

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF COTTERED PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN COTTERED VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2013 AT 7.30 PM**

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

Officer attending Marty Kilby  
Present: District Cllr Rosemary Cheswright; 22 members of the public.

**APOLOGIES**

12.149 None

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

12.140 Mr Jeff Hughes, Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services East Herts Council had written reminding councillors of the requirement to register any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, and of all the requirements relating to the disclosure. The content of his letter was formally reported. Councillors had received a copy of the letter and noted the contents. The information was noted.

12.141 There were no declarations of interest on items on the agenda.

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

12.147 The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2013 were before the meeting. There was a query on minute 12.144 on whether it had been reported to the meeting that Cllr Ridley and Cllr Harwood-Bee were under instructions from Mr Drinkwater to ask Cllr Pitman to leave the Council Chamber when the matter of the boundary between the Parish Council Recreation Ground land and 1 Home Close was discussed, and it was asked that the minutes not be signed until the audio recording of the 8 January meeting had been checked. Subsequently at the end of the meeting, the electronic recording was played and it was agreed the minutes were appropriate and were then signed as a correct record.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

12.148 Mr Smith from the Crescent has continued his efforts to reduce the speed of traffic and is now requesting that Cottered write to the authorities seeking further help.

The tree surgeon that is to undertake work on three trees on the green has obtained the necessary permission of EHDC. However EHDC require a replacement tree be planted near the telephone box and in order to save money the Parish Councillors have agreed to plant this themselves.

Many tenants of Peasecroft have contacted the Chairman following instructions they have received from the Housing Association, telling them to move out of the garages by the 31<sup>st</sup> March. The Chairman contacted Cllr Jim Ranger and EHDC's senior planning officer to seek further information.

On the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> March the Chairman attended a EHDC "workshop" concerned with Localism and Standards. Each Councillor is to receive access to a standards "tool kit" in the form of a manual.

The Chairman is scheduled to attend the forthcoming Mayville planning appeal being held at Hertford. Noted that Cllr Jim Ranger will also be speaking to support the refusal against retrospective planning permission

**FINANCE****12.149 Finance Report and Payments Authorised**

The finance report was before the meeting, together with a statement of the bank holdings. The authorised payments were:

|     |                              |          |                                      |
|-----|------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 651 | CPM Playgrounds              | £282     | Swing chains                         |
| 652 | M Kilby                      | £475.90  | Clerk invoice and expenses Feb/March |
| 653 | Society Local Council Clerks | £63.00   | 2013 subscription                    |
| 654 | NFU Mutual                   | ££140.72 | Tractor insurance                    |

**12.150 Grasscutting**

Cllr Brian Murchie reported that the grass-cutting contract for Cottered & Throcking was due for renewal. Stewart Bullard & Son, the current contractors, have quoted for the renewal to the current specification of approximately 10 cuts per year, which for 2013 was a £55.88 increase on the previous year. Cllr Murchie to ask the contractors if at the end of the autumn season they could arrange to suck up the leaves on the greens. The clerk to send Cllr Murchie one of the new marked maps indicating the village green area in Cottered, which would help with queries about the area to be cut. It was proposed that the quotation from Stewart Bullard & Son be accepted, and this was unanimously agreed.

**Resolved:** The quotation for grasscutting from Stewart Bullard & Son emailed to Cllr Brian Murchie on 7 March 2013 for the years 2013-2015 inclusive be accepted.

## PLANNING

### 12.151 **Planning Schedule**

The updated planning schedule is an appendix to these minutes.

### 12.152 **Mayville, Cottered - E/11/0365/B**

The appeal against EHC enforcement action to remove unauthorised use of an extended barn to create a residential unit will be held on 26 March 2013 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford. Cllr Bryan Pitman will be attending and speaking to uphold the decision to remove the residential use of the extended barn. District Cllr Jim Ranger will also be attending and speaking in support of EHC decision.

### 12.153 **Garages site, Peasecroft, Cottered - 3/12/0241/FP**

This planning application for the demolition of garages and the erection of 2 semi-detached 3 bed houses had been refused and an appeal has been registered. Cottered Parish Council has objected to the application.

The Chairman reported that the garage users have been sent a letter requesting them to vacate their rented garages by 31 March. One garage user is reported as being told by the Housing Association that the garages are to be demolished regardless of the outcome of the appeal.

District Cllr Jim Ranger had contacted the Chairman and stated that if a land owner in Cottered Parish were to be persuaded to offer a small site suitable for building at least 2 social housing properties, EHDC would be prepared to purchase that site and release it to South Anglia Housing for building. Cllr Ranger suggested that South Anglia would then reconsider their decision to demolish the garages.

Councillors expressed concern that South Anglia Housing might take an offer of land at present, but would still in the future sell or develop the garages. Three councillors said they had been approached by a landowner with an offer of land.

### **It was unanimously resolved to suspend Standing Orders to invite members of the public to speak on the Peasecroft Garages planning application**

Parishioners asked if the Parish Council would take over responsibility for managing the garages. Parishioners said that the construction of the garages included low level asbestos and concerns were expressed about handling of any demolition. Unhappiness was expressed by parishioners that only one week's notice of withdrawal of tenancy had been given by South Anglia. There were many worries about the possibly future inability of fire engines or ambulances being able to access Peasecroft because of the inevitable increase in on-street parking.

