

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL
Held In The Parish Centre, Lockleys Drive. Welwyn.
on 27TH JANUARY 2009
This commenced AT 7.45 PM**

7.30- 7.45pm PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: No members of the public arrived to speak to the Council.

PRESENT: Chairman, Councillor J Blackburn and Councillors M. Benson, S Butler, I Colpitts, C Hukin, L McLusky, P Neville, H Ober, J Roper and I Skidmore.

IN ATTENDANCE: R Findlay. Clerk

2009/001 WELCOME.

The Chairman welcomed all present and opened the meeting at 7.45pm.

2009/002 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Cllr. L. Page (Holiday)

At this juncture, the Chairman gave thanks for the contribution Cllr. John Roper had made to the Parish Council who was attending his last meeting. Cllr. Roper was due to resign on 31st January 2009. He has been in office for 9 years; three of which he was Chairman of the Council. Cllr. Roper was commended for only missing two Council meetings during his nine years.

Cllr. Roper said he had enjoyed his time with the Parish Council and thanked the Councillors and the Clerk for their good work and support during his time on the Council.

2009/003 DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

None

2009/004 MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER 2008

Resolved unanimously, the minutes of the meeting are an accurate and true record then duly signed by the Chairman.

2009/005 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 16TH DECEMBER 2008

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2009/006 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

a) Planning and Licensing Committee:

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr. Hukin reported on the meeting held on 23rd December 2008 and 6th January 2009.

It was agreed that the Tripartite Working Party should meet to discuss the planning needs for Welwyn parish as Welwyn Hatfield Council were reaching the 'issues and options' stage.

Resolved Unanimously, a date to be arranged for the Tripartite Working Party to meet as soon as possible. *(Consists of, the Parish Council, Welwyn Planning and Amenity Group and the Parish Plan Action Group).*

b) Leisure Facilities & Open Spaces Committee:

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr. Benson reported on the meeting held on 13th January 2009.

The Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Committee had reviewed the 'Cemetery and Garden of Remembrance Regulations' and **recommended** to Council that the following changes/additions are accepted.

Vehicles:

a) That the speed limit is reduced to 5mph.

b) That only authorised service vehicles, funeral cars and disabled cars are allowed in the Cemetery.

Transfer of Grant of Right, to be registered:

Must be registered with the Parish Council office on the Council's recommended form.

Receptacles for flowers:

a) That no mementos or other items be placed on graves without permission.

b) 14 days after burial the Council staff will remove floral tributes and dispose of them unless a specific written request has been made to the Clerk for tributes to be removed by the family.

c) Glass shades, candles and halogen lamps are not to be placed on any grave.

Headstones/Monuments and Inscriptions to be approved:

a) No metal vases, railings, fencing, kerbs or other structures enclosing graves, other than headstones will be permitted in any sections of the cemetery from 01 January 2009 (exception is made to burials within the eight months prior to 01 January 2009).

The Council advises that masonry should not be placed on graves until at least six to eight months after interment. This allows for settlement.

All installations must be in accordance with current NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) recommendations.

b) The Council will remove any unauthorised memorials, kerbs, railings, ornamentation or horticultural decoration. The Council may recover the cost of removal of these items from the holder of The Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial to that grave, in accordance with the powers and procedures set out in Article 14 of The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

Resolved unanimously. The Council accepts all the changes/additions to the regulations.

c) Finance Committee:

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr. Skidmore reported on the meeting held on 20th January 2009.

The Clerk was congratulated for spotting the error on Special Expenses and immediately reporting it to the Borough Council so it could be amended. The Clerk has been notified that it had now been corrected. (*Details are shown under Minute no. 2009/012*)

The Clerk had checked the lease to investigate the responsibility of the hedge-cutting at the Bowls club. She reported that the Council are responsible for maintaining the outside of the hedge and the Bowls club are responsible for cutting the inside.

The Chairman and Clerk reported on the Councils Finances.

It **recommended** that the Council accept the Income and Expenditure for December 2008 as shown below.

Payments

Gross: £41,362.87

Minus Bank Transfers from Accounts (*£22,380.64*)

= £18,982.23 paid out in the month of December 2008

Net: £40905.05

Minus Bank Transfers from Accounts (*£22,380.64*)

= £18,524.41 paid out in the month of December 2008

Receipts

Gross and Net: £29,923.02

Minus Bank Transfers from Accounts (*£22,380.64*)

= £7,542.38 received for the month of December 2008

Bank Balances at 31st December 2008

Current Account	£1,081.33
Business Premium Account	£56,922.06
Business Reserve	£6,050.67
Treasury Account	£90,500.00

Resolved unanimously, the Council accept the income and expenditure for December 2008.

2009/007

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STANDING ORDERS

The Finance Committee has reviewed the Financial Standing Orders and recommended the following changes which would fall in line with the annual budget timetable.

D.2 Annual Estimates

2.1 "... November..." to be changed to "... October..."

2.3 "...January..." to be changed to "...December..."

D.3 Budgetary Control

3.3 "...quarterly..." to be changed to "...monthly..."

D.5 Banking arrangements and cheques

5.3 "...at least..." to be removed.

Resolved unanimously to accept the changes.

