

Stanford Rivers PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Meeting: COUNCIL

Date: 14th January 2016

Time: 5.30PM

Venue: Toot Hill Village Hall, Toot Hill

PRESENT:

Councillors (6) John Glover (Chairman), A Buckley, J Gatward, T Saridja, R Jackson, B Hollington

Also in Attendance (1) - Adriana Jones – Clerk

Members of the Public (1)

Members of the Press (0)

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one member of the public present - the resident of Hare Cottage, Stanford Rivers. A copy of a letter sent by the Clerk to ECC regarding surface water issue near Hare Cottage had been previously circulated to all Councillors. Cllr Buckley gave members a brief update on the history of issues regarding surface water in the vicinity of Hare Cottage, including that in-between the road and the field opposite Hare Cottage their used to be a very large gully, and that this was on the field side of the hedge. The resident stated that there is also a brick built structure on the road side of the hedge which is full up with mud, and that there is enough room to place a ditch between the hedge and the road. The resident stated that in the past, ECC had given him £5,000 by way of compensation to replace an oak fence and works to a tree, however the problem still persists due to the fact there is no ditch on the opposite side of the road, and that there is no aperture for the water to go away. The resident confirmed that he had taken action himself to try and limit the damaged being caused to his property by way of building a 1 acre balancing pond in his rear garden. Cllr Jackson suggested the resident makes contact with his own insurance company explaining the problems, asking his insurance company to put pressure on ECC to resolve this issue. After discussion, the following action was AGREED:

1. Await a response from ECC Cllr McEwen
2. Clerk to try and ascertain who owns the field opposite Hare Cottage
3. Dependent on response from ECC, consider putting forward via the Local Highways Panel
4. Await update from Karen Baker, ECC, via resident.

The Chairman thanked the resident for attending, stating that the Parish Council would do what it could to ensure this problem was resolved.

P14.166 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)

NOTED that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Tallon.

P14.167 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None.

P14.168 MINUTES

Following a couple of alterations regarding errors in attendance stated, the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th November 2015 were **APPROVED** and duly signed by the Chairman.

P14.169 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

P14.170 FUTURE OF AUDITING

Councillors noted that from the start of the 2017/18 financial year smaller authorities, including parish and town councils and internal drainage boards, can choose to have an auditor appointed to them by a new 'sector-led body', or they can decide to procure their own. Smaller authorities with a turnover of less than £25,000 will be exempt from having to submit an annual financial return, but will still need to have an auditor appointed in case there are questions from electors to be resolved.

NALC, SLCC and ADA are currently working together to set up a 'sector led body' to procure audit for smaller authorities for the start of the 2017/18 financial year. This process is being supported and funded by DCLG. As was the case with the former Audit Commission, the running costs of the new body will be funded from the audit fees charged to smaller authorities. The board of the new body will comprise an independent chair, two independent members, and representation from NALC, SLCC and ADA. Secretariat support will be provided by NALC. The new body will have a Memorandum of Understanding with DCLG, who will have optional observer status, and who will also review and monitor progress and quality.

The SLB will appoint auditors for all those smaller authorities 'opted in' to the new arrangements. As a smaller authority, this council does not have to do anything as all smaller authorities are automatically opted in to the new body and will have an auditor procured for them. However, this Council could also 'opt out' of the new arrangements. The decision to opt out must be through a formal meeting of the council, and as such every council who is eligible to opt-out needs to actually formally consider if they are going to. This decision needs to be made by 31 January 2016. All authorities who wish to opt out must make their own arrangements with auditors, which will include but is not limited to the following:

- establishing an Auditor Panel;
- following a statutory appointment process set out in regulations;
- appointing an auditor by 31 December 2016;
- providing the SLB with the contact details of the appointed auditor.

Councillors discussed this issue, and **AGREED** they did not want to opt out of these new arrangements, and were happy to move forward with the sector led body.

P14.171 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME

No update at this time, however it was hoped an update would be available for the next meeting.

