

12th December 2022

At a Meeting of Ashdon Parish Council held on Monday 12th December 2022 in the Baptist Schoolroom at 7.30pm.

Present.

Councillors Mike Elsey (Chairman), Mrs. Michelle Lee, John Moran, Mrs. Alice Olley and George Smith

Mr. David Green (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence had been received from Cllr. Martin Foley (ECC) and Cllr. James De Vries (UDC)

2. Public Representations

Mrs. Sue Smith Chairman of the Village Hall Committee put the following to Members:-

- i. Hall front door. This is not a fire door. When will the door be replaced? The Chairman already had this matter in hand.
- ii. Hedge cutting at the extension car park. The hedge had been cut and Mrs. Smith requested that the Parish Council should pay. Referring to the Chairman, the Clerk pointed out that, following legal advice sought on an earlier matter, the responsibility for the extension car park was with the land owner. Neither the Parish Council nor the Village Hall Committee have any jurisdiction over the car park nor its maintenance including the hedge. It was noted that the car park had been necessary to obtain planning permission for the hall extension and that for the past 30 years the Hall Committee had paid for the hedge to be cut. The Chairman asked why after 30 years the Hall Committee now expected the Parish Council to pay. Mrs Smith did not give a direct answer.

Following discussion Members concluded that, as a goodwill gesture, on this occasion, the Parish Council would pay the invoice but that this would not set a precedent.

- iii. Gutters. Mrs Smith said the gutters needed cleaning. This had been done previously by the hall maintenance person. (Action Clerk)
- iv. Disabled toilets. In answer to a question from Mrs. Smith as to when and where the revised disabled toilets would be installed the Chairman said that the architect had been appointed and that a decision as to the position of the toilets would be taken at this meeting and then plans drawn up and costs determined. It was noted that the Village Hall Committee would be able to apply for grants towards the project.

The Clerk brought to Mrs. Smith's attention the following:-

- i. The disabled toilet was blocked not having been flushed and contained excrement. The person wishing to use the toilet had not been able to do so nor to wash their hands as there was no water.

- ii. there was no heating on in the small hall. Electric heaters had been donated and installed some years ago . They had a "frost stat" that is activated when the temperature drops. On several occasions it had been found that the mains switch had been switched off. The heaters had not been in use for many months as witnessed when council meetings were held in the hall. Without heating the hall would deteriorate and further problems would occur.

Mrs. Smith said she was unaware of either of the above matters but would have them rectified.

Mrs. Smith handed the Chairman a note from Mr. Stuart Hastie regarding legal matters as to the status of the hall and funds. Advice would be sought from the Village Halls Advisor at the RCCE.

3. Short address by Cllr. Martin Foley on County Council matters

Cllr. Foley had tendered his apologies. His report, and a subsequent report received after the meeting, were circulated to Members and held on file.

4. Short address by Cllr. James De Vries on District Council Matters.

There was no report from Cllr. De Vries. In Cllr. De Vries absence Cllr. Smith made the following report regarding the District Council finances:-

"The District Council identified earlier this year that there was a projected shortfall in the Councils budget of circa £3million by 2026-2027 and that this would likely result in a reduction in headcount of about 10% of the current workforce.

Inflation has pushed up UDC's expenditure. In addition, the Council's borrowing for it's commercial investments has been impacted by rising interest rates which has significantly reduced the investment income.

This leads to a projected deficit by 2027 of circa £5m. The council hopes that by selling one or two commercial assets we can reduced our borrowing costs and repayments by enough to increase income. This leaves the shortfall at £3m but the Council is facing a reduction in staff headcount in the region of 20-25% over the next few years. Clearly this will lead to drastic changes to the service provision that UDC offer.

Next years budget for the 2023-2024 financial year currently requires the use of £4m from reserves just to balance the budget. The Council has £12m in reserves so clearly such high levels of drawdown is not sustainable in the medium term".

5. Declaration of Interests

Cllr. Smith declared a non pecuniary interest in that he is a District Councillor and may attend District Council meetings where planning applications are discussed.

Cllr. Mrs. Olley declared a non pecuniary interest in UTT/22/2972/FUL. Erection of a single storey building to be used as a village store to the rear of the Rose and Crown, in that she is a personal friend of the applicant.

