

Wareside Parish Council

Minutes of Wareside Parish Council Meeting
Thursday 16th February 2023 held in the Village Hall at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr Paul Goodman (PG) (chair), Cllr Jane Moseley (JM), Cllr Shusanah Pillinger (SP), Cllr Stuart Richards (SR) and Cllr Mike Ryan (MR)

Others: Rebecca Burdick (Clerk) (RB) and Eric Buckmaster (EB)

Members of the public: Two members of the public were in attendance

The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of interest and dispensations:

- a) To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda (including non-pecuniary).
- b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests.
None.
- c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate.
None.

3. To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public

The parishioners in attendance wished to raise the idea of having a defibrillator in the Babbs Green area of the village with the PC. SP added (and she was also going to raise within this meeting) she also had had a social media query asking the same question from another parishioner. This particular parishioner had needed to call 999 for their daughter and this prompted her afterwards to find out where the closest defib was (although no defib was required for this incident. Both parishioners commented that the red telephone box would be a perfect place for a defib.

SP explained that investigations have been made into converting the red telephone box into a defibrillator (MR added it is a perfect place for one due to the supply of power to the phone box, although it was thought this was only for 7 years since ownership was transferred to the PC) and it was something the PC was planning to do having installed a defibrillator at the other end of the village. However, due to vandalism and general deterioration of the box, it requires quite a bit of work to restore it to a position that a defib could be located in it. Restoration of the telephone box is on the project list for the next financial year, should funds allow. However there is great concern within the PC that should the telephone box be restored it would again be vandalised. Furthermore, continued vandalism within the village to other items installed by the PC (for example fencing around the playground) means that unexpected funds are needed for repairs. The PC budget is so tight this inevitably takes away money from projects (such as restoration of the telephone box) that the PC would like to undertake.

JM added how disheartened the PC are becoming, Councillors are voluntarily putting in their own time to enhance the village with little input from the community, despite advertising for help (via posters, the Waresider magazine, an upgraded website and three

social media channels). This is only added to when as mentioned by SP vandalism occurs and areas given to the community for their enjoyment are not respected - notably LOH with the large areas of rubbish being dumped and fires made in the tree planting area.

The parishioner understood the PC frustrations and explained that the “community spirit” which once was present had deteriorated and the actions of a few were spoiling the area for the majority. They noted that having lived in the village for 20+ years they knew of people that would be interested in getting involved in community projects. SP asked how do the PC go about engaging them as the PC are on social media and post frequently, post in the local facebook group, display posters and write a section in the Waresider. The parishioner offered to help by going door to door to try and rally some community engagement. The PC thanked them for this suggestion and welcomed this idea, inviting all those interested in getting involved to attend the next PC meeting in March for a discussion on community engagement. It was stressed that the PC would appreciate offers of help with projects, not just lists of more problems the community wanted fixed.

With regards to the defibrillator, the parishioner thought that should the community be involved with the fundraising for it and the restoration of the telephone box then there would be a shared sense of responsibility to look after it. They would include this communication when they go door to door.

The parishioner also added that the street light opposite the church is not working and despite notifying the County Council it has not been fixed. The pathway next to this street light, from the road up to Coanwood Cottages is in need of maintenance - the bottom step is damaged and a trip hazard. Also the steps would benefit from a handle along the length of the steps and reflective paint on the steps so they are more visible.

The PC discussed if the street light was one that EHDC invoiced the PC for maintenance and electricity costs. RB noted the invoice for which had been received this month and it had almost doubled in price. Councillors asked EB if there was a way to find out, EB said to send the invoice to him and he would investigate. With regards to the steps it was discussed if they were the responsibility of Highways, as the path is a footpath, or perhaps Network Homes, as it is thought that they own all the properties and associated pathways. RB to add the query in an email to EB. RB to also email Highways and Network Homes.

4. To approve and sign meeting minutes

a) Thursday 22nd January 2023 was signed by chair of the meeting Paul Goodman

5. Planning

a) To consider planning applications received between 19th January - 16th February 2023

Application: 3/23/0110/HH

Proposal: Demolition of garage and construction of new single storey detached garage.

At: Demolition of garage and construction of new single storey detached garage.

WPC comments: None

Note: The applicants were in attendance in order to answer any queries the PC may have. MR asked for clarification regarding the boundary line of the property and if this affected the adjacent turning point / public parking area. RB brought up the plans on her laptop and the parishioner talked through the drawings with the PC. This satisfied MR's query and no further comments or queries were made.

