

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 25th JANUARY 2010 AT
THE PARISH CENTRE LOCKLEYS DRIVE WELWYN
WHICH COMMENCED AT 7.45PM**

PRESENT: Councillor J Blackburn (Chairman) and Councillors M Benson, S Butler, C Hukin, R McKay, P Neville, H Ober and I Skidmore

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors A Blakett, I Colpitts and L McLusky

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: One member of the public was present.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chairman welcomed all present and opened the meeting.

2010/001 DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

Councillor Ober declared an interest in item 2010/007 and advised he would leave the room at this point.

2010/002 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21st DECEMBER 2009

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 21st December 2009, be approved and signed.

Unanimously agreed.

2010/003 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21st DECEMBER 2009.

There were no matters arising.

2010/004 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Planning and Licensing Committee. Councillor C Hukin Chairman of the Committee, presented a report of the meetings held on the 1st and 22nd December 2009 and 12th January 2010 and answered questions.

Leisure Facilities and Opens Spaces Committee. Councillor M Benson Vice Chairman of the Committee, presented a report of the meeting held on the 11th January 2010 and answered questions.

2010/010 St Mary's Church Wall. The St Mary's church representatives had requested that the absolute minimum of mechanical plant be used during the refurbishment/replacement of the church walls which could mean the project has to be completed using hand digging which would be costly. The Council felt this was an unacceptable condition as large mechanical plant had been used in the churchyard during the recent construction of the new church hall. It was agreed that the Chairman, Councillor Blackburn and Councillor McLusky would attend future meetings with church representatives.

2010/013. Digswell Playing Fields The Contract Manager of Finesse Leisure Partnership (FLP) has offered to lead a group of 'Friends' to clear the river banks, open up a walkway and to improve the football pitch.

2010/014 Proposed Youth Club. A Youth Sub-Committee meeting is to be held on the 4th February 2010 in the Parish Centre.

2010/005 SPECIAL EXPENSES 2010/2011

Details of Special Expenses for 2010/2011 were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 1.

Concern was expressed that for Digswell Playing Fields, a departmental overhead of £ 4,570 had been charged for the 2010/2011 year. This represents a 71% increase in expenditure. As this had not been charged in previous years, and no employees of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) are involved in the delivery of this service, the Acting Clerk to request clarification on this charge. The Handside site in Welwyn Garden City had incurred no special expense charge for 2010/2011 however the previous year £ 22,500 had been charged to this cost centre. Clarification to be sought on this point also.

**2010/006 INTERNAL AUDIT 1ST APRIL 2009 – 31ST MARCH 2010
Internal Audit Programme**

The Council's internal auditors, Auditing Solutions Ltd prepared a programme (scope) to examine in detail the Councils internal procedures to include

- Corporate Governance,
- Accounting procedures
- Asset and management of risks
- Precept determination and budget control
- Income control systems,
- Salaries, asset registers,
- Bank reconciliations
- Financial statements.

Details were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 2

It was agreed that the Council formally determine the level at which expenditure is to be capitalised (rule of thumb – over £ 1,000 on individual items or a group of items such as computer hardware and software). This item to be included in the Council' Financial Regulations.

Following discussion it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Skidmore and

RESOLVED “that the Internal Audit programme detailed in Appendix 2 be adopted”.

Unanimously Agreed.

Internal Audit Report 2009-2010 (First Interim)

The interim Internal Audit Report for 2009.2010 was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 3

It was proposed by the Chairman Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Skidmore and

RESOLVED “that the Internal Audit Report 2009.2010 (First Interim) be accepted”.

Unanimously agreed

A second Internal Audit is to be undertaken prior to the year end audit, dates to be advised.

2010/007 REVIEW OF RENTS RECEIVED FROM TENANTS OF COUNCIL OWNED PROPERTY

Spindlebury Cottage £ 825 per month= £9,900per annum

Following discussion it was agreed that two local Estate Agents be requested to value the rental for the property per annum, bearing in mind its position on the playing fields. Report to be made at the next meeting.

Bowls Club Lease

The Bowls Club lease was due for review December 09. The Bowls Club was informed that a review was to be undertaken and that a quotation from Brown and Lee Chartered Surveyors of £ 500 to review the lease had been received. The Bowls Club requested an offer of a 20% increase in the annual rental be considered rather than undertaking a professional valuation. The rent for the previous 5 year period was £ 1040.

Following advice for the Council's External Auditor, that the terms of the lease should be followed and a professional valuation sought for the lease for the period 1st December 2009-30th November 2014. A valuation has been sought, report awaited.

Sports and Social Club Lease

The Sports and Social Club Lease is due for renewal March 2010. The Sports and Social Club have agreed that Brown and Lee Chartered Surveyors undertake a professional valuation. Report awaited.

2010/008 GRANT AID

The Road Victim Trust request financial support, documentation was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 4. Following discussion it was agreed, as the Council have limited funds, they are unable to support this request. The Council support local groups and charities rather than County or National organisations. Councillor Neville tabled a draft Grant Awarding Policy. Attached as **APPENDIX 1**
It was agreed this would be an Agenda item for the next Full Council meeting.

2010/009 POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS (PCSO's)

PCSO Agreement. The Chairman and Inspector Grout signed the agreement for Welwyn Parish Council to financially support 50% of the employment of a PCSO in the Welwyn Parish for two years 1st April 2010 – 31st March 2012 at a cost of £ 14,250 for the first year with a possible inflation linked increase for the second year.

The signed agreement to be approved by Full Council was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 5. Following discussion it was agreed that 4.7.1 be changed to ensure the whole of the Parish is covered by the part funded PCSO.

It was proposed by the Chairman Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Skidmore and

RESOLVED "that the amended agreement be signed by the Chairman"

Unanimously agreed.

The Chairman advised that at least two fully trained PCSO's have expressed an interest in undertaking the Welwyn Parish post.

Provision of a Bicycle for use by the Welwyn PCSO. The Council to consider funding the supply of a bicycle for use by the Welwyn dedicated PCSO at a cost of £ 450. This includes purchase of a bicycle and the relevant protective clothing.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor Butler, seconded by Councillor Neville and

RESOLVED "that the Council fund the purchase of a bicycle and protective clothing, at a cost of £ 450".

Vote: 7 For
1 abstention

The motion was carried.

The PCSO Update January 2010 was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 6

EXEMPT BUSINESS

Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following items on the Agenda, the Chairman at 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.

2010/010 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING (EXEMPT BUSINESS) HELD ON THE 21ST DECEMBER 2009

RESOLVED" that the Minutes of the Council Meeting (Exempt Business) held on the 21ST December 2009 be approved and signed".

2010/012 The Chairman thanked all present and declared the meeting closed at 9.05PM.

Signed.....Chairman, Welwyn Parish Council

Dated 22ND February 2010