

**MINUTES OF COTTERED AND THROCKING PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN COTTERED VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 14 JANUARY 2014 AT 7.30 PM**

Present: Bryan Pitman (Chair) Brian Murchie  
David Charles Francis Ridley  
Terry McGrath

Officer attending: Marty Kilby (clerk) 4 members of the public

**APOLOGIES**

13.107 John Harwood-Bee

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

13.108 None

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

13.109 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 November 2013 were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

13.110 **13th November** The chairman attended a small meeting in Buntingford concerning the Neighbourhood Plan at which he reported that Cottered Parish Council had voted to join the Buntingford scheme. Joining this scheme results in the need to appoint stakeholders to represent Cottered and Throcking parish. The chairman and councillors have approached various residents, to date three volunteers have come forward, the original intention was to find six.

**27th November** The chairman attended a presentation given by the Deputy Leader of Herts CC defining the financial challenges facing HCC. The government grant to HCC has been cut by 26% and HCC have to save another £149m during 2014. The Deputy Leader asked for suggestions from parish and town councils.

**28th November** Residents of Throcking expressed concern about the mud and general conditions of the road surfaces around their village. The chairman, together with a resident of Throcking, walked around the roads in that area and took photographs of the damaged roads and overall conditions. At that time it was understood that Throcking residents had already reported these matters to Hertfordshire Highways. On checking the Highways reporting website the chairman found this was so. He then rang Scott & Scott and requested they clean up the mud as it appeared to come from local fields.

**12th December** The clerk and chairman attended an EHDC planning presentation at which more details of the proposed District Plan emerged.

**17th December** Cottered councillors attended a meeting at Buntingford which had been requested by Buntingford councillors in order to discuss a possible new homes bonus which could be paid to Cottered if the proposed Pigeon development was approved. Cottered Parish Council concluded that it was too early to commit to any sort of possible agreement until such time as firm planning approval was obtained.

**6th January** The clerk noticed that EHDC had released more of its District Plan including the chapter covering villages. Cottered has lost its category 3 rating and now a group 2 village. *In group 2 villages, limited infilling (up to five dwellings on each site) and limited affordable housing for local community needs, together with small-scale employment, leisure, recreation and community facilities may be permitted.*

**10th January** As instructed at the last meeting the chairman continued the process of trying to bring pressure on authorities to improve road safety along the A507. Further to contacting Police Sergeant Wallace and the local CCIr Rose Cheswright, our MP Oliver Heald has just had a combined meeting with CCIrs Rose Cheswright, David Andrews, DCIIr Jim Ranger, and CC Highways officials.

**12th January** Three councillors attended a site meeting at Lordship Farm relating the new planning application for the Old Barn.

**FINANCE**

13.110 **Finance report and payments authorised**

The finance report was before the meeting. The authorised payments were:

689	M Kilby	£262.40	salary Dec-Jan
690	M Kilby	£24.40	expenses Dec-Jan
691	Cottered Village Hall	£15.00	January meeting

13.111 **Precept**

The precept was agreed.

**Resolved: that the precept for the financial year commencing 1 April 2014 be Seven thousand pounds (£7,000)**

13.112 **Internal auditor**

No replies had been received from the advert for a replacement internal auditor. Three possible internal auditors were mentioned. Mr K Street, Accountant in Buntingford; the internal auditor for Ardeley Parish Council; and Cllr Murchie said he would enquire of a person he knew. Clerk to ask if the Ardeley auditor would be available and Cllr Murchie to ask his contact. A final decision to be made at the March meeting.

**PLANNING**13.113 **Planning schedule**

The updated planning schedule is an appendix to these minutes.

13.114 **3/13/2065/FP - 1 The Crescent, Cottered**

Erection of 2 storey rear extension and erection of replacement porch. No objections.

13.115. **3/13/2230/FP - The Old Barn, Lordship Farm, Cottered**

Full permission for alteration of existing barn to dwelling.

A previous planning approval was in force for this barn and the current application was for additional and changed windows and doors and increasing the size from a 3 bedroom house to a 4 bedroom house.

**After a vote it was resolved to suspend standing orders and open the meeting to the public**

A neighbour to The Old Barn reported to the meeting that the current works were being carried out without permission and East Herts Council had said they were unable to stop the construction. It was said that the building was either a listed building or within the curtilage of a listed building and needed listed building consent. The developers have knocked bricks through an historic barn wall to create a new window in the south elevation near to the proposed sunken patio, the application shows excavations that could damage drainage as they cut across the route of existing sewers, and although the application said it was for a 4 bedroom house, concern was expressed that the downstairs study, with its neighbouring toilet facilities, might be used by owners as a fifth bedroom.. The plans were useless because they had no measurements shown. Pargetting and rendering is shown as being lost, the sunken patio will cut off front and back sewers from Lordship Farm and also takes up amenity space. Layout of both floors are changed and there is inadequate parking shown.

**Resolved to resume standing orders**

A full discussion took place. Councillors expressed concern about the new east facing window (on the elevation above the garage) which would overlook neighbouring property, the work being done to the patio area which could cause problems to the drainage on the whole site, the fact that work was being carried out before planning permission was obtained, and that permission should be obtained for all of the works because the site was in a conservation area.

Council agreed that the clerk should contact the planning officer in the first instance, and then the enforcement officer and CCllr Rose Cheswright to ascertain the exact situation, and find out why the work cannot be stopped before the application is determined. Cllr Bryan Pitman would contact DCllr Jim Ranger.