Application: 3/23/0119/FUL

Proposal: Proposed Part Change of Use of Existing Barn to Holiday-Let including the installation of doorway, windows and two rooflights and existing stable to be used in conjunction with the holiday-let

At: Bourne Farm (North Of Bourne Villa) Wareside Ware Hertfordshire

WPC comments: Comments made

b) To review planning decisions made by EHDC

Application: 3/22/2090/FUL

Proposal: Alterations to agricultural access

At: Watersplace Ware Road Wareside Hertfordshire SG12 7QQ

EHDC decision: Granted

Application: 3/22/2703/ASDPN

Proposal: Erection of an additional storey to a detached bungalow to increase the height of the dwelling from 4.77 metres to 7.45 metres.

At: The Bungalow Bakers End Nursery Wareside

EHDC decision: Granted

It was noted by the PC that no decision regarding the White Horse change of use application had been received, despite the application being submitted 19/04/22. RB to contact planning for an update.

6. To receive reports from County and District Councillor

Cllr Eric Buckmaster shared his report, see appendix item A for full report.

Discussions were had with Eric about more funding needed for rural areas not just in the towns - MR raised the concern of "Rural Poverty". Questions asked: "are there potential funding streams for electrical car charging points in villages?" (JM) "and speed awareness signs?" (SP). Eric asked that these queries be put in an email to him and he would investigate; RB to action.

7. To receive updates from Councillors/Clerk on:

a) Little Oak Heath

i. To review and discuss LOH vision/action plan

See appendix item B, discussion continued below.

ii. To review LOH maintenance schedule for Spring-Autumn 2023

iii. To review additional work at LOH

JM covered the above agenda items together. RB and JM met with Chris Eyre, E-Scapes Landscapes, at LOH on 13/02 to discuss the above agenda items before this meeting. JM drafted a short vision along with the action plan discussed with Chris (see appendix item B) and presented it to the PC. In brief, proposals are as follows: regular cutting of the paths to be undertaken bi-monthly rather than monthly, one pathway to be excluded from the rota due to location, football pitch cutting to be put on hold for a couple of months to determine usage. Money saved from this reduction in maintenance work would be spent using E-scapes for larger projects based on a day-rate price. These larger projects this year were highlighted as: clearing the scrub from the orchard up to the footpath at the top of LOH and

cutting back the brambles by the pond area to the original fenceline (which Councillors had started to do manually themselves). RB noted that Chris did highlight that monthly visits to LOH would have to be worth the journey over - of which he needed to work out a minimum of work he required each month. However, subject to PC approval, JM noted that the same budgeted funds would be spent yearly; the money would just be redirected to other projects required to maintain LOH. The PC agreed with these suggestions. It was commented that LOH requires a lot of money to maintain and with such a tight budget it would be ideal if money could be diverted to pay for additional work that is now required rather than additional funds (which would likely have to come out of reserves) being used. JM and RB to meet with Chris again to discuss a monthly schedule and costs before the next meeting. JM to contact Chris to arrange.

iii. Playground maintenance

Due to the length of the meeting it was agreed that RB send a list of maintenance jobs required (and those needed to repair vandalised property) via email to determine which jobs can be done within the PC and which need external contractors.

b) Larkshill

i. To review Larkshill maintenance schedule for Spring-Autumn 2023

JM updated the PC that Chris has recommended no additional work was required at Larkshill before the Spring monthly maintenance could commence. The PC were happy with the monthly cutting schedule to continue this year.

8. Finance

a) To approve signing of orders for payment online via BACS

Payee	Work done/goods received	Amount
Rebecca Burdick	Salary (January)	£274.28
Paul Goodman	Playground fencing reimbursement	£171.35

b) To discuss application to Locality Budget Grant and other EHDC grants

RB asked EBif his Locality Budget Grant would cover the cost of a noticeboard to be used for both PC notices and community notices. He said he had funded this before and yes it would.

SP highlighted the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund which she had sent an email about. RB has more information which she will send around via email. Due to the lateness and over running of the meeting it was agreed that discussion were to continue via email and full discussion of proposed ideas at the next meeting.

9. Urgent matters not included on this agenda (for full discussion on the next agenda)

Village celebrations for the King’s Coronation.

Meeting finished at 9.55pm
Next meeting 16th March 2023 at 19.30

Signed:

Date:

Chair Cllr Paul Goodman

Appendix

Item A:

E Buckmaster report for Feb 2023

New report details Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's improved performance

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is pleased with its improved performance as detailed in a report published by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

HMICFRS visited Hertfordshire early in 2022 to inspect the work of the service under three pillars: Effectiveness, Efficiency, and People. Since the last report in 2018, the service has moved from 'Requires Improvement' in all three pillars to a 'Good' rating in two out of the three areas of inspection.

In the report, the Inspectorate once again acknowledged the strength of the service's emergency response arrangements, the skills and professionalism of its firefighters and incident commanders, as well as recognising the high standard of training to ensure the continued delivery of a strong and effective emergency response.

