

Great Chesterford Parish Council

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 1st April, 2020 on Skype.

Present	Chair Tom Newcombe, Councillors Gareth Bevens, David Hall, Wendy Martin, Mike Mitchell, Julie Redfern and Rachel Thackray.
In Attendance	District Councillors Neil Gregory and Richard Pavitt, and Amanda Lindsell, Clerk to the Council.

20/044 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and noted from County Cllr John Moran and Cllrs Penny McCullough and Sharon Tricerri.

20/045 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Chair Tom Newcombe declared a pecuniary interest as a partner at Birketts.

Councillors Hall declared a personal interest in agenda items 20/049ii and iii, as a neighbour of the applicant.

20/046 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the March 2020 Parish Council Meeting were approved by Councillors as an accurate representation and Chairman Tom Newcombe authorised the Clerk to sign the minutes on his behalf.

20/047 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public had raised the following issues to the Clerk;

i. The possibility of the Easter Bunny visiting Great Chesterford on Easter Sunday. The suggestion was that an email could be sent on the Google Group asking if people would like a visit and the Easter Bunny would attend the gardens of those who subscribed, waving through the window and leaving little eggs for the children.

Councillors agreed that this was not a matter for the Council to decide, but noted that Chair Newcombe would email recommending that should anyone undertake such activities, they should exercise extreme caution and not deliver things to doorsteps. TN

ii. Concerns were raised by a resident regarding several groups of young children congregating at the skate park and the hills formed by the building work. It was agreed that this was a relatively limited problem, but that Cllr Mitchell will collect barrier tape from Cllr Hall to create a visual barrier at the skate park, alongside the laminated signs that are already in place informing the public, should they not otherwise be aware, that the skate park is currently shut. MM

iii. Cllr Bevens detailed Eddie and Carole Hatfield's call for volunteers to assist in clearing grass from the base of each of the 70 trees within the orchard. Volunteers will be asked to clear a 1m circle around each tree, whilst observing social distancing. The Council approved this call for volunteers and requested that volunteers act consistently within government guidelines regarding social distancing.

20/048 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

District Cllr Pavitt welcomed any questions.

Cllr Mitchell asked for clarification on the execution of the government volunteering scheme, whether ECC are taking the lead, and will there be any tumble down to UDC and GCPC and then Good Neighbours.

Cllr Redfern noted that the only information available has been provided by ECC and Uttlesford Volunteers.

District Cllr Pavitt resolved to investigate the chain of command between the scheme and Good Neighbours.

District Cllr Gregory agreed that communications from UDC have been inadequate, and that any updates have been through R4U rather than UDC, which he will circulate and also request that UDC improve their communications, particularly information for businesses. District Cllr Gregory noted that UDC are trying to set up remote communications and have several senior members ill or isolating, but strategic communications need to improve, and these points will be made robustly.

District Cllr Pavitt agreed to circulate the UDC circular received 01/04/2020.

Cllr Hall noted that the Local Plan meeting scheduled 31/03/2020 has been deferred to an unspecified date and that GCPC and LCPC have had no response to their letter to Planning regarding S.106 and the Axis development. District Cllr Gregory noted that following discussion with the leader of the District Council

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31/03/2020, a document is going out for wider consultation, with the intention for a decision to be made by the end of April, once voting by remote meeting has been addressed, with the current climate making no notable change to the predicted outcome. District Cllr Gregory requested an update on the Hill meeting and it was agreed that the Clerk would forward the meeting notes.

Cllr Mitchell requested clarity on Community Shielding, and District Cllr Gregory confirmed that it is run by the Essex Resilience Forum, a group of 11 District Council and run from Chelmsford as part of the standard Emergency Plan, and agreed to liaise with UDC.

20/049 PLANNING

The following responses were agreed to be returned to Uttlesford District Council relating to applications;

i. UTT/20/0617/HHF - The Old Tower, High Street, Great Chesterford

Proposed two storey and single storey extension, erection of chimney and replacement of rear facing windows to match existing. (Renewal of previously approved UTT/17/1106/HHF) (15/04/2020) No comment.

ii. UTT/20/0595/HHF - The Old Elm Tree, Church Street, Great Chesterford

The insertion of a four panel window to the rear gable. (14/04/2020) No comment.

iii. UTT/20/0596/LB - The Old Elm Tree, Church Street, Great Chesterford

The insertion of a four panel window to the rear gable. (14/04/2020) No comment.

iv. Planning appeal APP/C1570/W/20/3247203 - Land At Acre Croft High Street, Great Chesterford.

Three new dwellings with associated garages from new access at land rear of Acre Croft (re-submission of previously approved scheme under references UTT/15/1424/OP and UTT/16/0328/DFO) (23/04/2020) It was resolved that the Clerk would reiterate the Council's previous comments to the Planning Inspectorate.

20/050 FINANCE

i. The clerk presented a statement of accounts and reconciliation to cash books for the Recreation Ground Trust and Parish Council Current and Deposit accounts which were agreed and signed.

The following transactions;

OP - Birketts - Nursery - £1824

OP - March salaries, holiday pay + expenses - £3117.25

OP - Essex Pension Fund - March payment - £463.71

OP - HMRC Quarterly payment - £1099.19

DD - Unity Trust Bank - quarterly bank charges - £18.00

were agreed for payment.

ii. The Council authorised a budget of £300 to Cllr Redfern for emergency expenditure during the Covid-19 pandemic.

