

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF COTTERED PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN COTTERED VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 10 JANUARY 2012 AT 7.30 PM

Present Bryan Pitman (Chair) Terry McGrath
David Charles Brian Murchie
John Harwood-Bee Francis Ridley

Officer attending Jane Pitman (Hertfordshire County Councillor - Chairman)
Marty Kilby

Present: 8 members of the public.

APOLOGIES

11.77 No Councillors. Mr Roger Gomm apologised (Parish Paths)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

11.78 None

MINUTES OF MEETING

11.79 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8 November 2011 were before the meeting. The minutes were signed as a correct record.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

11.80 **28th November** - Francis Ridley reports that metal tube structure supporting the cricket club practice netting on the Recreation Ground is beginning to fall down and hence is a potential safety hazard. The Chairman inspects the structure and verifies Francis's concerns.
3rd December - A working party consisting of Kevin Pepper, David Charles and Bryan Pitman demolish the cricket practice netting structure, clear and make safe the surrounding area on the Recreation Ground.
7th December - Councillors held informal meeting to review documentation relative to the Greens and the Recreation Ground.
13th December - The chairman attaches warning notices to the children's play equipment regarding dog fouling fines.
19th December - Chairman removes fallen branches blocking pavement near Paddock Wells.
5th January - The high winds cause a tree to be blown down across the footpath on the Recreation Ground. The chairman cuts up the fallen tree into manageable, transportable and burnable sizes in anticipation that parishioners will complete the final clearance task.
7th January - Vice Chairman and Chairman put up two dog fouling signs, one at the entrance of the Recreation Ground at the beginning of FP 7, the other at the beginning of FP 30, near the old Police House.
Litter Picking - The litter picker hoped to resume duties within the next few weeks.
Waste Bins - Most bins have broken or missing bottoms and needed replacing. Brian Murchie might be able to provide plastic replacements.
Leaves - Noted that if possible the leaves should be collected from the Greens in Autumn.

HIGHWAYS**11.81 Highways Locality Budget Funding**

The Chairman welcomed County Councillor Jane Pitman, who gave a presentation explaining the roll out of Highway locality budgets. In essence this meant that for the trial scheme period County Councillors would have £90k to spend in their area from the overall Highway budget. This was suggested to be spend in two phases – one of £60-£65k for capital type works, and the remainder for minor works, reacting to requests. Cllr Jane Pitman was thanked for her presentation and advice. The entrance to the Girl Guides building at the junction with the A507 Baldock Road was discussed and Jane Pitman asked that details be sent to her.

11.82 Girls Guides Entrance junction A507 Baldock Road

A small area of entrance pathway had several large potholes. This part of the entrance fell between the pavement on either side and it was suggested this fell within the jurisdiction of Highways. Highways Authority disputed this and have declined to fund the works. Agreed clerk to pass details to County Councillor Jane Pitman and request that these repairs be considered under the HLB funding.

PLANNING**11.83 Planning Schedule**

The updated planning schedule is an appendix to these minutes.

11.84 Park N Load, Buttermilk Farm, Buntingford

Noted that the application had been granted permission. One of the conditions was that works to the splay entrance from the A507 would be carried out, including landscaping.

11.85 Mayville, Cottered

East Herts Planning enforcement had visited the site and had contacted the owners. Agreed that Parish Council request to be involved in the discussions.

RIGHTS OF WAY

11.86 Footpath 45

The history of the problems relating to Footpath 45 were related from 1950 when the original walk was wrongly reported. In the 1980s the Court found in the landowner's favour that the footpath was not a designated path. In the 1990s the Rambler Association wanted to re-open the matter and divert the footpath. The Parish Council's view is that a diversion is not appropriate because the footpath technically and legally does not exist.

The Definitive Map Team Leader was invited to a meeting but has replied saying they have no money to divert the footpath and therefore a meeting would not be productive

Resolved: The Definitive Map Team Leader be again invited to a meeting with Parish Councillors when the matter can be fully discussed. Clerk to explain again that the discussion is because a diversion is not appropriate because the footpath technically and legally does not exist.

11.87 Parish Paths Partnership

Roger Gomm was unable to attend the meeting and this would be an agenda item at the next Council meeting.

FINANCE

11.88 Financial Report

The financial report was before the Council and noted.

11.89 Payments Authorised

618	Clerk	£372.93	Clerk salary and expenses Dec/Jan
619	Village Hall	£15	January meeting
620	Stewart Bullard & Son	£2,170.14	2011 Grasscutting

11.90 EHDC New Homes Bonus

Noted that for the coming year Cottered would not be eligible for a new homes bonus.

11.91 Budget

The budget had been discussed at the November meeting. There being no other items to add it was agreed that the Precept Demand would be £6,000 for the coming year – unchanged from 2011-2012. The Precept Demand was duly signed.

11.92 Auditors

The internal and external auditors had approved the Annual Return for year ended 2010-2011 and the Annual Return was approved and accepted.

CLERK'S REPORT

11.93 The Clerk's report was before the Council and the correspondence noted. The report is an appendix to the minutes.

The Herts Police Draft Strategic Policing Plan was noted, and no comments were added.

The Throcking Lane ditch had been cleared at the lower ends. Francis Ridley was concerned that the drainage had not been cleared under the road and will send details to the Clerk so she can raise this with Highways.

RECREATION GROUND FENCE

11.94 Councillors had held an informal meeting to ascertain what documentation is held by the Parish relating to the fence and ditch. John Harwood-Bee had spoken with Mr and Mrs Lawton (owners of 1 Home Close whose land shared the boundary being discussed).

Mr and Mrs Lawton being present, it was

Resolved to suspend Standing Orders and invite Mr and Mrs Lawton to join in the discussions.

A full discussion took place with the concerns of all parish councillors and Mr and Mrs Lawton being discussed. During the discussion it was agreed that the Land Registry plan was correct, but agreement was not reached on whether accurate measurements could be taken from this plan. It was noted that the Land Registry plan showed a straight line boundary from Flint Cottage along the line of the whole of the Recreation Ground, without a T junction kink at the boundary of Home Close land and the adjoining grazing field.

Resolved: Mr and Mrs Lawton agreed to request their surveyor to write and explain why, when a straight line was shown on the Land Registry plan, he had measured the area and shown a right angle in the fence line. After this, it would possibly be necessary to have a meeting on site with the surveyor.

Mr and Mrs Lawton were thanked for joining in the discussions and the Parish Council resumed Standing Orders.

OTHER BUSINESS NOT PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

11.95 **Warren Lane**

There was a large pothole near the entrance to Toppesfield. Agreed to discuss this under the Recreation Ground Trust meeting which would follow.

11.96 **Stocking Hill**

Noted that EHC was not going to enforce the condition imposed on the Stocking Hill development that only people 50 years and over could purchase the properties. District Cllr Jim Ranger was discussing this with EHC Planning.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 13 March 2012 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm and was followed by an open session.

Signed _____

Date _____

OPEN SESSION

1. Recreation Ground Fence: Parishioners were divided on this question, with one stating that nothing should be done to remove boundary. Another expressed concern that children will be forced to use the main road to get to the playing field, and that the Recreation Ground itself was surrounded by ditches on all sides and, apart from this one disputed short stretch, all other ditches belonged to the Parish Council – it seemed unrealistic to assume this one stretch of ditch did not have the same criteria as the remainder of the boundaries.

2. Planning applications - Parish Council were urged to continue to request paper versions of planning applications.

3. 39 The Crescent - complaint made that the hedge is growing over the path and Highways to be requested to arrange for cutting back. Clerk to again request that this be cut back.

The open session closed at 9.35 pm