The service's contribution to national response arrangements was also judged to be good, remarking on the quality of our specialist equipment and, once again, the expertise of our staff.

The report highlighted innovative practice in the Fire Protection department, noting that the service has "strong links and engages well with regulatory partners and local businesses" and that it "contributes to improving local business productivity with guidance and advice."

In its report, HMICFRS also highlighted areas that require improvement, including some elements of the service's fire prevention work, efficiency, and diversity of its people.

Hertfordshire County Council is encouraging residents to apply now for street parties to celebrate the King's coronation.

Anyone wanting to close a road for a street party will need to apply to the county council at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/streetparties by 26 March 2023.

Recognising the social and community benefits of celebrating this historic event, the county council has decided to waive the usual road closure fees in hope of encouraging as many people as possible to take up the opportunity to celebrate this momentous occasion.

Hertfordshire has a strong reputation for community held Royal celebrations, with the county hosting more than 560 street parties to celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee last summer, and claiming the title of street party capital of Britain for previous royal weddings and jubilees.

Information on how to apply for a street party road closure can be found on the county council's website at www.hertsdirect.org/streetparties

Helping Hertfordshire's children have a Happy Easter holiday

We are delighted to be working in partnership again with Herts Sports Partnership and Hertfordshire Community Foundation to run the HAPpy programme (Holiday Activities Programme), supporting local families at a time when they need it the most.

Booking will open on 6 March for more than 14,000 spaces run by 75 different providers from 3 April – 14 April 2023 (not bank holidays).

The programme is open to children and young people eligible for benefits-related free school meals. We understand not all families in need meet the FSM criteria, and a small proportion of free places can be provided to families identified by those professionals working with them. A unique code can be issued only to those professionals to share with the family. Any services who work with vulnerable/eligible families and would like a code or wish to promote this further please email happy@hertfordshire.gov.uk for more information.

Hertfordshire schools will be giving out booking codes on 20 February to families of eligible children. Parents/carers who have not received the code should contact their school office or email haf@herts.ac.uk.

We will be sharing information about the HAPpy programme on our social media channels. If you have your own social media accounts, please help us spread the word by sharing our posts.

Further details of the programme, the camps available and to book places can be found at: <https://sportinherts.org.uk/happy/booking>

County Councils Network (CCN) has published a new CCN Analysis publication, focusing on economic inactivity.

Focusing on the four main categories of economic inactivity (and excluding 'temporary sick') the CCN has analysed Office of National Statistics' Annual Population Survey dataset for March 2020 and September 2022 to ascertain where, and for what reason, people have left the employment market pre and post pandemic. The analysis includes local authority type, regional and CCN member council level data

Over 100,000 people have taken the 'lifestyle choice' of early retirement in England's county areas during the pandemic, contributing to hundreds of thousands of people leaving the jobs market over the last three years. CCN are calling for extra powers over employment and skills to be devolved to their areas to help encourage these 'missing' workers back into employment as new analysis reveals that over 320,000 more people have become economically inactive in England's 36 county areas compared to the outbreak of Coronavirus in March 2020

Summary of Key Findings;

- The number of economically inactive people in England has grown from 7m to 7.243m as a result of a 11.6% (320,300) increase in the number of economically

inactive people in England's 37 county and CCN unitary areas. Excluding the rise in students, these areas still witness a far greater increase (6.5%) than all other local authority types.

- In contrast, major cities and towns across the country saw a decrease in economically inactive people, with London seeing a drop of 20,100 people and the eight largest 'core cities' in England which collectively saw a drop of 26,500 people. Metropolitan boroughs saw 17,000 fewer people economically inactive.
- The number of long-term sick in county and CCN unitary members increased by 70,000 over the period, some 57% of the increase in England. The increase has been higher in county and CCN unitary areas (10.5%) compared to all other local authority types.
- In total, 100,300 extra people took the lifestyle choice of early retirement in county and CCN unitary areas compared to pre-pandemic levels, a 21% increase over the 36 months. This trend is up across England but has risen the steepest in counties - some 68% of the entire increase in England was in county and CCN unitary authorities, with the rise four times the total amount of councils in London and metropolitan borough areas.
- Some 56% of all those who have retired early are now in county areas, up from 54% from March 2020. Approximately 1 in 25 working age adults in counties are now retired early. This compares to 1 in 35 in metropolitan boroughs and 1 in 63 in London now retired early.
- County and CCN unitary areas have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of students, with 181,800 more students compared to March 2020, with all other local authority types witnessing a reduction.
- Regionally, the East Midlands has seen the largest increase of people become economically inactive since the start of the pandemic (+10.4% and 60,400 people), including the highest increase of early retirees (+31.3%) and the highest rise in long-term sick (+16.6). The South East had the second largest increase (+9.7% and 93,500 people) and the North West the third highest (+6.7% and 70,700 people).

