

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Cottered Parish Council held
Monday 18th May, 2009
7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall**

Present: Bryan Pitman (Chair)
David Charles
Lesley Greensmith
Terry McGrath
Brian Murchie
Derek Newman

The Clerk and 8 members of the public

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| | | Action |
| 1. | Chairman. Bryan Pitman was proposed by David Charles, seconded by Terry McGrath and elected unanimously | |
| 2. | Vice-Chair. Terry McGrath was proposed by David Charles, seconded by Derek Newman and elected unanimously | |
| 3. | Apologies there were no apologies for absence. | |
| 4. | The minutes of the meeting held on 16 th March 2009, having been circulated, were approved as a correct record. | |
| 5. | Chairman's report. | |
| | (i) Outstanding Highways issues including the bend at the top of Warren Lane where erosion of the curb has left it in a dangerous state to be referred again to highways. | Clerk |
| | (ii) Highlights from the Chief Constable's 4 year plan include a target to attend all emergencies within 15 minutes, even in the country, home crime was up by 30% but the latest figure is showing a downward trend by 10%, only 1 in 5 crimes is detected, arrests are running at 31,000 a year, Hertfordshire Constabulary employs 4,000 people and they have new facilities at Stevenage and Hatfield. More information will be available on www.hertspa.org | |
| | (iii) Bungalow owner (Toppesfield) in Brook End has cleared an area of village green outside the property and is asking that grass cutting be extended to the cleared area. Following an inspection of the site, the uneven surface would at the moment prevent grass cutting across the cleared area. Clerk to contact Grass Cutters to give them prior notice that this area should be included on their area to be cut, but only after it is suitable flattened. Chairman to inform owner of Toppesfield of the decision and seek solution to uneven ground. | Clerk
Chair |
| | (iv) The Chairman was approached by a resident of Parkside, situated the other side of the A10 on the northern edge of Buntingford but within the Parish of Cottered, regarding proposals by EHDC to designate 3 potential Gypsy/Traveller sites within close proximity to Parkside and in an area which it is understood that the travellers themselves don't want to be. The Meeting agreed that support should be given to the residents' of Parkside in their objections to these sites being put forward. The Chairman has already informed Jane Pitman and Jim Ranger and proposes to raise the issue again at the Annual Parish Meeting on the 19 th May. | Chair |
| 6. | Annual Reviews | |
| | (i) Financial regulations. The regulations were reviewed and no changes made. | |
| | (ii) Risk assessments. The schedule of risk assessments was reviewed and changes accepted. | |
| | (iii) Register of assets. Reviewed and agreed with the addition of the Telephone Kiosk. | |
| | (iv) Insurance cover. Reviewed and agreed with the addition of the Telephone Kiosk. | |

Action
Clerk

The Clerk to check the cost of insuring the telephone kiosk for all risks or impact only.

- (v) **Litter picker’s salary.** This was increased to £1,462.97 p.a., £121.91 per month, as per amount received from EHDC.
- (vi) **Clerk’s salary.** A one point (15 to 16 or 20pence per hour) increase bringing the hourly rate to £8.438 was agreed.

7. **Finances.** At the end of April, the balance of the Parish Council current account was £3632.97 and the interest bearing account at the end of March was £5,288.06, the statement for April not yet received.

The year end budget report was accepted.

The annual return and annual governance statement were reviewed, approved and signed.

A Parish Trust financial statement for 2008/09 was reviewed during the internal audit as required by feedback from the 2007/8 audit.

The following cheques were approved and signed:

534	SLCC	£50.00	WWYC Training
535	HAPTC	£352.06	Membership fee
536	Allianz	£848.48	Insurance
537	Cottered Village Hall	£40.00	Hire of hall May meetings
538	E Hayden	£121.91	litter picking May
539	E Haydon	£121.91	litter picking June
540	J Diales	£309.85	Salary & expenses April & May

8. **Planning**

No planning applications have been received since the last meeting

The following decision has been notified:

- (i) **Lordship Farm** Steel portal building (18.288mx9.144m) to replace existing lean-to building – Granted.
- (ii) The application relating to **land at Stocking Hill Lane**, alteration of double garages to 2 no. dwellings to single garages with residential accommodation, etc. to which the Parish Council objected, has not yet been decided. This will be dealt with at the 10th June Planning meeting

Information on the Planning Department’s “call for sites” which invites nomination of potential development sites in the District has been included as an article in the Parish Magazine.

