

Little Easton Parish Council



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Minutes of the **Little Easton Parish Annual Council Meeting** held at the **Memorial Hall** on **Wednesday 26 May 2021**
AT 7PM

Present: Cllr Dodsley Cllr Fowell Cllr Hindley Cllr Keefe Cllr Rodwell Cllr Sidgwick
Dist Cllr Tayler
04 members of the public

21/19 APPOINT CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2021-2022
Cllr Sarah Sidgwick was duly elected to serve for the year 2021-2022 with unanimous agreement

SIGN ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE
Duly completed and signed

21/20	<p>APPOINT REPRESENTATIVE FOR YEAR 2021-2022 WAR MEMORIAL - Cllr Sarah Keefe MEMORIAL HALL – To Be Advised PLAY AREA – Cllr Rebecca Fowell and Cllr Sarah Keefe PARISH MAINTENANCE – Cllr Rebecca Fowell PLANNING LOCAL AND NP – Cllr Sarah Sidgwick GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE – Cllr Katy Rodwell COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES – Cllr Sarah Keefe STANSTED AIRPORT – To Be Advised HIGHWOODS QUARRY – To Be Advised FOOTPATHS & HIGHWAYS – Cllr Rebecca Fowell</p>
21/21	<p>NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE County Cllr Martin Foley sent his apologies due to County related matters</p>
21/22	<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING None declared</p>
21/23	<p>APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 APRIL 2021 RESOLUTION – Approve the minutes as an accurate record: Proposed Cllr Hindley, Seconded Cllr Fowell – unanimous agreement</p>
21/24	<p>UTT/21/1495/FUL PROPOSAL: Erection of 44 residential units and 3 commercial units (flexible space); inclusion of 3 additional plots for self-build homes; together with associated access, carparking and landscaping LOCATION: Land East Of The Stag Inn Duck Street UTT/21/1495/FUL Erection of 44 residential units and 3 commercial units (flexible space); inclusion of 3 additional plots for self-build homes; together with associated access,</p>

[carparking and landscaping | Land East Of The Stag Inn Duck Street Little Easton Essex \(uttlesford.gov.uk\)](http://uttlesford.gov.uk)

Comment date- 04 June

- Cllr Chris Hindley highlighted this proposal is very similar to the application made and rejected in 2015.
- Noted there had been overwhelming residents objection to the proposals.
- Noted UDC has not got a 5 year sustainable housing supply.
- Observation shared – Clarification is required as to the power supply routing and method for the development.
- The document produced by the group “Keep Little Easton Little” is a comprehensive, recommended read.
- Postal comments can be sent to UDC Planning department if online submission is not available or desired method of commenting.

See formal response at **APPENDIX A**

21/25

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Members of the public may raise questions about and comment on items on the Agenda OR of import. Session is limited to 15 minutes (3 minutes per person with no repetition of a previous question)

None presented

21/26

RECEIVE THE DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Dist Cllr Mike Tayler:-

- Fully support objection to the application - **UTT/21/1495/FUL**
- Concern expressed for a comment on the aforementioned application on council letter-headed paper.
- Local Plan progressing, public engagement and comments have been good.
- Any future market town proposals would first have to address the wholly inadequate infrastructure which currently renders such a suggestion as unsustainable.
- Cllr Tayler wished Cllr Sidgwick well in her role as Chairman of the PC.

Cllr Tayler left the meeting

21/27

RECEIVE CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

Tree Warden position is being advertised as the parish three year tree condition survey needs completing this year.

Green Homes grants available from ECC up to £10,000, this is an old initiative which is drawing to a close at end of June, details circulated to members, placed on the website and social media, conditions apply.

Cllr Fowell advised the office of a resident’s observation that a river course may have been diverted along Duck Street, several photographs have been submitted to the Flooding team at Essex who are planning a site visit to inspect further, they have concerns about the drainage along the section of Duck Street which has been submitted to Highways six times in the recent past.

The ECC food provision initiative supporting families most in need as a result of the pandemic continues until the end of June, they are allocating up to £15 per food parcel and seeking details and numbers from towns and villages with such families who would benefit from such support.