County Budget Proposals

Hertfordshire County Council proposes draft budget to protect vital services

Hertfordshire County Council has published its draft budget for the next financial year. The proposed budget continues to invest in the council's Corporate Plan priorities while maintaining the services we all use and providing support to the people who need it most.

Like councils across the country, Hertfordshire County Council continues to face huge financial challenges due to soaring rates of inflation and high demand for council services. Overall, the county council will spend over £1 billion next year delivering essential services for residents. As a result, the council has needed to make some difficult decisions to be able to propose a balanced budget for the new financial year, which begins on 1 April 2023.

In order to deliver a balanced budget, the county council will be making savings of £27.4m in 2023/24 – the highest level of savings since 2017. And only a small proportion of these savings (£2.9m) will impact on service provision or partners. These savings are in addition to those already made in the autumn to ensure a balanced budget for the remainder of the current financial year.

However these savings alone will not be enough to balance the budget, so in order to protect frontline services, Hertfordshire County Council is also proposing to raise council tax by 4.99% (including 2% specifically for social care). This means a typical Band D household will be paying £1,605.63, an increase of £1.47 per week.

The proposed budget reflects the commitments made in the council's Corporate Plan to deliver a cleaner, greener and healthier Hertfordshire, including:

- £38m to ensure adult care providers can continue to support residents – including a 9.68% wage increase for care staff to help recruitment and retention, matching the increase in the national living wage and continuing to ensure that Hertfordshire care wages are well above both the national and real living wages (supported by the social care precept)
- £15m is expected from the extension of the Household Support Fund to support our most vulnerable residents with the cost of living
- An extra £19m for Childrens' Services, including an extra £5.2m to support the children in our care
- £10m for home-to-school transport for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities to ensure they can get to school easily
- £6.4m to support waste disposal services, alongside new contracts that will mean that no waste in the county will go to landfill from 2024.
- £4.6m of extra funding into highways revenue budgets to cover inflation and ensure we can continue repairs and maintenance work on our roads.
- £36.4m to continue our work to improve recycling centres and make our waste infrastructure fit for the future
- Funding to continue moving forward the Brookfield Riverside and Garden Village developments in Broxbourne
- Continuing to invest in our website to enable more people to carry out transactions online.

The county council is also investing in projects that will ensure future savings. This investment will go into a number of projects that will help residents remain independent for longer, keep families together through early intervention schemes and save taxpayers money by transforming partnership working.

These proposed budget plans will be considered by the Council's Cabinet on Monday 16 January.

All councils have been affected by the inflation rate of around 11pc, and more for some materials and services. (a period of re tendering, rescoping, value engineering)

Councils forecast budgets over a period of years , Medium Term Financial Plan.

In order to deliver a balanced budget, the county council will be making savings of £27.4m in 2023/24 plus £19m from reserves.

The forecast for 4 years also includes the delivery of £44.6m of savings by the end of 2025/26

Councils will need to undertake transformation plans in order to achieve savings

Govt sets the maximum increase Councils can make without referendum. Hertfordshire County Council is also proposing to raise council tax by 4.99% (including 2% specifically for social care). This means a typical Band D household will be paying £1,605.63, an increase of £1.47 per week. £76.44 per annum

Last week each portfolio holder was scrutinised along with Directors by backbench members in specific budget topic groups.

Projected Budget Gaps	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Original Budget gap	18.8	0.5	15.3	27.1
Use of reserves	(18.8)	(0.5)		
Final Budget position	0.0	0.0	15.3	27.1

East Herts 2.99pc £5.50

Note that the savings requirements, that will need to be delivered to balance the budget in the Medium Term, the delivery profile of which has been smoothed using earmarked reserves, are:

2023/24 £822k

2024/25 £2,170k

2025/26 £2,192k

2026/27 £2,053k

2027/28 £567k.

HCC accounts for 75pc of the council tax bill, 60 pc of which goes to adult and childrens services. Out of the remainder goes to services such as Highways, Fire Service, Waste disposal and recycling, Public Health, and Planning, and libraries

EHDC is the Council Tax Collection Authority and pays out benefits. Also responsible for Waste Collection, Parks and Open Spaces. Leisure Centres, Theatre, Cultural services, public health social prescribing, Planning, parking and on street and off street enforcement, licencing, housing options, homelessness support, community engagement, Business support and more.

If approved the Band D portion for East Herts council is just around £189 per year. This accounts for around 9pc of council tax.

The remainder is precepts demanded by parishes and the police.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster Feb 2023

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