

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF COTTERED PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN COTTERED VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 8 JANUARY 2013 AT 7.30 PM**

Present	Bryan Pitman (Chair) David Charles John Harwood-Bee	Terry McGrath Brian Murchie Francis Ridley
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Officer attending: Marty Kilby  
Present: 5 members of the public.

**APOLOGIES**

12.124 None

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

12.125 None

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

12.126 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2012 were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**12.127 November**

Mr Smith from The Crescent has continued his efforts to reduce the speed of traffic passing through Cottered. An exchange of correspondence between Mr Smith and Hertfordshire Highways is ongoing and Cllr Jane Pitman has been involved.

**12.128 December**

Two residents have reported separate dangerous trees to the Chairman and hence the just completed survey by a Tree Surgeon is timely. The Parish Council must now make decisions regarding the 140+ village trees. Although the majority of the trees stood on Village Trust land, the maintenance and any actions would initially be discussed under the budget item because of financial implications on the precept.

**12.129 13<sup>th</sup> December**

The Clerk, the Chairman, and Cllr Harwood-Bee all attended a presentation by Hertfordshire County Council, who gave details of important changes to the structure and organization of Hertfordshire Highways. The main change means that all practical maintenance work has been outsourced to Ringway, who has been appointed highways contractor for a 12 year contract. Hertfordshire Highways no longer exists as a Department within Hertfordshire County Council. At the meeting many Parish and Town Council representatives complained about the ineffectiveness of the on-line fault reporting system, and the complete lack of feedback relating to enquiries made either online or by telephone. There was no direct way offered of contacting any named person regarding any highway problems, except that the County Council person representing local councils (CC Jane Pitman in the case of Cottered) could be notified of problems and concerns.

**FINANCE**

**12.130 Finance Report and Payments Authorised**

The finance report was before the meeting, together with a budget comparison updated. The authorised payments were:

649	Village Hall	£15	January meeting
650	M Kilby	£387.30	Clerkinvoice and expenses Dec/Jan

**12.131 Budget 2013-2014**

Councillors had received budget suggestions at the November meeting. The costs relating to grasscutting and tree maintenance on Village Trust land were discussed and Cllr Harwood-Bee confirmed that the Charity Commission had been consulted and agreed that costs relating to the Village Trust could properly be taken from Village Trust finances. It was recognised that this money was finite and therefore would inevitably be depleted over time, leaving the Parish Council budget as the only source of income to maintain the Greens. However it would be a number of years before that stage was reached, giving the Parish Council time to consider different solutions for the future. It was felt paramount not to increase the precept this year because of the current unfavourable financial climate.

**Resolved:** £1,000 be requested to be transferred from Parish Trust funds for the current year to contribute towards the cost of cutting grass and maintaining the greens.

**Resolved:** £1,000 be requested to be transferred from Parish Trust funds for the 2013-2014 financial year to contribute towards the cost of cutting grass and maintaining the greens.

**Resolved:** The cost of tree work to the trees on the green be funded by the Parish Trust funds.

**Resolved:** The budget be adopted and the Precept for 2013-2014 be unchanged and remain at £6,000.

The above resolutions were unanimously agreed.

## PLANNING

### 12.132 Planning Schedule

The updated planning schedule is an appendix to these minutes.

### 12.133 Applications going to Appeal

Three planning applications that had been refused were being taken to appeal by the relative applicants. Cottered Parish Council had objected to all three applications and it was agreed that the Clerk be authorised to write to the Planning Inspectorate reiterating Cottered Parish Council's objections to the specific applications. The three applications are:

Mayville, Cottered. A letter of objection has already been sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

Elmville Stables, Throcking. A letter of objection had been sent to EHC and it was agreed that a similar letter be sent to the Planning Inspectorate immediately.

Stocking Hill, Cottered. A letter of objection had been sent to EHC and it was agreed that a similar letter be sent to the Planning Inspectorate when the appeal process was commenced.

## HIGHWAYS

### 12.134 Cottered Road, Throcking

No work had been done to repair the ruts on the Throcking Road. Under the new arrangements for repairing the highway it was not anticipated that any immediate action would be taken, however it was agreed the Clerk write to County Cllr David Andrews who, at the recent Highways Presentation evening, had expressed concern that feedback on problems was not taking place.

### 12.135 Salt Bins

HCC had written to say that Highways no longer provide additional highway grit bins, because of excessive demand. Grit bins can be purchased privately from Hertfordshire Business Supplies at a cost of £115-£140. These bins may not be placed on the highway and will not be refilled by Highways as part of their programme. In view of the comments it was agreed not to purchase a grit bin.

### 12.136 Additional Bus Shelter

HCC had said they will contact the Parish Council once they had detailed proposals.