	<p>The proposals for the development on the land east of the Stag PH has attracted interest from residents, thus far the office has received 70 objections and 0 in favour of the proposals, out of a registered voting population of 356 people</p> <p>I have thus far received via my letterbox 45 Responses to the Village Development Survey.</p> <p>Members have received various communications from the District and County Council plus other bodies who support this sector, the remainder of the items are covered by this Agenda, so back to you Chairman</p>
21/28	<p>FINANCE – RECEIVE STATEMENT & AGREE PAYMENTS – APPOINT AUTHORISER RESOLUTION – Approve the Finance statement: Proposed Cllr Katy Rodwell, Seconded Cllr Sarah Sidgwick - Unanimous agreement</p> <p>Authoriser - Cllr Dodsley APPENDIX B</p>
21/29	<p>CONSIDER THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN Little Easton PC AND THE Memorial Hall Management Committee – AGREE NEXT ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Need to appoint new members to the MHMC. ➤ Confusion highlighted include responsibilities of the parish council and the Memorial Hall Trustees as defined in the 1996 agreement, eg the Charity Commission adopting responsibility for the land and Hall; there are a number of issues that need clarifying. ➤ Car park operation remains an issue. ➤ Cricket Club agreement due for renewal this year. ➤ A resident is completing a full review of the historical documents and due to submit a paper to the PC outlining their content along with some suggestions to consider for the future direction of the relationship between the PC and the MHMC.
21/30	<p>PLANNING – REVIEW AND COMMENT ON ANY CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS</p> <p>UTT/21/1517/HHF PROPOSAL: Proposed single storey and first floor side extensions LOCATION: Bramley Beech Mill End UTT/21/1517/HHF Proposed single storey and first floor side extensions Bramley Beech Mill End Little Easton Dunmow Essex CM6 2JB (uttlesford.gov.uk) Comment date – 04 June NO OBJECTION</p>
21/31	<p>CONSIDER ADOPTION OF THE LOCAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE – PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED TO MEMBERS RESOLUTION – Approve the adoption of the Advisory Committee Terms of Reference: Proposed Cllr Rebecca Fowell, Seconded Cllr Sarah Sidgwick- Unanimous agreement.</p>
21/32	<p>AGREE STAFF PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR 2021-22 AND APPOINT TWO COUNCILLORS TO COMPLETE THAT TASK RESOLUTION – Approve the appointment of Cllr Sarah Keefe and Cllr Sarah Sidgwick to complete the staff performance review and to agree a date and location for that meeting.</p>
21/33	<p>RECEIVE UPDATE ON PLACEMENT OF ONE LITTER BIN ADJACENT TO DOG BIN ON LAUNDRY LANE BRIDLEWAY – Cllr Hindley Affixing bin to the post agreed by land owner, Parish Maintenance contractor to be instructed to fix the bin to the post. RESOLUTION – Approve purchase of the litter bin at £95+ from the Litter Bin company: Proposed Cllr Chris Hindley, Seconded Cllr Sarah Sidgwick – Unanimous agreement. CLERK to ACTION</p>