### **The public session closed**

The Chairman asked that if people objected to the garage demolition it was essential that individual letters were written to the Planning Inspectorate expressing such objections.

The Chairman also reminded the meeting that a photograph was being schedule outside the garages on Thursday at 5.15 for those who objected hence to have a group photo which would be in the local newspaper.

**Resolved: That the Chairman liaise with Cllr Jim Ranger regarding progressing the pay off of building land so that the garage site can be saved. Further resolved that the Parish Council contact Health & Safety Executive, Hatfield, expressing the concerns about the low level asbestos content in the garage building material.**

### 12.154 **Elmville Stables, Throcking - 3/12/1411/FP**

#### **Change of use to single pitch Traveller Site including mobile home, touring caravan, stable block and hardstanding**

Noted that the informal hearing date of the appeal is 10.00 am on 10th April in Room 27, EH Council Offices, Wallfields, Hertford. Cottered Parish Council has asked if they can make a verbal statement of their objections.

## HIGHWAYS

### 12.155 **Speeding through Cottered**

A parishioner had written to the Parish Council about the continued concerns of speeding through Cottered, particularly on the bend outside The Crescent. Councillors fully agreed with the concerns expressed, but noted that traffic calming is not possible at this location. Agreed the Chairman would report back to the parishioner and to continue to seek advice on ways to reduce traffic speed.

### 12.156 **Additional Bus Shelter**

HCC had submitted proposals for the new shelter, which were acceptable. Thanks were expressed to Mrs Beryl Woodgate who had organised the petition asking for an additional bus shelter.

## RECREATION GROUND BOUNDARY

12.157 Land Registry had registered the Recreation Ground and the Village Hall land, and the relevant Title numbers are HD520223 (Recreation Ground) and HD522068 (Village Hall).

There followed a full discussion about whether the Parish Council should instruct a RICS surveyor (Templars) to visit the site and give a qualified opinion of where the boundary is

on the ground, so it can be marked. Two differing opinions were expressed, one that the boundary is clear from the Land Registry documents, that it clearly starts from the angled corner of Flint Cottage (which is on the Home Close side of the existing ditch) and that it runs in a straight line to and through the next field to a kink, and then on to the final boundary. As this is clear, it would be a misuse of public money to employ a surveyor. The second view was that to settle the current dispute the only certain way was to employ a surveyor as had been discussed before, and then mark the boundary on the land itself.

**Proposed:** Cllr Francis Ridley proposed and Cllr Harwood-Bee seconded, that Cottered Parish Council employ a RICS surveyor to visit the site and settle the boundary discussion. 4 or 5 posts would then be erected to mark the boundary on the site.

The voting was 3 in favour, and 3 against. The Chairman used his casting vote against the proposal.

**The motion failed.**

## RECREATION GROUND

### 12.158 **Rocking Horse, swing area, and swing rusting pole**

These repairs will be carried out when the weather improved.

### 12.159 **Road to the Petanque and Cricket Pavilion**

The track had many potholes, and Cllr David Charles would obtain a quotation for repair.

## STANDING ORDERS

12.160 The Standing Orders, with amendments, would be finalised and sent round to councillors for adoption at the next meeting

## RISK ASSESSMENTS

12.161 Cllr Harwood-Bee had prepared the risk assessments for the litter picking and asked that the Chairman and Clerk look through these before they are approved. The grasscutting ride on mower assessment was being prepared and will be brought to the next meeting.

## TREES

12.162 The Tree Preservation Order on 4 Cedar Trees at Cheynes Coach House had been received and was noted.

## CLERK'S REPORT

12.163 The Clerk's report was before the Council and the correspondence noted. Particular attention was drawn to the EHC Draft Statement of Community Involvement, on which comments had been requested. The Chairman would read and make any comments necessary.

## DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12.164 The date of the next meeting is:

|                            |         |                                      |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Tuesday 14 May 2013</b> | 7.00 pm | Annual meeting of the Parish Council |
|                            | 7.15 pm | Parish Council meeting               |
|                            | 8.00 pm | Annual Parish Meeting                |

Clerk to ask for reports from Village Organisations for the Annual Parish Meeting.

## OTHER BUSINESS

### 12.165 **Telephone Box**

Agreed Cllr David Charles would try and obtain the correct paint for the phone box, which Cllr Brian Murchie will arrange to be repainted.

### 12.166 **Throcking Road**

Noted that the ditch along the Throcking Road had been demolished by vehicles. This means that the water is washing down the road and breaking up the macadam highway surface. Clerk to ask Highways to clear the ditch.

## PUBLIC SESSION (Commenced at 9.45pm)

Concern was expressed about the road between the Church and Cheynes which had a very bad surface.

Discussion took place about a public path that runs along the edge of the brick wall of Flint Cottage and was marked by a stile, and concerns were raised that if a fence were erected along this boundary then this path could be lost. Parishioners asked that if volunteers could raise the cost of hiring a RICS surveyor, then would the Parish Council feel able to employ a surveyor on the Recreation Ground boundary measurement.

District Cllr Rose Cheswright introduced herself to the meeting and indicated she was standing for election as the local County Councillor vacancy which had come about due to the retirement of Jane Pitman. The election date was Thursday 22 May 2013. Parish Council will write a letter to County Cllr Jane Pitman thanking her for her 30 years of service to the local community.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_