P14.172 CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Members **RECEIVED** an oral report from the Clerk as follows:

- All licensing authority's are required to consult every three years on their Gambling Act 2005 policy. EFDC are currently consulting on theirs, the deadline for responses being 31st January 2016. Copies are available via the Clerk if any Councillor would like to review the document. Noted.
- Letter from Chris Whitbread regarding Devolution in Essex (copy attached to the agenda for members information). The Clerk stated that she had met with the Chief Executive of EFDC who had informed her be cautious regarding an expectation as to when or if this will happen.
- **Essex Energy Switch** - launched on 1 December. This is a collective energy switching initiative for people and businesses who want to cut their energy bills. It is a free, easy and secure way to cut energy bills without wasting time comparing prices on comparison sites. Residents have until 1 February 2016 to register their interest (without any obligation) in switching their energy supplier through the scheme. Small and medium-sized businesses can also register and are encouraged to do so. Anyone who pays an energy bill can take part and can register for electricity and gas or just for one or the other. As well as homeowners this includes tenants and customers on pre-payment meters. An auction will take place on 1 February 2016. The auction works by getting energy companies to bid against each other to offer the lowest rate for gas and electricity contracts. Of course, the more people who sign up for the scheme, the lower the bid is likely to be. On 12 February 2016 emails will be sent to those who have registered containing a new gas and electricity offer, valid for one month. This offer will be calculated using existing energy usage and costs. Only when the offer is received will residents and businesses need to decide whether or not to accept. The previous Essex Energy Switch took place in early 2015 and attracted more than 6,280 registrations. Almost 40% of those who registered then decided to switch their energy supplier, securing an average saving of more than £262. Councillors **AGREED** this should be placed in News and Views

- Broadband - the first Gigaclear broadband customers are now online. The service is expected to come to this Parish in June 2016.
- Letter from EFDC stating that Waltham Abbey Town Council has applied to have an area designated for a Neighbourhood Plan.

P14.173 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Councillors noted that there were two planning applications which, due to technical problems with the computer, the Clerk failed to identify within the timeframe specified for comment. The Clerk formally apologised to Members for this, and confirmed that a failsafe measure has been put in place so this error will not occur again. The stated applications were as follows:

EPF/2781/15	Westgate, 4 Hill Crest Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar <i>Applicant: Mr & Mrs Reynolds</i>	Demolition of existing rear conservatory. Proposed single storey rear extension. http://planpub.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/NIM.websearch/ExternalEntryPoint.aspx?SEARCH_TYPE=1&DOC_CLASS_CODE=PL&FOLDER1_REF=580300 PERMISSION GRANTED BY OFFICER
EPF/2737/15	153 London Road, Stanford Rivers, Ongar <i>Applicant: Mr Hagger</i>	Detached dwelling http://planpub.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/NIM.websearch/ExternalEntryPoint.aspx?SEARCH_TYPE=1&DOC_CLASS_CODE=PL&FOLDER1_REF=580193 PERMISSION REFUSED BY OFFICER

Councillors **CONSIDERED** the following:

1. To CONSIDER any planning applications submitted to the Parish Council for comment as detailed below NONE		
EPF/3139/15	Little Paddocks, 115 London Road, Stanford Rivers <i>Applicant: Mr Jim Sullivan</i> <i>Deadline: 18th January</i>	Part two storey, part single storey side extension including modifications to existing house and demolition of existing structures. No Objection
EPF/2832/15	39 Berwick Lane, Stanford Rivers, Ongar <i>Applicant: Mr & Mrs Quorn</i> <i>Deadline : extension agreed to 15th Jan</i>	New dwelling house on land adjacent to 39 Berwick Lane, Stanford Rivers, Ongar, Essex, CM5 9PZ OBJECTION - on the following grounds: 1. Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt 2. Whilst it is understood that the applicants have designed the proposed building to try and blend in with the forestry close to the site, the design is such that it fails to adopt a significance in the street scene, specifically when considering its location to the listed structure directly adjacent and the design of the adjacent property. This design would in fact stand out as being completely out of place at this location. This is contrary to DBE1. 3. Considering the proposed site, the applicant has failed to demonstrate why there is a need to site the property at this specific location thereby resulting in the loss of a number of TPO'd trees.

2. To NOTE any planning applications that have been responded to via the Clerks delegated powers		
EPF/2207/15	Mill Place, Mill Lane Toot Hill	Sub-division of plot and erection of a three-bedroomed bungalow with new access off Mill Lane. No Objection
3. To NOTE any planning applications upon which EFDC do not normally accept comments		
EPF/3091/15	Newhouse Farm, Mutton Row, Stanford Rivers <i>Applicant: Mrs Beverly Miles</i>	Submission of details of conditions: 2 (Additional Drawings) and 3 (Materials) pursuant to planning application ref: EPF/1450/15, dated 12/08/2015 for "(a single storey extension and minor internal alterations to Grade II listed detached house)"
EPF/2938/15	Long Acre Cottage, School Road, Stanford Rivers <i>Applicant: Mrs O'Neal</i>	Application for approval of reserved matter on planning application EPF/2936/14 (Outline planning application for proposed new 4 bed dwelling with some matters reserved).
EPF/2939/15	Long Acre Cottage, School Road, Stanford Rivers <i>Applicant: Mrs O'Neal</i>	Application for Approval of Details Reserved by condition 2 'details of reserved matters', 4 'hard and soft landscaping', 5 'tree protection' and 7 'flood risk' on planning application EPF/2936/14 (Outline planning application for proposed new 4 bed dwelling with some matters reserved).
EPF/2957/15	Mitchells Farm, London Road, Stapleford Tawney <i>Applicant: Johnstruct</i>	Confirmation of condition 1 of planning permission EPF/1859/12 (Extension to existing agricultural barn (Amended application to include Lean-to)
4. To NOTE any enforcement actions / appeals / New complaints received by the Parish Council via the EFDC list		
0464/15 Enforcement	Millrite Engineering 151-153 London Road Stanford Rivers	S.106 contribution due NOT EXPEDIENT TO TAKE ENFORCEMENT ACTION The Clerk has requested a full explanation of this action. UPDATE REQUESTED
NEW ENF/0613/15	Grove Cottage, 22 Epping Road <i>Officer: Jim Gordon</i>	Alleged Breach: Stables and buildings erected (List 18th - 27th November 2015)
NEW / CLOSED ENF/0578/15	Former Milking Parlour Colemans Farm Toot Hill Road	Enforcement check on discharge of conditions 4 & 5 of EPF/2628/07 - NO BREACH
5. To NOTE the following planning decisions by EFDC		
EPF/1995/15	5A Toot Hill Road Ongar, Essex, CM5 9QW	Side extension in the form of a single storey lean-to/hip-end roof extension with a first floor side dormer above; single storey rear extension with pitched roof; rear dormer window to first floor; 2.3m high enclosing garden boundary wall to separate parking area from courtyard garden. Decision Date: 6/11/2015 Decision: Grant

		Permission (With Conditions)
EPF/2207/15	Mill Place, Mill Lane Toot Hill	Sub-division of plot and erection of a three-bedroomed bungalow with new access off Mill Lane. Decision Date: 26/11/2015 Decision: Grant Permission (With Conditions)
EPF/2256/15	The Dairy Murrells Farm, London Road, Stanford Rivers	Single storey side extension Decision Date: 11/11/2015 Decision: Grant Permission (With Conditions)
EPF/2324/15	81 London Road, Stanford Rivers	Demolition of existing side extension. Part single, part two storey side/rear extension and porch on the side. Decision Date: 11/11/2015 Decision: Grant Permission (With Conditions)
EPF/2444/15	Mitchells Farm London Road Stapleford Tawney	Certificate of Lawful Development for use of agricultural buildings for storage and distribution use with ancillary workshop and offices. Certificate of Lawful Development - Existing Use Date: 22/12/2015 Decision: Lawful
EPF/2044/15	Woodpeckers, Murrells Farm, 22 London Road Stanford Rivers	Erection of Summer House Decision Date: 16/12/2015 Decision: Grant Permission (With Conditions)

P14.174 REPORTS

Members **RECEIVED** the following reports

Chairman's Report - No report.

Vice Chairman - Cllr Buckley reported that the individual who normally erects and dismantles the Christmas tree each year has indicated that he will not be doing this going forward. This is something that needs to be considered for next year, however Cllr Buckley feels that he would be able to source somebody else to take on this task. The lights and poles need to be collected, and Cllr Glover confirmed he would liaise with Cllr Buckley regarding this. Cllr Buckley reported that with the exception of Cllr Gatward, the members interest are now on the Parish Website.

County Councillors Report - None

Councillors Reports - None

P14.175 HIGHWAYS

a) Surface Water Flooding - London Road, Stanford Rivers

This issue was discussed during the public session at the start of the meeting, however for reference members **NOTED** that on 7th January, the Clerk and Cllr Buckley were contacted by a local resident regarding the ongoing Surface Water flooding issues along the A113 in Stanford Rivers. Subsequent to these conversations, and a number of emails sent by the resident, the Clerk composed a letter to Cllr Maggie McEwen to ascertain exactly what has / is being done to rectify this issue. A copy of the letter was emailed to Councillors on 8th January.

b) Cycling Strategy / Local Highway Panel

As previously reported, on behalf of ECC, EFDC are seeking to develop a Cycling Action Plan for the Epping Forest District. The outcome of this will be presented to the Epping Forest Local Highways Panel at its March 2016 meeting. The District Cycling Action Plan will generate

potential cycle schemes and initiatives for implementation in the short, medium and long term. It will be developed in discussion with local representatives and will inform and drive forward future investment in cycling in the District. It is anticipated that some of the potential infrastructure proposals could also help to mitigate the impact of existing and future development traffic flows in the District. A representative of this Parish Council has been invited to attend a stakeholder meeting on **Friday 15th January 2016 between 13:30 and 16:30**, in Committee Room 1 at Epping Forest District Council's Civic Offices, Epping High Street, CM16 4BZ. Cllr Saridja and the Clerk would be attending this meeting.

c) Overgrowth of Hedge in Toot Hill, near Phone Box

The Clerk has been liaising with ECC regarding this issue, who in turn have subcontracted the work out to EFDC to complete on their behalf. It is understood that some cutting back has been completed, however further cutting back has been requested. At the time of printing the agenda, there was no further update, however the Clerk stated that the actual area behind the telephone box was in a reasonable state. Cllr Hollington stated that the overgrowth was in the opposite direction going down Epping Road which is causing people not to be able to walk on the path.

d) Local Highway Panel

As agreed, the Clerk has submitted the following schemes to the Local Highway Panel for consideration:

- Fixing of Finger post on Toot Hill Village Green
- Reinstatement of Finger Post by Green Man Pub, Toot Hill
- Cutting back of vegetation by Gateway sign in Stanford Rivers coming from Ongar

An update is still awaited on the following:

- Approx 50m overgrown weeds by 2 Little Colemans - Highway Rangers to cut back
- Surface Water flooding - 2 sites, first where Romford Road meets London Road on approach to Wash Bridge. Second, 1km further along road (LEPP132039). - 12/1/16 - Update 12th January 2016 from Matthew Valentine - A topographical survey at two sites and drainage cleanse are due to be complete by the end of the month. It was **AGREED** the Clerk should ask for a copy of the topographical survey.

e) Other Highway Issues

The following issues are yet to be resolved, with no action being agreed by ECC:

- Missing Gateway sign, Stanford Rivers - ECC has stated they will not replace. It was **AGREED** the Clerk would have a new sign created.
- White Bear Public Footpath - ECC has confirmed that this overgrowth was cut 13th January 2016.
- Cllr Buckley asked if there was any update from Cllr McEwen regarding moving the 40MPH sign outside the Church on Church Lane, Stanford Rivers to nearer the gas pipe at Mutton Row. The Clerk stated there had not been and that she would check.
- The Clerk confirmed she would report the two VAS signs at either end of Stanford Rivers as not working.

P14.176 NEWS AND VIEWS

Councillors Recalled that Paul Rocks, Editor of News and Views stepped down from his position at the end of December. Regrettably, nobody has come forward to take on the task of managing this well read publication, and as such the Chairman and Clerk will endeavour to keep it going until such time as an Editor comes forward. The Chairman stated that he would arrange a meeting at which the Clerk, Paul Rocks and himself would attend to agree a way forward. Cllr Hollington stated that he would bring a copy of the Ongar publication to the next PC meeting as it would be a useful tool to assist with News and Views. The possible closure of Barclays Bank in Ongar would be a good article for the next edition.

P14.177 BUDGET / PRECEPT 2016/2017

Councillors **CONSIDERED** the budget, and subsequently the precept for 2016/2017. Details of the 2014/2015 figures, and current and expected figures for 2015/2016 was provided for members during the meeting.

Councillors noted that for 2015/2016, EFDC awarded the Parish Council £1,216 by way of a Parish Support Grant to offset the negative effect of the welfare reforms. This was based on a Tax Base of 348. On 30th November 2015 the Clerk received an email from Rob Pavey, Assistant Director of Resource at EFDC, advising that as EFDC has not yet received notification from the Government as to their financial settlement for 2016/2017, they are unable to provide us with the grant amount for the 2016/2017 financial year, however a reduction of 10% is anticipated. Subsequent to this the Government announced that the reduction in EFDC's settlement funding assessment for 2016/17 is 16.6%. The actual reduction in the grant passed on to the Parish council will be considered by the EFDC Finance Cabinet on 21 January. For planning purposes, the Parish Council has been asked to assume the existing policy of reducing the LCTS grant by the same amount as the overall reduction will continue and as such we should allow for a 16.6% reduction. This has been accounted for in the expected income, meaning the expected Parish Support Grant for 2016/2017 will be £991 - a decrease of £225, and based on a tax base of 349.6.

Councillors should also note that a cap remains on EFDC's ability to raise its precept without the need to go to a referendum - the cap being 2%. This cap does not currently apply to town and parish councils. Both Essex County Council and Essex Police have confirmed their intention to raise their precept by the maximum allowable without referendum.

After discussion, the following budget and precept was **AGREED**.

Income

	<u>BUDGET 2016/2017</u>
Precept	20,298
Bank Interest	35
Parish Support Grant	991
Other Income	0
Total	21,324

EXPENDITURE

	<u>BUDGET 2016/2017</u>
	£
Clerks Salary	5,400
Subscriptions	310
Insurance	252
Hire of Hall	120
Audit Fee	100
Postage/Stationery/photocopying	150
Car Mileage	100
Miscellaneous Expenses	300
Election Expenses	400
Toot Hill Village Hall	500
Christmas Tree Event SR	600
Grounds Maintenance	3,060
Open Spaces	120
Training	100
Grant - Church Yard	600
Speed Gun	200
News & Views Post and Distribution	1,600
PWLB Payments	3,340

Toot Hill Village Fete	150
Toot Hill VH Car park works	0
Various Parish Works	2,000
Anticipated Misc Donations:	0
Contribution, Neighbourhood Watch	200
Total	<u>19,602</u>

Councillors **AGREED** that a sum of £2,000 would be included in the budget to cover any works required in the Parish for which other responsible authorities were failing in their duties. Any expenditure under this cost heading would need to be agreed by full Parish Council.

P14.178 FINANCIAL REPORTS

List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts - The following payments were authorised:

Reference	To	For	Amount
BACS	Thornwood Grounds Maintenance	Grounds Maintenance - November	£240.00
BACS	North Weald Bassett PC	2 x Wreaths Remembrance Sunday Services N/W	£36.00
BACS	Alan Buckley	Reimbursement cost of Santa for Christmas event in Stanford Rivers, and Christmas Tree	£335.00
BACS	Adriana Jones	Reimbursement of cost for mulled wine and refreshments for Christmas event	£82.63
BACS	Adriana Jones	Clerk salary December and January	£720.00 <i>(paid monthly)</i>
BACS	Adriana Jones	Reimbursement of Coffee/Tea urn and postage	£29.07
BACS	HMRC	PAYE December and January	£180.00 <i>(paid monthly)</i>

P14.179 TOOT HILL VILLAGE HALL

Councillors were reminded that the official opening of the Car Park has been set for 8th February 2016 at 6pm. Cllr Hume, Chairman of ECC will be in attendance. Councillors were asked to spread the word to invite as many members of the public as possible. It was **AGREED** that up to £1,000 could be spent on any required ground works at the Village Hall to ensure it looks respectable for the opening. Cllr Jackson suggested that leaflets advertising the event should be created, and that he would be happy to post them through houses along London Road. The Chairman confirmed he would be happy to publicise throughout Toot Hill also.

P14.180 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Councillors **NOTED** the dates of the next meetings:

- 10th March 2016
- 8th February 2016 - Toot Hill Village Hall car park opening
- 12th May 2016
- 14th July 2016
- 8th September 2016

- 10th November 2016

Signed Date