20/051 EMERGENCY POWERS

Following recent advice from the Essex Association of Local Councils and the National Association of Local Councils, the Parish Council resolved to;

i. Cancel all public Parish Council meetings with immediate effect.

ii. Co-ordinate fortnightly Parish Council meetings on Skype. The Clerk will publish agendas for these meetings with at least three clear working days notice as required for usual Parish Council meetings. Residents wishing to raise items within the public forum, may contact the clerk in writing, by phone or email, before midday on the day of the meeting. Draft minutes of the meetings will be made available to the public within 48 hours on Google Groups, the Parish Council website and the village notice board.

iii. Devolve power to the Clerk to approve and make any payments below £500 in conjunction with the Chair.

iv. Devolve power to the Clerk to approve and make any payments below £1500 with approval via email from three Councillors.

v. Payments requiring approval above £1500 shall require approval from all Councillors via simple majority in the usual way, with the Chair's casting vote as necessary.

vi. Portfolio holders may make non-material operational decisions which do not require the expenditure of any monies exactly as previously. Otherwise, all decisions need to be made on the fortnightly Skype meeting via simple majority with the Chair's casting vote as necessary. If there is any likelihood a decision would be controversial, it is material.

vii. Decisions requiring prompt action to be made via new email chain, with approval from five Councillors.

viii. Genuinely urgent decisions to be proposed to the Parish Council on email, and ratified by two of the Chair

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or either Vice-Chairs. Any doubt as to promptness or urgency or whether it can wait until a fortnightly Skype meeting to be settled by the Chair.

ix. These powers to be in place for a period of three months, subject to review and cancellation at any point by simple majority, and renewal after three months on the same basis.

20/052 GOVERNMENT VOLUNTEERING SCHEME/GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Cllr Redfern detailed how Good Neighbours is a village initiative established in 2019, with herself as Parish Council representative, and became a good starting point to establish need, following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The group has 70 volunteers supporting the village. It was agreed that the Parish Council are supportive of Good Neighbours and that Cllr Redfern will report back if further support is needed at any point. Concerns were raised regarding possible vulnerable individuals that are not currently known to the Good Neighbours. District Cllr Pavitt noted that all residents considered to be at risk are being contacted this week with instructions to register with Essex Welfare Services to organise food deliveries. It was agreed that a further letter to residents would be despatched in 10 days asking for residents to notify Good Neighbours of any residents they are concerned for. JR

Cllr Hall confirmed that the Hills Charity have funds immediately available for residents requiring support, with a view to recovering costs further down the line, and an account is established at Days for this purpose. Chair Newcombe noted thanks to all the volunteers helping out with this fantastic village initiative.

20/053 FOOTPATHS

It was agreed that Cllr Mitchell would liaise with Aubrey regarding the installation of a post and rail zigzag on the footpath to Little Chesterford where it crosses the farm track. MM

20/055 NURSERY

Cllr Mitchell confirmed that he is regularly checking the nursery building and that post mediation discussions with Essex County Council have understandably ground to a halt during the Covid-19 pandemic. Cllr Mitchell is preparing business plan but requires the input from ECC and surveyors. There are discussions ongoing with surveyors as to what they could do as table top assessments in present situation. There have been discussions with CML in relation to one outstanding issue post mediation but again but halted by Covid-19. MM
Cllr Redfern confirmed that she has received no response from CML or Hewitsons.

20/054 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Thackray provided an update on the Neighbourhood Plan, with work continuing through online weekly meetings. Site assessment has received feedback which requires more work to complete the revision, and policies are starting to be written up.

Chair Newcombe thanked Cllr Thackray and her team for the exceptional hard work they are putting in to move forward as efficiently as possible.

20/056 MATTERS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

i. Cllr Redfern agreed to speak to County Cllr Gooding regarding legal costs incurred, as receipt was anticipated by 31/03/2020. JR

ii. An informal one way system has been reported to the Council by a resident. Signs have been erected at the end of Manor Lane and where the path crosses the Little Chesterford route, advising walkers to walk to Little Chesterford via Rose Lane, returning via Manor Lane to assist with social distancing and the advised 2m separation between parties.

iii. It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the notes from the Hill meeting to the council and District Councillors and that Chair Newcombe would forward contact details for the Hill representatives to the Clerk.

iv. Cllr Redfern asked if any guidance has been received from UDC regarding the proposed boundary move. Cllr Hall confirmed that there has been no response to the letter from Great and Little Chesterford Parish Councils requesting guidance.

v. Travellers risk - consideration of blocking entrance to CCC.

vi. Notice board renovation - Cllr Redfern to request advice from carpenters on the Google Group. JR

vii. Nursery fencing - to consider relocating the fencing.

viii. Meeting with Hamiltons regarding a self-storage facility, planning application anticipated.

ix. The History Society are continuing with displaying the soldier silhouettes commemorating residents who died in WW11. The deadline for the flag competition is Friday, with only one entry to date it was agreed to extend the competition to all primary school age children in the parish.

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20/057 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 15th April, 2020.

The meeting closed at 21.18

**Approved as accurate;
15/04/2020**