

GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

www.lovegreatchesterford.com

Clerk to the Council – Kate Stacey

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Councillors are summoned to attend a meeting of Great Chesterford Parish Council to be held on;

Wednesday 9th March, 2022 at 7:30pm at the Chesterfords Community Centre.

In accordance with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) s1, the council, in consideration of the confidential nature of the business, may resolve to exclude members of the public and press from consideration of items.

22/21 Apologies for Absence

22/22 Declaration of Interests

To receive any 'personal' or 'pecuniary' interests relating to items on the agenda.

22/23 Minutes of the Last Meeting

To approve as a correct record of events the minutes of the 9th February Parish Council meeting.

22/24 Co-Option of New Councillor

To note progress with recruitment.

22/25 Public Forum

15 minutes will be made available to address questions raised by members of the public.

22/26 County and District Councillor`s Reports

To receive the above reports.

22/27 Planning

To consider any comments to be returned to Uttlesford District Council (UDC) relating to applications;

i. **Appeal**; Like-for-like replacement bedroom and bathroom window. **The Close** Church Street Great Chesterford Saffron Walden Essex CB10 1NP

ii. Proposed removal of existing porch and erection of new porch. **4 St Johns Close** Great Chesterford Essex CB10 1PB. Ref. No: UTT/22/0270/HHF.

iii. Proposed 1st floor extension to sides & rear, new entrance door/window following demolition of existing porch/removal of chimney. **7 Rookery Close** Gt Chesterford Essex CB10 1QA. Ref. No: UTT/22/0315/HHF.

iv. Loft conversion with new rear facing rooflight windows. **9 South Street** Great Chesterford Essex CB10 1NW. Ref. No: UTT/22/0323/HHF.

v. Proposed removal of interior bathroom wall and installation of extractor fan through external wall. **Mill Cottage** Newmarket Road Great Chesterford Essex CB10 1NS. Ref. No: UTT/22/0505/LB.

vi. Application to discharge condition 3 (materials) 4 (joinery details) 5 (archaeology) 8 (ecology) 9 (lighting) attached to UTT/21/3231/HHF. **Flint Cottage** Newmarket Road Great Chesterford Essex CB10 1NS. Ref. No: UTT/22/0528/DOC.

To note UDC planning decisions;

i. Removal of three tree branches. **The Gables** Carmel Street Great Chesterford Saffron Walden CB10 1PH. Ref. No: UTT/22/0268/TCA. **No Objections.**

ii. Non-material amendment to UTT/21/2113/FUL - Trees behind Plots 12-13 to be removed, revision to French doors of plot 10 and roof tile specification. **Land North Of Bartholomew Close** Great Chesterford. Ref. No: UTT/22/0041/NMA. **Split Decision (removal of trees refused).**

iii. Proposed works to ceiling/floor joists and chimney breast top plate. **May Cottage** Carmel Street Great Chesterford CB10 1PH. Ref. No: UTT/21/3413/LB. **Refused.**

22/28 Finance

i. To receive a statement and review of accounts and list of payments for approval.

22/29 Christmas Tree

To consider the purchase of a permanent 'Christmas' Tree for Horse River Green.

22/30 London Road Housing Development

To consider potential road names for the new housing development to be returned to the developers.

22/31 Major Planning Issues

i. To discuss the decision of the Secretary of State to issue a Designation Notice/put UDC in Special Measures regarding planning permission for major developments, and its implications for London Rd proposals and more widely.

ii. London Road development

iii. To discuss the management arrangements for the Woodland/Open Spaces on the London Rd site.

iv. To receive a report on the archaeological dig at Stumps Cross.

22/32 Recreation Ground Trust

To receive an update and to consider and discuss items 2, 3, 4 and 6 on Appendix 1.

22/33 Open spaces

To receive an update and to consider and discuss item 10 on Appendix 1.

22/34 Jubilee celebrations

To discuss and consider issues.

22/35 Pilgrims Close Open Space/Fence

To discuss use of the area and confirm any actions.

22/36 Village meeting

To consider and discuss the potential date of Wednesday 30 March 2022

22/37 Grant applications

To consider and discuss applications as follows;

i. Cricket Club – net refurbishment

ii. Jubilee celebrations

iii. GC Primary Academy Year 6 Leavers Event

22/38 Neighbourhood plan

To receive an update.

22/39 Local Plan

To receive an update.

22/40 Nursery

i. To resolve to carry out agenda item 22/40 in closed session in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

ii. To receive an update (Appendix 2)

22/41 Matters for Further Discussion

Subject to the discretion of the Chair, raised by Councillors with a view to being an item on the next agenda. Please note that no decisions can be lawfully made under this item.

22/42 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 13th April 2022.