2009/008

REVIEW OF GRANT AID APPLICATIONS

The Clerk had previously circulated copies of the Draft Grant Aid application form to Council. She then presented the draft application form for requests for donations from the Council for the financial year 2009/2010.

It was agreed that the form would give more information to the Council when a request is received. It was also agreed that for the present time there would not be a deadline date for requests to be considered during the year, but the process would be reviewed annually.

Resolved unanimously, the application form is accepted.

2009/009

REVIEW OF THE COUNCILS FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

The Clerk had produced a detailed Financial Risk Assessment; which had been previously circulated to members of the Council. The Clerk had also liaised with the Chairman of Finance, Cllr. Skidmore.

After discussion it was **Resolved unanimously**, all actions and reviews listed would be acted upon.

It was proposed by Cllr. Skidmore that the Council accepts the comprehensive Financial Risk Assessment.

Resolved unanimously, to accept the comprehensive Financial Risk Assessment.

2009/010

APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE YEAR END ACCOUNTS 2008/2009.

At the last meeting of the Council the Clerk was asked to speak with Mr Ray Adams to ask if he would agree to again be the Council's Independent Internal Auditor.

(Note: Mr Adams has previous acted as the Independent Internal Auditor for the Council for a number of years previously and is qualified to do, he is totally independent of the Council).

The Clerk reported that Mr Adams has agreed to be the Council's independent Internal Auditor for the year end accounts 2008/2009.

It was proposed by Cllr. Skidmore and seconded by Cllr. Neville that Mr Ray Adams be the Independent Internal Auditor for 2008\2009

Resolved unanimously.

2009/011

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S RISK SCHEDULE

The Clerk had drafted the Council's Risk Schedule; which had previously been circulated to members of the Council. This shows the frequency of the Council's activity reviews.

It was proposed by Cllr. Benson and seconded by Cllr. Skidmore to accept the Risk Schedule.

Resolved unanimously.

2009/012

SPECIAL EXPENSES/COUNCIL TAX BASE

Council Tax base: The document was duly noted.

Special Expenses:

As mentioned earlier in the proceeding the Special Expenses for the Civic Centre had been corrected to show the correct figure of £50,000. *(This was due to the arrears which were paid of £10,000 in 2008/2009 but were not shown in the Special Expenses due to the negotiations with the Parish Council only being completed after Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council had set the Special Expenses for the Borough for 2008/2009).*

It was agreed that there was another discrepancy in regard to Special Expenses under the 'Play areas' heading.

Resolved the Clerk will liaise with Cllr. Neville on this issue.

The Council discussed correspondence from the Borough Council dated 04 December 2008 in response to a meeting held with Bob Jewell, Chief financial officer and the Parish Council at the Parish Centre.

Mr Jewell misunderstood what was asked in regard to Danesbury and Singlers Marsh.

Resolved unanimously that:

- a) the Clerk contact Mr Jewell to ask that the Parish Council know what is being budgeted for and how it is being spent. This would show transparency and enable the Council to explain to their parishioners.
- b) that the Parish Council has an input on what the money is being spent on.
- c) ask Mr Jewell if he would attend another meeting with the Parish Council to discuss this matter.

2009/013

WELWYN NORTH STATION

Cllr. Neville reported on the proposed changes for Welwyn North Station. After discussion it was:

Resolved unanimously that the Clerk send a letter of objection to the changes.

2009/014

WHBC STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT.

(Availability of sites)

After discussion. It was agreed that the Parish Council had not identified any land which would be suitable to release for extra housing.

Resolved unanimously, the Clerk notifies the Borough Council.

2009/015

CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2010/2011

The Chairman and Clerk had read through the consultation document and reported their findings.

After discussion, the Council recommended that people with children should read and respond to the document.

Resolved that the Council does not to submit an observation to this consultation.

2009/016 ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009

The Clerk reported that she was producing the Annual Report for 2008/2009 and asked that Chairpersons of the Council's Committee submit at least 300 words on what the Committee's accomplishments have been throughout the year.

Resolved that the reports would be submitted to the Clerk by the end of February 2009.

EXEMPT BUSINESS

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following items on the Agenda; 2009/017, the Chairman as this point stated that he would excluded the public and accredited representatives of newspapers on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the items.

2009/017 CLERKS CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT/JOB DESCRIPTION (Exempt Business)

The Chairman reported he was to give the recommendations of the Recruitment Working Party from the meeting held on 13th January '09. *(All notes produced during the process of reviewing the Clerks Contract/Job description are held in the 'Confidential File')*.

The Clerk had volunteered to leave the meeting to enable the Council discussed the recommendations in private. This was accepted by Council.

After discussion the Clerk was asked to rejoin the meeting.

Resolved unanimously to accept the recommendations of the Recruitment Working Party:

- a. the Clerk's contract, after slight amendments (as agreed with the Clerk) is the contact and job description as recommended by The National Association of Local Councils & Society of Local Council Clerk.
- b. The Clerk is moved to the new scale recommended and salary adjusted and backdated accordingly to 01 April 2008.

2009/018 CLOSE OF MEETING.

The Chairman thanked every one for attending and closed the meeting at 9.09pm

Signed:..... Chairman of the Council

Date: