contracted amount of hours. Partly due to being a new role, training, organisation of the Christmas event, preparing the budget and the production of the magazine.

After much discussion it was agreed by the Councillors that the Clerk's weekly hours should be increased to 18-20 hours a week, and the Clerk should try to work within that set amount of time. However, the Council noted that if items arose and the Clerk needed to work additional hours to fulfil the role then overtime would be permitted, subject to the Clerk keeping a timesheet.

24/11: Memorial Hall

24/11.1 To consider parking issues related to the Memorial Hall

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting and minuted above.

24/11.2 To discuss registering the Memorial Hall

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting and minuted above.

24/12: Sub Committees

The Clerk confirmed that she was investigating the best way for the Council to run to meet their requirements. This may involve Committees, Sub Committees or Working Groups. The Clerk would be contacting EALC and SLCC for advice and to understand the best working practices. The Councillors agreed that this was the best course of action.

24/13: Correspondence received

The Councillors noted the correspondence received since the last meeting:

Essex Association of Local Councils

Weekly e-bulletin

The Playing Field

18/12/23 December 2023 Newsletter

DWD

07/12/23 Correction to the Beaulieu Delivery Development Update – November 2023

Mayors Office

18/12/23 News from the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Chelmsford 2023-2024

Other

01/12/23 Invite to ESO Roundtable

04/12/23 Email notification from National Parish Magazine Awards that the Parish Magazine came 28th out of 450 magazines.

04/12/23 Chelmsford City Council response to use of the Pavilion

08/12/23 National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury community newsletter, December 2023

Chelmsford City Council bulletins and updates, including Play in the Park

Memorial Hall regarding parking restrictions

CSW monthly newsletter

24/14: Pylons

24/14.1 To consider the use of banners in the area

The Council confirmed that they had requested for any banners that had been placed on highways to be removed. Two members of the public had contacted the Council to request banners which could be displayed on their

private property. The Council approved for two more large banners to be purchased, with the images of buses on. The Clerk would purchase the banners.

24/15: Pavilion and Recreational Areas

24/15.1 To consider the renewal of the park inspections contract

The Councillors discussed the park inspections and agreed to renew the contract with Seagrave Inspection Services Limited, as they had agreed to hold the prices for 2024 (£527 plus VAT), and this was a competitive quotation.

24/15.2 To consider Play in the Park events for Easter and Summer

The Councillors discussed the Play in the Park events. The Clerk reported that Parish Councils are only able to book entire days, at a cost of £300, and the extras are all additional costs. The Parish Council would also need to pay to hire the Memorial Hall for the day, to use the toilet facilities.

The Council discussed that these events were a real benefit to the community, however, needed to ensure that the Council remain within the budget. The Councillors thought that hosting one event in the summer holidays with some added extras, such as a bouncy castle, was the best option.

The Clerk advised that there may be some grants available, in order to run further events for the community, this would be investigated with the City Council and the Clerk would report back to the Council.

24/16: Parish Maintenance

24/16.1 To consider the pavement by the Glebe Field

The Clerk informed the Council that a resident had contacted the Clerk regarding an outstanding issue with the pavement by the Glebe Field which has been outstanding for 18 months. The Councillors agreed for Perspective Landscapes to remove the vegetation from the pavement, and approved the additional payment of £50 for these works.

The Councillors requested for a further quote to be obtained in order to carry out any additional works that were required in that area, including cutting the hedge and tidying up the area. The Clerk will request this information and report back to the Council.

24/16.2 To consider the frequency of litter picking during winter months

The Chairman informed the Council about the amount of additional litter in the village and along Back Lane. The frequency of litter picks change to monthly from November to April, instead of fortnightly.

The Councillors agreed that the litter picks frequency should be the same all year round. This will be addressed and amended when reviewing the maintenance contract, but for the remainder of the current contract this will be an additional extra. A quote will be obtained from Perspective Landscapes for this additional work and will be presented at the next meeting.

24/17: Traffic in the village

24/17.1 To receive update from the Traffic Consultant

The Councillors discussed the report from the Traffic Consultant. Councillor Kingham updated the Council and confirmed that a meeting would be held with the Traffic Consultant shortly. The Councillors will then meet with Councillor Steel, the engineer and the Traffic Consultant to try and move the situation forwards.

24/17.2 To consider the invoice from the Traffic Consultant

The Councillors discussed and **approved** the invoice from the Traffic Consultant.

24/18: Matters to be raised by members for the next agenda

Councillor Allen asked for pavement issues to be raised on the next agenda, and to understand how to report these issues.

The meeting closed at 9:10pm.