SIGNED (CLERK):

DATE: 03/03/22



Appendix 1

Report Open Spaces and RGT Parish Council Meeting 9 March 2022

Open Spaces

1. Footpath repairs at Pilgrim Close – part completed. Consideration of additional areas to be repaired.
2. Flag pole at Coronation Green – damaged and pulled down – reportedly by junior resident – to be repaired – scheduled 5 March 2022. To add fencing.
3. Review of condition of trees under responsibility of PC – Open Spaces and RGT. Discussion with contractor and inspection week 21 February. Tree at Pilgrim Close play area to be felled, planning to be completed in March. Follow up inspections of trees in summer. Xref item 2 RGT.
4. Yellow Lines on High Street – ECC contacted to revive implementation of agreed changes following site visit last year. Notice from NEPP posted on High Street which did not reflect what had been discussed. PC not contacted. UDC/ECC/NEPP contacted and agreed that NEPP posted notice in error. Plan of discussed changes to yellow lines on High Street distributed with email on 27 February (copy attached). Residents asked to forward views.
5. Drains in village – many blocked. Plan to be prepared for ECC.
6. Lighting repairs – Number of lights out in village and contractor contacted. Relaced lights with low wattage LED bulbs.

RGT

1. Play areas at Recreation Ground and Pilgrim Close – Contractor scheduled to replace the fencing at Recreation Ground play area with s106 funds. Repair and maintenance work to play equipment to be completed at same time. Work scheduled to commence Wednesday 2 March. The Rec play area will be shut for approx. 3 weeks. Email informing village sent out 27 February. Notices posted on gates at play area.

Long term consideration of funding for new/replacement play equipment at Rec and Pilgrim Close play areas. Residents to be consulted.

2. Trees at Recreation Ground – three lost following storm Eunice. Trees cleared within 10 days by either contractor or Aubrey. Follow up inspections of trees in summer.
3. Footpath repairs on path from Meadow Road to play area at Recreation Ground. Path at recreation ground - continuation of repairs required by tree roots and Pilgrim Close path into the area before the play area – safety/trip issue. Review of electrical supply for lighting on footpath from Meadow Road to play area at Recreation Ground.

4. Ditches at Recreation Ground / Flood Defences – annual work – completed. Report to ECC in relation to ditch on Walden Road and culverts at Walden and Newmarket Roads. No obvious work done. Landowner upstream from allotments to Walden Road cleared ditches. Landowners downstream of Rec/Newmarket Road contacted and meeting with local agent where ditch clearance work already carried out and future work plan discussed. To be followed up with both landowners. Review of ditch at HRG.
5. Electrical supply – discussion with comm centre regarding electrical supply to comm centre and from comm centre to bowls club, multisports, and scout hut.
6. Gym equipment – Annual servicing completed. Reported by equipment supplier that small cracks appearing on *pull up bars*. Checked and possible small cracks on one pull up bar. Sign posted requesting that pull up bar not be used. Check and repair to be scheduled.
7. Drains at Rec car park – clearance of drains – completed. One drain in particular slow to drain. Discussions with comm centre.
8. Scout hut - Licence given to scout group to use the existing building and interim improvements. Long term lease being drafted. Updated plans and planning permission application pending. On-going discussion between PC/RGT, Comm Centre and scout regarding electricity supply to scout hut (item 5).
9. CCTV – discussions revived with community centre and contractor.
10. Grass on Recreation Ground – football pitch and cricket outfield – Inspection by contractor with PC and cricket club representatives. Recommended verti draining and fertilizer application. Seeding and weed killer not required. Consideration to application of sand on football pitch to assist drainage. Discussion with contractor regarding cutting equipment. Football pitch being used by youth team from January.
11. Rospa report – Red flagged urgent risk items identified (to skate park) in report - repaired. Contractor identified for non-urgent repairs and maintenance to play equipment at Recreation Ground play area. Work to be done at same time as fencing (item 1.).
12. Skatepark – small repair required –contractor will check and do work when weather allows.

Appendix 2

Email to Great Chesterford Residents, 27 February 2022

Dear all,

I hope you had an enjoyable weekend and have enjoyed the sunshine following the recent storms.

The Parish Council has, as ever, been working hard on a number of issues and we have been reporting on issues at our monthly meetings, the minutes of which are circulated and any queries arising we are very happy to answer.

Sadly, due to COVID-19 we have been unable to have an Annual Village Meeting for the last 2 years, which is usually the opportunity for the Village to come together and discuss key issues and receive an update from the Parish Council. Thankfully, this year, we are now able to do that. A date in late spring (March if possible) will be announced shortly.

In the mean-time it will not be lost on many of you that in the main, updates on the new Nursery Building have been in "Part 2" of our monthly meetings, and thereby excluded from the public. That has been for two reasons: (1) we were in a legal process with the previous developers of the site, and (2) we have been in sensitive negotiations with the relevant stakeholders to get the project back up and running.

The PC is, at last, in a position to provide a detailed report on progress to-date and this email is an update as to where the PC is with its discussions with ECC working towards a solution.

The PC has been in active discussion and negotiation over many months with Essex County Council (and they in turn with the Department of Education) regarding the development.

