

LITTLE EASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 23rd October 2013 at 8pm in the Memorial Hall

Present: Sue Gilbert (Chairman), J Willson, Roger Board, Rob Boulton, Janina Jones, Jackie Deane (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Walsh and Smith and Mrs Shirley Holden. There were no declarations of interest on agenda items.
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. **Public Forum** – Two members of the public raised concerns about the speed limit and lack of visible signage for the recreation ground on Manor Road. There were safety concerns for children playing and crossing the road. The Council was asked if it makes recommendations over the use of Manor Road and signage on the road. A resident commented that residents had not been consulted about the content of the agreement between the Cricket Club and the Parish Council over their use of the playing field and pavilion. The Clerk will respond in writing regarding the Cricket Club and follow up highways enquiries. Nigel Holden reported that the play area is shaded from lime trees and the safety surfaces had become slippery as a result. He has cleaned the surfaces and also put down sand so that they are safe to use. In his opinion, the shade caused by lime trees within the enclosed area is causing the problem.
4. **Tree works** on recreation ground – quotations were received for works over the next 2 years, with a budget having been set aside. A quotation was approved for immediate work of £1,445 + VAT and £1,960 during 2014-15. A further quote should be requested for the removal of a lime tree in the centre of the play area, for consideration at the next meeting, along with work to the fence and play surfaces.
5. **Budget items for 2014-15** – Budget heading were discussed and a draft report will be presented at the next meeting, including additional ideas given by councillors for spending in the next financial year.
6. **Highways** –The Clerk had been advised by the County Council that the 60mph stretch of road between Mill End and Duck Street did not meet the criteria for a reduction in the speed limit but an application would be given consideration if a good case were put forward.

ECC Highways are to take over the new NW Bypass by 29th January 2014 and will do a safety audit shortly before the opening, carried out by an independent inspector. The ECC engineer working on the project has advised that no further works will be carried prior to the opening of the development, other than anything identified by the inspector. If an application to the Local Highways Panel is an option, councillors were advised to consider what improvement might be made or identify the main safety issue for the junction with the B184.

Initial action points for this and for the Mill End link with Duck Street were discussed. It was agreed that the Council should apply to the Local Area Panel to have the speed limit reduced but first put an item in the parish magazine to ask residents if they had experienced or seen accidents on that stretch of road and also at the junction with the B184 and roundabout. The Council would then be able to consider taking forward concerns over safety at both locations.

7. **Children's Xmas Party** – Village Hall has been booked and advertised in the parish magazine for Sunday, 8th December, 3 - 5pm for children up to 12 years. It was decided to ask a local caterer to provide the buffet and refreshments at the Children's Christmas Party. S Gilbert would not be there on the day but helpers have come forward to help S Holden and leaflets will be distributed in the village.
8. **Representatives' reports** – S Gilbert will attend the Memorial Service on 10th November and later lay the Parish Council wreath on the war memorial. J Jones reported a healthy income for the Memorial Hall and that a sub-committee has been set up to look at grants for the hall roof. The next fundraiser is a quiz night on 15th November. The Committee is discussing options for an agreement with the Cricket Club which might involve seeking legal advice. S Gilbert reported damage to one of the picnic benches and the Clerk was asked to check with the Cricket Club before looking into repairing it. S Gilbert reported that nothing more had been done about the trip hazard created by the water meter on the edge of the recreation ground. R Board asked that N Holden help him with the distribution of the salt, which has been received from the County Council.
9. **Clerk's report and correspondence** – The District Council has advised that a new councillor can be co-opted as soon as possible. N Holden has been asked to include work to the slippery play surface in the play area, and the Clerk will seek advice on alternatives, for discussion at the next meeting. N Holden has also been asked to give an estimate and worse-case scenario for replacing some of the fence around the play area. This will also be discussed at the next meeting.

Correspondence has been received from the Cricket Club, following their attendance at the last meeting. Several actions have been resolved at their meeting in response to residents' complaints.

The Clerk intends to follow up the water meter safety issue with the Cricket Club and the water company. Two Lt Easton residents spoke at the Planning Committee Meeting to object to the proposed location of a youth shelter in relation to UTT/13/1663/DFO.
10. **Planning - UTT/13/2107/OP**, an outline application with all matters reserved, for up to 790 homes, including primary school, community buildings, open space including playing fields and allotments and associated infrastructure and associated development West of Woodside Way, Gt Dunmow. The developer had consulted the Parish Council at the pre-planning stage there is no objection in principle to the development of the GD1 site. Lt Easton priorities should be reiterated and an objection to the current application should be submitted as there have been objections from ecological consultees. Concerns should also be raised that the road should be adequate for the extra traffic generated from this application.

Highwood Quarry - **ESS/52/13/UTT** - Request to amend condition 67 of ESS/65/06/UTT (to allow crushing of inert waste) and retrospective application **ESS/51/13/UTT** to extend Bund 7 located on the northern boundary by 19m to the north – no initial comment but any comment from councillors to be advised before the 7th November deadline.

Planning Committee Meeting Decision –**UTT/13/1663/DFO** - Woodlands Park Sector 4 – approved with conditions, including those relating to the proposed youth shelter.
11. **Finance** – The external audit has been completed with no recommendations for the Council. An additional cost of £30 has been discussed with R Board and is to be queried on their feedback form as a copy of the advertisement of audit was not initially requested. As finance representative, R Board reviewed the account reconciliation, budget 2012-13, clerk salary scale and contract, payroll and expenses.

Last month's cheque to Post Office for HMRC was re-written to amend the amount from £281.80 to 296.70 to include NI for July.

Balance on 1st October was £24,495.03

Cheques agreed: J Deane £468.60, UALC £25, PKF Littlejohn (external audit) £276, CPRE £29, A&J Lighting Solutions £23.10, E-ON 21.83, MDL £156.00, SNH Garden Services £144.00. J Deane £468.60

12. **Items for the next agenda** – Co-option of a councillor, Memorial Hall if legal advice is to be considered, budget and precept, highways, playground safety surface trees and fence.
13. **Next meeting** – Wednesday, 11th December 2013 at 8pm in the Memorial Hall
End of Public Meeting
14. **Annual review of Clerk's Salary** – An updated employment contract was agreed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk. It was agreed that there would be no change in hours but the Clerk's salary should increase by one increment to SCP 25, effective 1st January 2014.

Meeting closed at 9.35pm