**Resolved: Cottered & Throcking Parish Council object to the application**

13.116 **East Herts District Plan**

The draft District Plan was on the EHC website. East Herts full Council would discuss the proposed draft plan on 29th January and then the plan would be issued to the entire district for a 12 week public consultation period. Cottered & Throcking had been designated a group 2 village and a plan of the village showing suggested development boundaries was part of the proposals. Some councillors thought the development boundary allowed no room for any development at all. It was recognised that EHC welcomed suggestions from the villages themselves to change and amend their local areas, and had encouraged villages to have individual neighbourhood plans. Agreed that the final suggested plan be put on the parish council website with a link to the full District Plan on the EHC website - this to be after EHC had finalised the suggestions on 29th January.

13.117 **Neighbourhood Plan**

As reported under Chairman's Report minute 13.109, a village meeting had voted to join with Buntingford in a joint neighbourhood plan. Three stakeholders to represent Cottered & Throcking

had volunteered, these being Messrs Neville Chuck, Andrew Fancy, and Roger Gomm. The next meeting with Buntingford was scheduled for 23 January and Cllr Bryan Pitman would also go along. Concern was expressed that the suggested village boundary allowed no room for expansion at all and it was recognised that the neighbourhood plan could propose an amended boundary.

**Resolved: Unanimously to approve the three stakeholders as the village representatives.**

#### 13.118 **Peasecroft/The Crescent parking**

The parking along this cul-de-sac often meant, particularly in the evenings, that the road was impassable and vehicle owners had to be asked to move cars so that larger vehicles such as refuse collection lorries could get through. A suggestion was made that staggered parking on either side of the road might help alleviate the problem and it was recognised that this would mean road markings to define parking spaces. Clerk to enquire from Highways and Cllr Rose Cheswright what the possibility was of having defined spaces. Cllr Bryan Pitman to contact Sgt Duncan Wallace and ask him to visit the area in the evening hours (when the most vehicles were parked) to see the extent of the problem.

#### 13.119 **1-4 Peasecroft**

It was understood that Circle Anglia had reconsidered moving out the residents of 1-4 Peasecroft so that building works could take place, and it was now thought that the remedial works could be carried out whilst the householders were in occupation.

### **HIGHWAYS**

#### 13.120 **Brook End drainage**

No update has yet been received from HCC Countryside Management.

#### 13.121 **Throcking Road**

Throcking Road, round the Church area, was covered with mud, ditches had been blocked or filled in, there were numerous potholes and broken edges to the highway, and the hedges had vanished. The majority of the damage appeared to have been caused by local farm work, but it was also recognised that when the A507 was closed because of accidents then traffic diverted round this road network which was simply not able to take the size and amount of vehicles.

Agreed that the Clerk ask Ringway to meet councillors on site. Also agreed to ask the Police that, when the A507 was shut, then a one way system be put in place with east bound traffic using the Cottered/Throcking route, and west bound traffic being diverted to Royston.

#### 13.122 **A507 Accidents**

North East Herts MP Oliver Heald, together with CCllrs Rose Cheswright and David Andrews, and DCllr Jim Ranger, met County Council Highway officers to make an inspection of the A507 between Buntingford and Cottered, and the A10 near Puckeridge. The two areas have seen a number of accidents recently including three fatal accidents on the A507 since January 2010 and a number of serious accidents on the same stretch. There has been a recent fatal accident on the A510 as a result of a deer strike.

Following the meeting there are to be works on the A507 to maintain and dress the road surface and further analysis about improved road signage and other safety measures. Regarding the A10, an enhanced programme of inspection of the deer fence has been approved, together with measures for speedy emergency works where fence gaps are discovered.

### **RECREATION GROUND**

#### 13.123 **Cricket Club**

The Cricket Club provided a copy of the current insurance for the pavilion and public liability.

Agreed Clerk to ask DCllr Jim Ranger if any funding was available for internal and external decoration and maintenance of the pavilion.

#### 13.124 **Dog Mess**

Noted that councillors had cleared away plastic bags of dog mess on the recreation ground a number of times. Agreed Clerk to ask EHC if any notices were available that would indicate dog owners should take their dog mess home and bin it.

### **PARISH TRUST**

#### 13.125 **Bus Shelter**

The Parish Trust had reminded the Parish Council that the Trust should be consulted when any work was proposed on Trust land, such as the recent erection of the bus shelter.

**WEBSITE****13.126 Upgrading**

Because of changes to the website by the hosting company, who will no longer support the software programme, an upgrading was necessary. This would cost an additional £15 per year. Agreed that the upgrading be approved.

**CLERK'S REPORT**

13.127 The Clerk's report was before the Council and the correspondence noted. A request had been received from a private individual who wished to purchase the Cottered telephone box and remove it. It was agreed that the telephone box was not for sale. Clerk to check that the Throcking telephone box was also owned by the Parish Council.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

13.128 Tuesday 11 March 2014 - 7.30 pm Village Hall  
Tuesday 13 May 2014 (Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council)

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PUBLIC SESSION****Opened at 9.15 pm**

1. Margaret Harrison asked for everyone to put pressure on East Herts Council planners to prevent the unapproved building works continuing at The Old Barn, Lordship Farm.

The public session closed at 9.25 pm.