In order to understand fully the current position it is necessary to set out the background facts in some detail. In 2016 there was a s106 settlement between UDC and a local land owner where land was transferred to the PC with a covenant that the land requires an educational use and hence the preschool project is being progressed. That land is where the allotments, orchard and adjacent field are situated. The PC issued an invitation to tender for a nursery provider and also to build the nursery. Expressions of interest were received and independently vetted. A company already known to ECC providing childcare facilities and expertise was chosen. Once appointed that company applied for then available government funding, which was delivered through ECC through a funding agreement. A lease to be entered into with the company concerned was in the course of being negotiated, and heads of terms had been agreed. A build contract was entered into by a build delivery company for the nursery provider and work commenced in 2018 under a licence as the lease terms were being finalised. Unfortunately it then became apparent to the PC towards the end of 2018 that the relationship between persons within both the nursery provider and the nursery delivery company had irreparably broken down. In addition, also at the end of 2018 there was a very serious archaeological issue on site which resulted in breaches of planning requirements. ECC intervened and work on the building was abruptly stopped. As a result of the breaches of planning and the breakdown of relationships within the nursery providing company, the PC, in consultation with ECC, had no alternative but to terminate the licence permitting the build works and the site was taken back under control by the PC. ECC terminated the funding agreement they had with the nursery provider.

One of the parties involved with the nursery provider company challenged the termination of the licence by the PC. A negotiated resolution was tried but not ultimately possible to the PC commenced proceedings in August 2019 at Cambridge County Court for a Declaration that all rights that the nursery provider or any associated company may have had in the nursery were validly terminated. Supported by ECC, the dispute was resolved at mediation in February 2020 where any and all rights were relinquished by the nursery provider or any associated company. The terms of the mediation settlement agreement contain a confidentiality provision so cannot be disclosed further.

Following resolution of the legal dispute, the PC and ECC commenced a full review of the condition of the part constructed building. This process was delayed and slowed dramatically by the impact of the pandemic during a large part of 2020. Surveys took place in June and July 2020 by a firm of surveyors appointed by ECC. A report was published in late 2020 which listed a number of serious defects in the building. Costings were obtained for the completion of the building including the rectification of the defects found during the surveys. It was identified that the costs of completion were at least the estimated cost of replacement with a new building. One further considerable difficulty with completing the existing building would be obtaining warranties and insurance, which would effectively not be possible to obtain. In all the circumstances, as advised by ECC's surveyors, it was concluded that the only realistic course of action was to proceed with a replacement building. Discussions have continued with ECC to develop replacement building plans and specifications.

There are two other issues to mention to complete the picture , namely archaeology and storage. As mentioned above, one of the reasons the PC was forced to terminate the licence to continue to build the nursery was that there were grounds works carried out (to install a ground source heat pump system) in breach of planning requirements to have such works monitored by an archaeologist. The ground works resulted in about 30 roman skeletons being destructively unearthed. There is still significant archaeological work to be completed at the nursery site and analysis of the skeletons already recovered. The PC has remained in close conduct with the archaeologist involved initially and also ECC with a view to completing the work and also to reinstate the remains respectfully at the site. The second issue is that of storage. In order to allow the initial works to commence at the nursery garages used for storage were demolished. That storage space has been replaced with containers at the Recreation Ground. Apart from the impact of the nursery build, storage space for a number of parties and groups around the village has always been an issue and the thinking is that a dedicated storage block be built next to the recently revived scout hut (which is to be expanded and we are delighted to have back in use by the community).

So – where are we now? The PC is dealing with: (i) new nursery provider in course of being identified, (ii) building and (iii) funding/borrowing to complete the project. The planning is that all three will progress quickly in the near future. The PC and ECC are in advanced discussions in relation to the procurement requirements for the nursery provider and building which will take place with the assistance of ECC and on their platforms. There is residual funding available from ECC. Borrowing will be required to be undertaken by the PC. The outline business plan is for the borrowing costs to be matched at least by the rent obtained from renting the building to the nursery provider with no impact on the precept. The application for borrowing requires consultation with the village and this will take place shortly.

In conclusion for now, hopefully it will be appreciated that the PC has been dealing with a very complex set of problems that were not of its making (compounded very heavily by COVID) and has been working very hard with ECC towards a solution. A large number of those discussions have been commercially sensitive (including the legal dispute and assessment of the building) resulting in the PC having to be careful about what it could say. Hopefully we are over this period now. As mentioned above the intention is to have a post COVID village meeting this year and the subject of the nursery will be on the agenda. Once delivery takes place the Village and local residents will have a first-class facility of which they can be proud, providing 56 nursery and pre-school places for the next generations.

We are tirelessly trying to resolve the issues faced, and particular thanks have to go to Mike Mitchell and Julie Redfern who have given up huge amounts of their time on your behalf over many, many months.

We will separately provide an update on other village matters over email, and at the Annual Village Meeting, but I hope the above is useful to you.

Kind regards

Tom

Tom Newcombe

Chair

Great Chesterford Parish Council