

LITTLE EASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting (AGM) held on Wednesday 20th May 2015 at 8.00pm in the Memorial Hall

Present: Sue Gilbert (Chairman), Chris Audritt, Doug Wyatt, John Freeman (UDC), Jackie Deane (Clerk) and 5 members of the public.

Cllr John Freeman introduced himself as one of the 2 newly elected district councillors for the enlarged Thaxted Ward.

1. **Annual Election of Chairman** – Chris Audritt was proposed by D Wyatt, seconded by S Gilbert and duly elected. He made his declaration of acceptance of office and thanked Sue Gilbert for her hard work as Chairman over the past 4 years.
2. **Co-option of Councillors** – Eileen McKendry-Gray and Chris Hindley were co-opted onto the council.
3. **Annual Election of Vice Chairman** – Doug Wyatt was proposed by Chris Audritt, seconded by Sue Gilbert and duly elected.
4. **Apologies for absence and declarations of interest** on agenda items. Apologies were received from Cllrs Martin Foley (UDC) and Simon Walsh (ECC). There were no declarations of interest on agenda items, other than planning (see below).
5. **Minutes of the last meeting** - Minutes of the last Annual Parish Assembly were signed by the Chairman as a true record. Minutes of the last parish council meeting were also signed.
6. **Public Forum** – Jayne Paul held a coffee morning to raise funds for a defibrillator. Added to previous donations, approximately £1,750 has been raised towards the target of £2,000 and is in account held by the Community Heartbeat Trust. Cllr Freeman suggested that a grant could be made from the UDC new homes bonus. Ms Paul agreed to inform the Clerk of the final cost for the defibrillator, cabinet and ongoing costs for pads, batteries and electricity.
Chris Hindley reported that talks with the village hall over the grant for the roof and VAT are ongoing.
7. **Representatives and committees:**
 - Footpaths** – Eileen McKendry-Gray - Annual walk of paths and investigating any reports of obstructions or other queries. Contacting landowners, wherever possible, and reporting back to the next meeting or the Clerk if urgent. All footpaths and the parish boundary can be viewed on the Essex County Council website.
 - Village Hall** – Chris Audritt and Doug Wyatt - becoming trustees and attending their meetings. Reporting back to the next meeting and making representations at their meetings on behalf of the Parish Council when required.
 - Gardens of Easton Lodge** – Sue Gilbert - Attending meetings and updating the PC on relevant matters and their fundraising activities.
 - Trees and open spaces** – Sue Gilbert - fortnightly inspections of the play equipment and inspection of trees as required. Liaising with groundsman (Nigel Holden) over regular grounds maintenance and items identified at the annual playground inspection.
 - Planning** – Chris Audritt - circulating hard copies of all except major planning applications, as required, and checking for feedback from immediate neighbours whenever possible.
 - Finance** – Chris Hindley - overseeing the procedure for managing the financial affairs,

reviews in February and October with the Clerk/RFO to include insurance, risk assessment, budgets, Clerk's pay and financial agreements. Only one rep is needed until the Council changes to online banking.

Gravel Pit – Chris Hindley and Chris Audritt - attending annual meetings and site visit in September, keeping the council, landowners and residents updated on any matters advised during the year and passing on any questions or concerns to the County Council. Additional meetings can be arranged with the County Council if required.

Airport – Eileen McKendry-Gray - attending quarterly SSE Parish meetings and passing on any updates.

Website editor – Councillors agreed to accept the offer of help from Mr Peter Bright of Manor Road to edit all website content and suggest additional items.

Charities (including Alexia Wilson Trust representative) – Chris Audritt - keeping up to date on the local charities and reporting any fundraising or other news. Making recommendations for donations to them (usually at the end of the financial year).

Staffing committee – Sue Gilbert, Eileen McKendry-Gray and Doug Wyatt agreed to have an initial meeting to form a sub-committee of 2. The sub-committee would be a point of contact for the Clerk on any staffing matter and would review clerk's employment and salary in October.

8. **Contracts and agreements:**

Hall rental - In January 2015, the Parish Council agreed to pay a nominal £10 hall rental for meetings and £80 was paid to the Memorial Hall Committee for the 8 meetings planned for the year.

Village Hall – annual rent £25, paid in January

Gate behind the hall – annual rent £25 is currently being offset by R Board having the village beacon on his land.

Cricket Club 10-year agreement and grass cutting costs – May 2007-2017 which stipulates that half of the annual grass cutting costs will be reimbursed by the Club.

Street light maintenance contract – A&J Lighting, Sept 2013 to 31st Aug 2018 is £230pa

Electricity for street lights – unmetered tariff with E-ON

Grass cutting – MD Landscapes on agreed price per cut, no contracted terms

Grounds maintenance – SNH Garden Services – ongoing with no contract and managed by the Clerk up to a monthly limit of £200 without referral

Website and annual maintenance – The website was set up in 2014 by Activ Web Design – an annual fee of £150 will commence in 2015

Tree maintenance for 2015 – Works agreed £1,960 have been completed. Nothing planned for 2016 and this will be reviewed in October, with the risk assessment.

9. **Clerk's report** – The Memorial Hall has a restriction on sale registered at Land Registry after being identified by the Parish Council as an asset of community value. Over 1,500 assets have been listed nationally as assets of community value (community centres, parks or facilities for children, and privately owned facilities such as pubs and shops considered to be valuable for the wellbeing of communities) under the Right to Bid legislation.

Forthcoming meeting dates and training courses have been circulated, as has an update on Stansted Airport from Stop Stansted Expansion.

Further correspondence has been received from a Manor Road resident, with matters that have been reported over the past 2 years. Contact details have been given for the relevant authorities regarding speed limits, signs, bridleways and community policing.

The resident does not wish correspondence to be passed on to these authorities. The resident feels that there is unfinished business with the Parish Council and disagrees with certain decisions taken in the past. It was suggested that the cost of filling in holes in the bridleway has resulted in the increase of traffic speeds.

The resident wishes for leaves from trees in the recreation ground to be cleared away from his own property by the Parish Council. The Clerk has responded to say that there is no leaf clearance in Manor Road but they are cleared annually from land that the Parish Council has responsibility to maintain.

10. **Planning** - Eileen McKendry-Gray declared a non-pecuniary interest as she lives in a neighbouring property and Sue Gilbert declared a pecuniary interest her business.

UTT/15/0189 HHF - The Tower House, Easton Lodge, garage/annexe – no objection.

11. **Finance:**

- 1) Clerk's annual finance report - attached
- 2) External audit – All statements on the Annual Return were agreed and signed by the Chairman.
- 3) Insurance – Renewal on 1st June – It was agreed to renew with Aon.
- 4) Monthly payments: Alexia Wilson Trust £25, Gardens of Easton Lodge £25, The Five Parishes £50, Pleshey Tree Services £336, Eon £21.83, Aon UK Ltd £814.87, J Deane £333.57

12. **Items for the next agenda** – annual rent for gate behind the village hall; quotes for rear fence behind the war memorial; quotes for concrete base below the basketball net, update on speed limit reduction request; setting up a working group for considering a neighbourhood plan.

13. **Date of the next AGM** - Date of next Annual Parish Council Meeting (AGM) – Wednesday, 25th May 2016 at 8.00pm in the Memorial Hall. The calendar of 2015/16 meetings was agreed.

14. **Date of the next meeting of the Council** - Wednesday, 8th July at 8pm, a week earlier than previously advertised. An alternative venue will be arranged if the hall is closed for work on the roof.

Meeting closed at 9.50pm