<p>21/34</p>	<p>COMMENT ON THE RISK ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT PROVIDED BY THE MHMC CONCERNING THE IMPACT ON VEHICLE MOVEMENTS ALONG MANOR ROAD AS A RESULT OF THE GATE CLOSURE TIMINGS</p> <p>Council agreed it was a reasonable suggestion within the document produced by the MHMC to place a sign on the gate and that the suggestion of “automating” the gate operation seemed a positive progression.</p> <p>Council received an overview of automated gate component choice(s) and operation along with suggestions on default state(s) in times of failure.</p> <p>Specification to be drafted to enable quotations to be sought for supply and installation.</p>
<p>21/35</p>	<p>CONSIDER ADOPTION OF DRAFT GDPR POLICY – CIRCULATED TO MEMBERS RESOLUTION – Approve GDPR policy adoption : Proposed Cllr Andy Dodsley, Seconded Cllr Chris Hindley – Unanimous agreement.</p> <p>CLERK to place Policy on the website</p>
<p>21/36</p>	<p>REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS</p> <p>WAR MEMORIAL – Cllr Keefe Contractor visited site, awaiting quote for cleaning and restoration works.</p> <p>MEMORIAL HALL – Cllr Hindley Covered in item 21/34.</p> <p>21/35(i)- RECEIVE UPDATE ON PROPOSALS FOR ELECTRIFYING THE GATE Specification required to enable going out to tender.</p> <p>PLAY AREA – Cllr Fowell & Cllr Keefe Equipment painting progressed, goals to be inspected.</p> <p>PARISH MAINTENANCE – Cllr Hindley Contractor working through the maintenance schedule for the year. Cllr Keefe to circulate report from site meeting at Manor Rd to consider any action to be taken on playingfield/PROW boundary; item to be discussed at next PC meeting.</p> <p>PLANNING LOCAL AND NP – Cllr Dodsley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Local Plan leadership group have met. ❖ Easton Park comments appear repeatedly in the Stakeholder Forums(s) comments, It has been identified that Uttlesford is in need of a Country Park and that Easton Park could be that site. ❖ The Call for Sites has now closed with Easton Park put forward as a Country Park. ❖ The Regulation 18 process should commence early next year. ❖ Neighbourhood Plan survey circulated to the community, closes 31 May, residents urged to comment. <p>GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE – Cllr Fowell Additional open days planned for 2021.</p> <p>COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES – Cllr Keefe No responses to article placed in 5Parishes magazine, combined social event proposed for September.</p> <p>STANSTED AIRPORT – Cllr Rodwell No meetings to date – NEWSFLASH – Airport owners won their appeal and had their costs awarded.</p> <p>HIGHWOODS QUARRY – Cllr Hindley No meetings to date, Cllr Sarah Sidgwick to adopt responsibility as Representative.</p> <p>FOOTPATHS & HIGHWAYS – Cllr Fowell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Play area sign repaired at entrance to Manor Road. ❖ Airfield FP sign fallen, to be reported to Highways. ❖ Other repair noticed reported to Highways.

21/37	DISCUSS PLAY AREA FENCE REPLACEMENT PROJECT FOR 2021-2022 – AGREE NEXT ACTION Site meeting arranged with one contractor, two further contractors to confirm their offers, prior to appraisal and selection at PC meeting.
21/38	ITEMS OF REPORT OR FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA OR IN 5P MAGAZINE Question of weight limit on the bridge in Park Road through the ponds, assessment of status/ownership; resident with experience of such matters to advise the Clerk of wording to submit to Highways. Cllrs Andy Dodsley and Chris Hindley confirmed their retirement from the council and would be formally submitting their resignations to the office and fellow members. Council vacancies to be added to 5P magazine.
21/39	DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S) – COUNCIL MEETING 30 JUNE 2021 – 7pm – CLOSE – 8:55pm

Signed.....Date.....

APPENDIX A

Planning Application: UTT/21/1495/FUL - Land East of The Stag Inn, Duck Street, Little Easton

Erection of 44 residential units and 3 commercial units (flexible space); inclusion of 3 additional plots for self-build homes; together with associated access, car parking and landscaping.

Little Easton Parish Council (LEPC) have reviewed the above planning application and wish to register their formal objection to the proposed development. LEPC have received more than 70 responses from village residents objecting to the proposals and no responses in favour of the proposed development. The council also notes that at the time of writing there are 23 resident objections logged on the UDC planning portal.

HISTORY OF THE SITE

The site, which is outside the Little Easton Village development boundary, has a previous history of planning applications and development proposals. In 2015 the site was put forward as a potential development site for 65-75 homes in the UDC call for sites process for the Local Plan. The findings on the suitability of the site for development are detailed on page 272 (reference 03 LT EAS 15) in the AECOM Sustainability Appraisal for the UDC Local Plan dated December 2018. The site was rejected from the call for sites process with the reason given by UDC being ***“The site is considered unsuitable as development on this site would not contribute to sustainable patterns of development.”***

Later in 2015, an application for Outline Planning permission was submitted for 65 houses on the site (UTT/15/2069/OP). The parish council objected to the proposal and more than 90 letters of objection were submitted by residents. The application was refused by UDC on the following grounds:

- The proposal would represent an unsustainable form of residential development at this isolated and exposed rural location outside the development limits of Little Easton.
- The site has poor connectivity with adjacent settlements and there would be a dependency upon the car by residents of the development to travel to work and to use essential local services such as health and education given that the site is poorly served by public transport.
- The proposal would result in an unsatisfactory urban expansion of the settlement that would erode into the open countryside creating a large expansive development which does not relate to the settlement thereby having an environmental impact.
- The proposed development fails to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined within the National Planning Policy Framework.

OBJECTIONS TO CURRENT APPLICATION – UTT/21/1495/FUL

Character & Landscape Objections

The site is outside the Little Easton Development Boundary is therefore considered to be within the countryside. The site sits within the Upper Chelmer River Valley as defined in the Chris Blandford Associates Assessment Report (2006) which assessed the landscape character has having a relatively high sensitivity to change. LEPC objects to the application on the following character and landscape grounds:

- The proposal will significantly affect the character of the site and the surrounding area. It is at odds with the existing linear settlement pattern and the scale of the development is disproportionate to the existing settlement (a 24% increase on the existing 195 houses).
- The development will significantly intrude into the valley and will be visible in views from Duck Street and the public footpath network.
- The site contributes significantly to the rural quality and character of the area around Little Easton and this will be substantially eroded if the development proceeds. The development will give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the countryside which are not mitigated by any realistic scheme benefits.
- The proposal is contrary to the core principles of the NPPF which aim to conserve and enhance the natural environment and to recognise the intrinsic character of the countryside.

Access and Transport Objections

A range of potential transport benefits and solutions are proposed in the application. LEPC would note the following for use in the assessment of the application:

- Little Easton is very poorly served by public transport. New residents would be dependent upon cars to travel to work and to use essential local services such as health and education.
- The only bus service serving the village (313) is an infrequent bus service with just 2-3 services per day that only operate outside of peak hours of travel. There is no direct service to a railway station and a peak time journey to a railway station would take over an hour by bus. This fact is not mentioned in the application. Also, the DaRT2 bus service does not meet the needs of residents in the village and is rarely, if ever used by residents.
- It is highly unlikely that a “Car Club” would be a viable proposition for a village the size of Little Easton. No operational details of such a scheme are included with the application and the parish council are sceptical that such a scheme will ever acquire sufficient critical mass to make it viable. It is far more likely that new residents will use their allocation of 90+ parking spaces to park their private cars which will be frequently used to access needed services and facilities away from the village, resulting in a dramatic increase in traffic through the village.

- The parish council regularly receive complaints about street parking along Duck Street near The Stag public house. The parking makes driving through the village dangerous and forces pedestrians to walk out in the road around the parked cars putting them at increased risk of being hit by passing cars. The reduction in parking availability at The Stag public house due to the planning proposal and the increase in car numbers is likely to make this situation worse for residents, cyclists and pedestrians.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIONS

Economic Benefit

There is little in the way of local amenities and services in Little Easton, limited to the public house, village hall and cricket pitch/play area and the site itself is significantly isolated. There is also limited connectivity to larger nearby towns by way of public transport. Future occupiers would therefore be heavily dependent on the use of motor vehicles to access essential facilities and services further afield. This would conflict with any environmental approach of what constitutes a sustainable development.

There is minimal opportunity for employment in the village, with the only commercial enterprises being the small privately-run public house and a local wedding venue. The proposed commercial units would only offer very limited employment opportunities for the existing or future residents and so would not provide any significant economic benefit to the village. The suggested uses of the units (i.e. dog groomers, yoga or an ethical beauty salon) are unlikely to have any impact on the long term sustainability of the village. As a result, the development does not satisfy the economic dimension of sustainability in the NPPF.

Social Benefit

Given the isolation of the application site and its limited public transport connectivity to other larger villages and towns, most trips would start with the use of a motor vehicle. It is therefore considered that the future residents would be dependent upon the wider community for their health, social and cultural well-being as well as for employment opportunities. The parish council are of the opinion that the proposal does not adequately meet the needs of present and future generations and would not satisfy the social dimension of sustainability as set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

Environmental Benefit

The NPPF identifies this dimension as contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural built and historic environment including improvements to biodiversity and minimising waste. Little Easton is a linear settlement that sits on the ridge above the Chelmer Valley with houses aligned close to Duck Street. The only notable intrusion down towards the valley is the small number of houses in Butchers Pasture. The proposed development would be a significant intrusion into the valley that does not relate to the existing village or the wider surrounding area and would result in an urban expansion of the settlement of Little Easton into the open countryside creating a large expansive development which does not relate to the existing settlement. This neither protects or enhances the built, historic or natural environments of the village.

Although some attempts have been made in the current application to address the sustainability issues identified in the previous refusal, such as more sustainable design and construction proposals, LEPC consider that the application proposes a development which is not sustainable and that the substantial harm that would be afforded by the development outweighs any benefits from the proposal when assessed against the NPPF. As a result, there can be no presumption in favour of sustainable development as advised by the NPPF.

FLOOD RISK OBJECTIONS

Although the Flood Risk Assessment confirms that the majority of the Site is not located within Flood Zones 2 or 3 as defined by the Environmental Agency it is located within the Chelmer Valley and immediately adjacent to an area designated as Flood Zone 2 & 3 (which includes part of the Site). The assessment notes the fishing lakes/reservoirs and water channels within the village of Little Easton that flow into the River Chelmer via the Site. It is worth noting that the single access point to the site is within the corridor of “High Risk Flooding” as detailed on page 13 of the assessment – section 3.1.12, figure 3.3. This will be a potential issue for access to and from the site.

The River Chelmer frequently floods in and around the village and in recent years, the village has increasingly suffered from serious and frequent flooding. During periods of even moderately heavy rainfall, the village becomes inaccessible as a result of flooding along Duck Street and at the junction of Mill End with Dunmow Road and the ford in Great Easton.

As the flooding cuts residents off from accessing or leaving the village, the parish council has had to negotiate with private landowners in and around Easton Park to provide a “Flood Route” that directs traffic away from Duck Street and Mill End across Easton Park and the A120, and exiting/entering on the Stortford Road in Little Canfield. This situation is worsening every year and the flood route was needed during the Winter of 2020/21.

It is also interesting to note that the Flood Assessment has a caveat excluding the insurability of properties at flood risk, recommending that developers proposing developments in areas that may be at risk of flooding contact the Association of British Insurers to ascertain policy rules on flood insurance. Many insurers have a policy question asking whether a home is within 200 metres of a river and it is also noteworthy that a significant proportion of the proposed site is within 200 metres of the river Chelmer.

Pictures of flooding within the village are contained in Appendix A on the following page.

Appendix A – Pictures of Little Easton Village Flooding



Figure 1
Flooding at Mill End Duck Street



Figure 2
Flooding at Stables adjacent to proposed site



Figure 3
Flooding at Elmbridge Mill, Mill End

APPENDIX B

LEPC May 2021 Finance Statement											
Precept	27,355							Budget	Net Ex Diff +/-		
								27,355	2,743	-24,612	
Date	Supplier	Description	Invoice	FPO/DD	Min Ref	Rec	Credit	Debit	VAT	Net	Centre
Opening Balance							43,672.39	0.00		0.00	
06/05/2021	UDC	NP expenses	NP 0001	BGC			9.98				Income
12/05/2021	Activ Web	Web services	Inv 5161	DD				42.00	7.00	35.00	Web
17/05/2021	A&J Lighting	Lighting maintenance	Inv 35140	DD				24.30	4.05	20.25	Lighting
18/05/2021	Haven Power	Electricity	Inv 9351/935	DD				46.23	2.20	44.03	Utility
	MDL	Grass cutting	Inv 63	FPO				156.00	26.00	130.00	Grass
	Steve's Services	Strim and watering	Inv 0421	FPO				150.00	0.00	150.00	Maintenance
	Wicksteed	Paint	Inv 813684	FPO				36.60	6.10	30.50	Play area
	Polymax - IB	Safety matting	Inv 4165795	FPO				196.20	32.70	163.50	Maintenance
	A&J Lighting	Annual repairs	Inv 35176	FPO				259.56	43.26	216.3	Lighting
	Zoom - AD	Subscription	Inv67060	FPO				14.39	2.40	11.99	Subs
	M&B Printers - PB	NP Printing expense	Inv 15677	FPO				290.00	0.00	290.00	NP
	Employee	Expenses	N/A	FPO				6.75	0.00	6.75	Admin
	Employee	WFH	N/A	S/O				26.00	0.00	26.00	Admin
	Employee	Salary	PAYE	FPO				356.55	0.00	356.55	Clerk
	Amazon - AD	NP Labels	Inv 35394	FPO				5.79	0.97	4.82	Admin
May							43,682.37	1,610.37	124.68	1,485.69	
Opening Balance	JUNE						42,072.00				