

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF
WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 12TH JULY 2011 AT
THE PARISH CENTRE LOCKLEYS DRIVE WELWYN
WHICH COMMENCED AT 7.30PM**

PRESENT: Councillor P Neville (Chairman), Councillor J Blackburn (Vice Chairman) and Councillors M Benson, M Castle, C Hukin, L McLusky and I Skidmore.

IN ATTENDANCE: A S Pack (Clerk to the Council)

APOLOGIES: Councillors J Khan and B McKay

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Three members of the public were present

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chairman welcomed the two new Councillors B Morris and A Woolgar who had signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, in presence of the Clerk this evening.

2011/084 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Morris declared an interest in item 2011/088 of the Agenda as he is a Governor of St Mary's School.

2011/085 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 20TH JUNE 2011

RESOLVED "that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 20th June 2011 be approved and signed".

Unanimously agreed.

2011/086 WELWYN HATFIELD BROUGH COUNCIL (WHBC) HOW MANY NEW HOMES QUESTIONNAIRE

A copy of the questionnaire was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 1
A Report by Councillor Skidmore was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 2
Included with the Agenda also was the WHBC Core Strategy Consultation Document

Councillor Skidmore presented his report which was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 2. Councillor Skidmore considered the Council should make its decisions based on the evidence presented in the above WHBC documents summarised in his report. Councillor Skidmore also considered the Council should consider what WHBC should do and not solely focus on the impact of the Core Strategy on Welwyn Parish. Later in the year when specific sites are considered then this would be a different matter.

Councillor Neville requested each Councillor to summarise their views of how the Welwyn Hatfield Borough should proceed over the next twenty years.

Councillor Blackburn: Having read all the documents, Councillor Blackburn would support Option 2, with a higher proportion of affordable housing. Concern was expressed that there should be the minimum use of Green Belt land and a minimum rise in the growth of jobs. There has been a significant rise in jobs over recent years with no comparative rise in parking provision.

Councillor Morris: Concerned about the possible expansion of villages which could create one large urban sprawl, with communities losing their unique identities. Councillor Morris would support Option 2 or Option 3

Councillor Hukin: the proposed options are all about number with no provision for the required infrastructure for such developments nor the money required to provide the infrastructure. In the past WHBC have exceeded the number of housing designated each year therefore with this in mind Councillor Hukin would support Option 2

Councillor Castle: Would want to protect the Green Belt for future generations and would oppose any growth of villages in the Borough. Councillor Castle would rather see existing brown field sites used and infill where appropriate. Would therefore support Option 1.

Councillor McLusky: In 1991 the East of England Plan predicted the area would be a desert because of the lack of water in the area, recently a very dry spell in the East of England had proved a problem. Rather than the expansion of existing settlements, Councillor McLusky would prefer existing disused industrial sites and factories to be developed for housing and therefore supports Option 1. with the heart but Option 2 with the head.

Councillor Woolgar: Lived 30 years in the area and has seen an upsurge in traffic movements with no obvious long-term infrastructure planning, and although agrees the Council must accept some progress would support Option 2 which minimises growth to an acceptable level.

Councillor Benson: Although this is Borough wide consultation, there is a requirement for the Council to give their views on how the proposals will impact in our own localities as this will help to inform their decisions. Councillor Benson supports Option 2

Councillor Skidmore: WHBC have a very difficult decision to make. The figures in the document are a rational approach to growth in the next twenty years and as there are presently 3,000 people on the housing list growth must be considered to accommodate this growing need for housing. Councillor Skidmore supports Option 4 as this reduces the Green Belt by only 5%

Councillor Neville: As WHBC historically has been following the principles set out in Option 2, and on a point of stability he would support Option 2.

It was proposed by Councillor Neville, seconded by Councillor Benson and

RESOLVED "that Option 5 be eliminated".
Unanimously agree

It was proposed by Councillor Neville and seconded by Councillor Benson

“that Welwyn Parish Council supports Option 2”.

It was proposed by Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor McLusky that the above proposal be amended to add

“that the proportion of affordable housing be increased”.

No further amendments were proposed, despite the Chairman’s invitation to do so.

Vote to accept the amendment

6 for

2 against

1 abstention.

The amendment was carried.

No further amendments were proposed despite the Chairman’s invitation to do so.