### 12.137 Access to Guide Centre

Noted that the pot holes in the highway access to the Guide Centre were getting worse.

Highways dispute that this part of the highway falls within their jurisdiction, and the ownership of this area had not been resolved.

## RECREATION GROUND

### 12.138 Cradle Swing

Having examined the cradle swing in order to replace the chains, it was found that the swing connecting bars were broken and eroded. The cost of replacing the cradle swing is £105 plus VAT.

**Resolved:** That the cradle swing be replaced at the cost of £105 plus VAT

The bottom balance chain on the trim trail was missing. There was no risk or hazard involved in not replacing the chain. It was agreed not to replace this chain at the current time.

### 12.139 Swings and swing area

The tiles round the swings needed jet washing and Cllr Harwood-Bee would organise this when the ground conditions improved. The rusting on the pole above the flat seat swings would also be repaired by Cllr Harwood-Bee when the weather improved.

### 12.140 Rocking Horse

The part of the footboard that needed replacing on the rocking horse was at the very front and Cllr Harwood-Bee had received an offer from a parishioner to repair this later in the year.

## STANDING ORDERS

12.141 Draft standing orders had been circulated and will be discussed at the next meeting.

## RISK ASSESSMENTS

12.142 Cllr Harwood-Bee would bring these to the next meeting.

**RIGHTS OF WAY****12.143 Footpath 45**

Cllr Ridley had taken the complete file to County Hall and had it photocopied together with the Herts County file material, so the Parish now had a complete file for record purposes. The matter was progressing, but would take a long time, probably a matter of years.

**RECREATION GROUND BOUNDARY****12.144 Boundary between Recreation Ground and 1 Home Close**

The solicitors had still not received Land Registry papers for the Recreation Ground and the Clerk to pursue urgently with the solicitors.

Cllr Ridley and Cllr Harwood-Bee informed Council that they had had a private personal meeting with Mr Simon Drinkwater, EHC Director of Neighbourhood Services and Monitoring Officer. The two councillors stated that they had discussed the implications of the new Code of Conduct and that Simon Drinkwater had said in his opinion under the Code of Conduct Cllr Bryan Pitman should not take part in any discussions relating to the boundary dispute between the Parish Council Recreation Ground boundary and 1 Home Close. No record was available of what information had been given to Mr Drinkwater, nor of Mr Drinkwater's reply. No communication on this subject had been received from Simon Drinkwater by the Chairman. Cllr Ridley and Cllr Harwood-Bee informed Council that they 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. Furthermore failure by Cllr Pitman to comply with these instruction would be a criminal act which in an extreme case could result in a jail sentence. Cllr Pitman said he would take advice on this matter. Cllrs Ridley and Harwood-Bee further requested that Templars Surveyors be asked to carry out a survey of the boundary and give their opinion, as previously agreed. Council was reminded that it had later been agreed that Land Registry would be asked to register the land first.

**LAYBY ON A507 WEST OF COTTERED**

12.145 Hertfordshire Wildlife Sites Programme Manager had sent a report giving details of the plants growing on the A507 layby to the west of Cottered within the speed limit. They asked that the Parish Council agree to help maintain the wild plants existing on this site. Agreed to defer to the next meeting until local opinions obtained. Clerk to ask Hertfordshire Wildlife exactly what it was hoped that the Parish Council would do, and the implications on time and the parish budget.

**CLERK'S REPORT**

12.146 The Clerk's report was before the Council and the correspondence noted.

**DATES OF NEXT TWO MEETINGS**

The dates of the next two meetings are:

**Tuesday 19 March 2013** (noted that because of the Clerk's absence on leave in February and March, the agenda would be sent by 19 February and councillors to send to the clerk any items they wished on the agenda before that date).

<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

**OTHER BUSINESS****12.147 Recreation Ground**

Cllr Charles said the track to the cricket pavilion and the petanque area was badly potholed. To be discussed at the next meeting.

**12.148 Village Day Committee**

Cllr Harwood-Bee informed Council that the Village Day Committee would like to change the format of the Village Day meeting to include a dog show. Agreed that in this instance a dog show would be allowed to be held on the Recreation Ground. Organisers to ensure that apart from the actual show ring, dogs should be kept to the edges of the ground and any and all dog mess to be cleared immediately by the owners and organisers.

**PUBLIC SESSION** (Commenced at 9.10 pm)

Complaints were made about dog owners letting their dogs roam freely over farmland where public footpaths ran, rather than ensuring dogs were kept under control and to the right of way. Agreed that landowners be asked to contact the Defra Animal Health department at Chelmsford for help and the Parish Council ask the East Herts Dog Warden for advice.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_