6. Minutes.

Resolved - that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th November 2022, previously circulated, be approved (Cllr. Moran)

7. Matters Arising.

i. Playing Fields.

- a. Rectory Lane. Two further quotations for the replacement of the wooden structure on the zip wire had been requested one from Sovereign Play Equipment of Southend and a second from Peak Playgrounds of Chesterfield both of whom would only quote for a complete replacement of the zip wire which would cost over £10,000 +vat. Members recognised the reluctance of companies to quote for the replacement of the wooden structure only bearing in mind the safety measures, standards that they were required to meet and the insurance implications. In view of the aforementioned Members concluded that Fenland Leisure, as the original installers, be asked to replace the wooden structure as previously quoted.

Resolved - that an order be placed on Fenland Leisure to replace the wooden structure of the zip wire for the sum of £7,864.00 + vat. Work to be done when ground conditions allow, hopefully in the spring/Easter holidays to afford access through the school grounds. (Cllr. Smith)

- b. All Saints Playing Field Lease. The Chairman had contacted the PA to the CEO at the District Council to request a meeting regarding the lease, the play equipment and the affordable housing. He was waiting for a date.

ii Highways. Traffic Management.

- a. Spriggs Lane. Nothing to report
- b. Spoil Butlers Lane/Byrds Farm. Nothing to report.
- c. Speeding. Cllr Moran reported that he was waiting for the Local Highways Panel (LHP) report regarding 20mph limits in villages. It was understood that the LHP were seeking funding and that the Ashdon scheme was undergoing validation. Cllr. Foley had reported, and Cllr. Moran confirmed, that Essex County Council were considering carrying out trials of a 20mph limit in selected villages other than a blanket 20mph limit in villages across the county. Cllr. Moran would submit an application and attend the next full meeting of the County Council and put the point directly to the Cabinet Member for Highways that Ashdon be used as a trial village for such a scheme. It was considered that Ashdon was a prime site in that it had limited footways, a school in the centre of the village and blind bends which put pedestrians at risk and that it was very high on the list of priorities of the public in the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan. (Action Cllr. Moran)

Radwinter Road - Flooding and Road Gullies. Details of the blocked gully(s) outside Springfield had been forwarded to Cllr. Foley for action. The water flow had been checked by Affinity Water who had reported that it is not a water leak but water rising through the road surface due to the blocked gully. The whole drainage system needs investigating from

Goldstones to the village. Cllr. Moran will check the County Council Assets List to determine if all the drains are listed to ensure all are cleared Cllr. Foley would be requested to send an update of the drain clearance schedule. (Action Cllr. Moran/Clerk)

iii. Village Hall and White Horse House.

The Chairman reported that Prestige had started the installation of the new fire alarm system.. The work would take four days in the hall and a further four days in White Horse House. Disruption to hall bookings would be kept to a minimum. The Chairman thanked Mrs. Moore, lettings secretary, for her cooperation in this matter.

New Disabled Toilet.

Resolved - that after consideration Members resolved unanimously that the architects be advised to go ahead with the plans for new disabled toilet facility in the lobby of the hall and to seek quotations on this basis. Bearing in mind that planning permission had already been granted this would avoid added expense both in architect's fees and for permission to place them in the listed part of the hall. (Unanimous)

iv. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr. Smith reported that the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan had now been ratified and adopted by Uttlesford District Council and would be used as an aid to determining future planning applications. The Plan would require revising in two years time to ensure it was kept up to date.

v. Community Led Housing.

A meeting was being organised with Peter Holt, CEO of the District Council. Date to be advised.

vi. Neighbourhood Watch. Progressing

vii. Planting of a Jubilee Oak at the "Fir" trees, Walden Road. In hand with Mr. Everitt

viii. Commemoration of the Centenary of Ashdon Meteorite 9th March 2023.

Plans were well in hand for March. A very good article had appeared in the autumn edition of the Saffron Walden Historical Society magazine.

ix. Defribulator at Village Hall.

Change over to the original updated unit scheduled for Tuesday 13th December

x. Coronation of H.M. King Charles III.

Cllr. Mrs. Lee reported that a small group to organise events had been put together and arrangements were progressing well with all manner of events including a Coronation Quiz and a Fete at the school playing field. A preliminary budget had been prepared.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

Various emails distributed to Members. Members had been requested to raise any matters received by email under Correspondence.

- i. RCCE Countryside Voice. Autumn/Winter Edition
- ii. email dated 5th December from Peter Holt, UDC CEO. re Uttlesford Rangers,. Withdrawal of funding from the County Council and seeking the opinion of parishes as to whether to continue the service and the funding required to do so.

Resolved;- that the Parish Council the fund the Rangers for one year only at a cost of £711, £1.00 for each person on the electoral register. To be reviewed in late 2023. A list of possible jobs would be prepared by Members

9. NEW ITEMS.

- i. Dates of meetings for 2023. All meetings are on Mondays in the Baptist Schoolroom commencing at 7.30pm.

9th January, 20th February, 27th March (Annual Parish meeting followed by Parish Council), 15th May (Annual Parish Council meeting following elections), 12th June, 24th July, 21st August, 25th September, 6th November and 11th December.

10. NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

- i. UTT/22/2972/FUL. Erection of detached single storey building to be used as a Village Store
Rose & Crown, Crown Hill

Support

- ii. UTT/22/3183/CLE. Stairs and a second level door were added in 2015 to the outside of an existing garage to be able to utilise the roof space for storage.
Woodstones Farm, New House Lane

No Comment

- iii. UTT/22/3234/FUL. Erection of private equestrian facilities
Saffron House. Redgates Lane.

No Objections. Should this application be approved Members request that a condition be added that ensures that change of use for use for commercial purposes would not be granted.

- iv. UTT/22/3316/HHF. Demolition of existing outbuildings. Erection of replacement outbuilding and Annexe
Little Mortimers, Water End

Object. Vehicular access would have a detrimental effect on the bridleway and on the protected verges in Spriggs Lane/Water End

- v. UTT/22/3391/TCA. Reduce height by approximately 5m, reduce remaining crown by up to 2m to balance shape 1 no. silver birch

The Beeches, Walden Road
No Comment

11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS DETERMINED. There were no determinations

APPEAL DECISIONS. There were no appeal decisions

12. FINANCE.

- i. Budget 2023/24. The Clerk presented the draft budget for 2023/24 following consultation with the Chairman. Members would consider the budget and revert to the meeting on the 9th January 2023 when the precept would be set. It was noted that the Grass Cutting Contract currently with MD Landscapes (Anglia) of Finchingfield was due for review in March 2023. It was the opinion of Members that they are getting value for money and that the current contractor provides an excellent service. The contract would, therefore, be renewed for a further three years from March 2023 at an annual sum of £5,750.00 and increase of 5% over the current rate.
(Action Clerk)
- ii. Accounts for payment. The Accounts, Appendix i. were passed for payment (Cllr. Elsey)

13. Items for the Next Agenda. There were no "Items for the Next Agenda"

The meeting concluded at 10.00pm.

Signed Chairman

Date

Appendix i

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MONDAY 12th DECEMBER 2022 7th NOVEMBER 2022 to 12th DECEMBER 2022

Monies Received.	£	
UDC. Neighbourhood Plan grant for printing	941.00	D.C.
Paintin interment re Keith Williams	55.00	100343
Peasgood & Skeates. Headstone re David Roberts	110.00	100344

Invoices for Payment

Poppy Appeal. Wreaths & crosses S137	100.00	Ch.No. 102780
MD Landscapes. Steventon End/Opp Museum	154.80	Ch.No. 102781
EALC. Charles Arnold Baker	148.50	Ch.No. 102782
D. Green. Ink cartridges	80.68	Ch.No. 102783
AWF Trees. Village Christmas tree S137	130.00	Ch.No. 102784
NPower. Electricity Account. October	27.55	Ch.No. 102785
D. Green. Stamps	10.88	Ch.No. 102786
Haward Horological. Fit new gearbox to school clock	400.00	Ch.No. 102787
D. Green. Telephone/Broadband	20.13	Ch.No. 102788
D. Green. Diaries	3.98	Ch.No. 102789
D. Green. Plug Christmas Lights	3.00	Ch.No. 102790
SLCC. Annual subscription	112.00	Ch.No. 102791

Balances at Bank on 12th December 2022:-

Current Account:-	£1,710.81
Saver Account:-	£1,072.37
Saver Account:-	£82,561.37