RESOLVED “that Welwyn Parish Council supports Option 2 and request that the proportion of affordable housing be increased”.

Vote: 7 for

2 against

The motion was carried.

Following discussion, the questionnaire to be completed as follows:

Option 1

Comment

On balance Welwyn Parish Council consider that avoiding all encroachment on Green land is probably unrealistic in the longer term so do not support this option.

Option 2

The Council Support this option

Comment

- Welwyn Parish Council request that the proportion of affordable housing be increased
- The Council support this option for preserving the character of the Borough whilst allowing sustainable growth
- Were a community has supported a particular significant development, the community be given the credit this development has given in terms of housing numbers, in future development of the area.

Option 3

The Council support the protection of the Green Belt and would therefore not support this Option for the following reasons:

- This level of development is more likely to impact on landscape character, setting of towns and villages, and local biodiversity
- Risk of water shortage, the Southeast of England being an extremely dry region.
- Possible need to upgrade sewage infrastructure
- May reduce area of productive agricultural land close to towns
- The amount of Green Belt land being used for building could erode land around communities and increase coalescence of communities

Option 4

The Council do not support this option for the following reasons:

- At the rate of housing growth, the existing infrastructure will be overloaded before it is ever likely to be improved, especially the Borough's green infrastructure, the roads, the railway, and in particular the A1(M)
- Risk of water shortage, the Southeast of England being an extremely dry region.
- Probable need to upgrade sewage infrastructure, and the existing sewage treatment facility is almost impossible to expand,
- Concerns over whether this level of growth is deliverable
- Likely to result in a significant reduction in productive agricultural land close to urban areas.
- The amount of Green Belt land being used for building would use up land separating communities and cause coalescence, or might require new settlements to be created within the Green Belt, in either case detrimentally to the character of the Borough.

Option 5

The Council do not support this Option for the following reasons:

- Significant impact on the character of towns, villages and the wider landscape is likely.
- Risk of water shortage, the Southeast of England being an extremely dry region.
- Probable need to upgrade sewage infrastructure, and the existing sewage treatment facility is almost impossible to expand,
- Major impacts on infrastructure capacity are predicted, in particular in relation to transport, e.g. on the A1(M) and water treatment
- More likely to result in impacts on air quality through transport emissions
- Significant concerns over whether this level of growth is deliverable as the build rates have not been sustained over economic cycles.
- The amount of Green Belt land being used for building would use up land separating communities and cause coalescence, or might require new

settlements to be created within the Green Belt, in either case detrimentally to the character of the Borough and the quality of life in it.

It was proposed by Councillor Neville, seconded by Councillor Blackburn and

RESOLVED "that responsibility for the final wording be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with Councillor Neville and Councillor Skidmore".

Unanimously agreed.

2011/087 PROPOSED PARKING CONTROLS IN DIGSWELL, WELWYN

Hertfordshire Highways request the Council's response to the proposed introduction of parking controls in Burnham Green Road, Harmer Green Lane, White/Horse Lane and Orchard Road. Details attached as were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 3.

Following discussion it was agreed by a majority vote that the Council call into question the necessity to install yellow lines in a rural village setting.

2011/088 CAR PARK RESURFACING

Three tenders have been received to re-surface the Ottway Walk car park, Area 1, to include the existing car park and widening and re-surface the overflow car park adjacent to the existing car park, Area 2. Paperwork was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 4

It was proposed by Councillor Neville, seconded by Councillor Blackburn and

RESOLVED "that the quotation from Home Counties Surfacing Ltd, at a total cost of £ 47,800 to complete works to Area 1 and Area 2 of the Ottway Walk Car Park, be accepted".

**Vote: 7 for
2 abstentions
The motion was carried.**

2011/089 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING (EXEMPT BUSINESS) HELD ON THE 20th JUNE 2011

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council Meeting (Exempt Business) held on the 20th June 2011 be approved and signed."

2011/090 CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.12pm.

Signed.....Chairman, Welwyn Parish Council
25th July 2011.

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IN ATTENDANCE: A S Pack (Clerk to the Council)

APOLOGIES: Councillors J Khan and B McKay

EXEMPT BUSINESS

To exclude the Press and Public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 for the following items on the Agenda, on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of confidential contractual information.

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