

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 25th NOVEMBER 2008 AT
THE PARISH CENTRE LOCKLEYS DRIVE WELWYN
THAT COMMENCED AT 7.45PM.

PRESENT: Councillor J Blackburn (Chairman) and Cllrs M Benson, S Butler,
I Colpitts, C Hukin, P Neville, H Ober, J Roper and I Skidmore.

IN ATTENDANCE: R Findlay (Clerk) and J Lewis (Office Administrator) and one member
of the public.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs L Page and L .McLusky (Both other commitments)

2008/130 OPENING OF MEETING

The Chairman welcomed all present and declared the Council meeting open.

2008/131 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

None

2008/132 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28th OCTOBER 2008

Subject to an error in the date; this was corrected, then it was **Resolved** that the minutes were a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chairman.

**2008/133 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
28th OCTOBER 2008**

It was reported that the appeal for the Former Welwyn Ford Garage had been withdrawn by the applicant and consequently the public meeting has been cancelled.

It was reported that Cllr. Blackburn attended the meeting with Cllr. Neville in place of Cllr. Roper. The minutes of the meeting have been circulated.

2008/134 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Planning & Licensing

The Chairman, Cllr Hukin, presented a report of the last meeting.

Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces

The Chairman, Cllr Benson, presented a report of the last meeting. It was reported that the committee were discussing the possibility of the Council purchasing a Mini Bus for the Community.

Finance

The Chairman, Cllr Skidmore reported that the Committee had met on 31st October 2008 because an earlier meeting had not been quorate.

In the confusion, all the documents for the accounts of September 2008 had not been circulated.

It was **Resolved** to defer recommendation for approval to the next Council meeting.

As all the papers had been circulated for the October 2008 accounts, the Finance Chairman recommended that the Council approves the income and expenditure for October 2008 of £37,335.97 gross (£36,157.63 net).

Resolved that the Council approved the expenditure for October 2008 totalling £37,335.97 gross (£36,157.63 net).

The Bank balances at 31st October 2008 are as follows:

• Current Account	£1,000.00
• Premium Business Account	£83,997.30
• Business Reserve account	£6,039.18
• Treasury Account	£90,500.00

It was reported that the Council had to be careful with its expenditure for the remainder of the current financial year.

It was **Resolved** that the Finance Committee present their recommendations for the Budget and Precept of 2009/2010 later in the proceedings.

2008/135 AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2008.

The Clerk presented the Audit Report produced by the external Auditors, BDO Stoy Hayward.

The Clerk had previously circulated the External Auditor comments. The following comments were made in their report. The Clerk reported on the comments of the Auditor.

The Clerk had previously circulated the Annual Return to the Council.

1. Internal Audit. The Clerk recommended that the Council changed its Internal Auditor. Members recommended that Mr Ray Adams be approached to be the Council's Internal Auditor as he is independent of the Council.

Resolved, the Council accepts the Auditors comments. The Clerk to approach Mr Adams.

2. Financial Risk Assessment. The Clerk reported that this had been done before the end of the 2007-2008 financial year, but due to the Clerk being on long term sick; it was not presented to Council before the Year end. This should not re-occur in future years.

Resolved, the Council accepts the Auditors comments and the Clerk's explanation.

The Council **Resolved** to accept and approve the Annual Return for the financial year ended 2007/2008

The Clerk had also previously circulated a copy of matters drawn to the Council's attention by the External Auditor.

- a. Review of the effectiveness of internal audit. This was addressed and a resolution made earlier in the proceedings.
- b. Risk Assessment. This was addressed and a resolution made earlier in the proceedings.
- c. Asset Register. The External Auditor requires two valuations on the Council's assets: one based on the insured value of each asset and the other where depreciation had been calculated. The Clerk advised up-to-date valuations on some assets need to be obtained.

Resolved, the Council accepts the Auditors comments. The Clerk to contact the District Valuer. The Clerk and the Finance Chairman to compile a new asset register.

- d. Expenditure Powers. The Clerk reported that an error had been made and that this had been corrected and would not re-occur.

Resolved, the Council accepts the Auditors comments

- e. Comparatives re-stated. The Clerk reported that she was to investigate this with NALC as there appeared to be a disparity on the requirements of the External Auditor and their immediate predecessors.

Resolved, the Council instructs the Clerk to enquire if the practice of the present Auditor instructing the Clerk to change the figures on the Annual Return for 2006/2007 in sections 1, 6 and 9 when the Annual Return for 2006/2007 had already been audited and shown to be correct by their predecessor.

Notice for the Conclusion of Audit.

It was **Resolved** that the 'Notice for the Conclusion of Audit' be displayed.

EXEMPT BUSINESS

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item on the Agenda; **namely "Staffing" in the draft budget for 2009/2010**, the Chairman as this point 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.

At this juncture, the Office Administrator and member of the public left the meeting.

2008/136 BUDGET 2009/2010 AND SETTING OF THE PRECEPT FOR 2009/2010

The draft budget together with the Clerks notes and estimates had been previously circulated to all Council members.

At this Juncture Cllr. H. Ober declared a personal interest in 'Spindlebury Cottage' and would leave the meeting when the item was to be discussed.

The Clerk presented the Budget together with the Chairman of Finance.

The Chairman of Finance recommended that the Council accept the budget but that any other capital items had not yet been discussed because it was thought that these should be discussed fully in full Council.

It was agreed to go through and discuss each of the elements.

- Staff Costs and Salaries - Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- General Administration - Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Audit - Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Transport and Plant - Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Assistance to Local Groups- Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Allotments - Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Cemetery Churchyard and General Maintenance- Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Leisure Facilities - Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Civic Centre- Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.

- Parish Centre - Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Pavilion/Playing field- Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- White Hill Centre - Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Public Toilets - Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Other Buildings/Tenancies- Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Loan Repayments- Council accepted the Clerks recommendations.
- Capital Items – No decision reached.

At this juncture the Clerk left the meeting, due to her concerns that some members of the council were challenging her advice and therefore undermining her statutory responsibility to advise the Council.

[Note: Subsequent to the meeting, discussions have taken place between the Clerk and Chairman of the Council and agreement reached, to ensure that in future Councillors adhere to good practice to ensure that the Council can reach informed decisions based on the advice of the Clerk].

Signed:.....Chairman of the Council

Date:.....2008

ESTIMATE 2009/2010

Expenditure Heads	2009/2010	
	Inc.	Estimate Exp
Staff Costs/Salaries		142,521
General Administration	5	20,345
Audit		2,000
Transport & Plant		5,558
Assistance to Local Groups		2,000
Allotments	1,800	2,650
Cemetery, Churchyard & Gen. Maint.	6,200	18,750
Leisure Facilities		1,400
Civic Centre	22,000	63,080
Parish Centre	200	3,300
Pavilion/Playing fields	6,500	19,950
Whitehill Centre	9,000	8,600
Public Toilets		2,550
Other Buildings/Tenancies	34,116	
Loan Repayments		1,312
Civic Centre Rent Arrears		10,000
Capital Items		9,060
Contingency Fund		5,000
Agency Services		
Advertising		2,500
Interest	3,000	
Planning		
	82,821	320,576
Transfers from Reserves		
Transfer from Reserves for Captial Items	9,060	
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves		9,000
	9,060	9,000
Total Expenditure		329,576
Less Total Income	91,881	
		237,695
Amount Precepted	26% *	

(PC Actual 4.7%)