9. **Clerk’s report.**

- (i) Traffic improvement Schemes: **VA sign:** the electricity supply is in place leaving only the installation and commissioning of the sign itself. The road marking element of the overall proposal to be implemented as part of the forthcoming road resurfacing scheme and the remaining measures, double height kerb and bollards to prevent vehicular access behind the newly installed kerbs, is due to be carried out later in the Summer. Concerns were raised that the double yellow line needed to extend further down The Crescent. The Clerk to make enquiries with Highways whether this is an option.
- (ii) **BT Adopt a Kiosk Scheme** the sale of the telephone kiosk in Brook End is complete and the equipment has been removed. A requirement of the sale was that the responsibility for the electricity supply was taken over by the Parish. The annual cost of the unmetered supply is likely to be £40-£50 per year and to have the electricity supply removed is likely to cost between £400 and £500. As the light in the kiosk is helpful to residents, the electricity supply to remain. BT have provided a maintenance guide.
- (iii) The District Council intends to make changes to its **refuse collection and recycling**

Clerk

Action

services and would like to send an officer to one of our Parish Council meetings between July & October to talk about the proposed changes. It was agreed to ask for an officer to attend timed to follow publicity in the Parish Magazine.

- (iv) **Public Sector Duties:** The Equality and Human Rights Commission has written to local authorities reminding them of their duties under the forthcoming Equality Bill.
- (v) **East Herts Citizens Advice Service** has written requesting funding for the current year. Council agreed to contribute a small grant, exact amount to be decided at the next meeting but conditional on the Buntingford bureau staying open.
- (vi) **CPRE** are holding an LDF (Local Development Framework) training session at Knebworth Village Hall on Saturday 13th June at as cost of £10 for the 1st delegate. It was agreed that the Clerk should attend.
- (vii) **Clerk Training:** (HAPTC) are running a Finance for councils training session on the 23 September at Woolmer Green Village Hall at a cost of £25 per delegate. The meeting agreed that the Clerk should attend.

Publications received and available to Councillors include:

Hertfordshire Guide to Growth-2021 How should the county grow?

Parliamentary Debates for Wednesday 13 May 2009 which includes the transcript of a debate lead by Oliver Heald on "Protection of River Habitat"

CPRE Newsletter for May 2009

CDA for Herts newsletter

Countryside Voice

HAPTC newsletters

The Clerk May 2009

10. **Other matters**

- (i) Brian Murchie reported that a hedge had been cut down along the Throcking Road near the water tower. The matter had been reported to the Police.
- (ii) Lesley Greensmith reported that a new entrance had been cut in the hedge and a gate put in along Burymead Lane. The Clerk to check with Planning whether this is permitted.

Clerk

Derek Newman reported that the Football Club has taken on the mowing of the playing field, previously done by the Cricket Club, and had asked for help with the cost of buying diesel. Derek was asked to find out how much this is likely to cost per year.

Derek

- (iii) The owner of Cheynes Lodge asked for help with clearing the litter along the grass verge from Cheynes Lodge going towards Walkern. As this is a narrow twisty lane it would be dangerous for individuals on foot without protection to attempt this. The Clerk to see if Highways are able to offer assistance and failing help from Highways, talk to Environmental Services.

Clerk

- (iv) It was also noted that large lorries are using the B1037 between Cottered and Cromer and not helped by an "unsuitable for heavy vehicles sign" at the Cromer end of Cromer Heath.

- (v) Bags of rubbish left at the top of The Crescent and outside garage No. 12. Lesley will check if either has been cleared away before the Clerk contacts the Refuge collection people to have them taken away.

Clerk

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm and was followed by an open session.

Dates of next meetings: Monday 13th July 2009