

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 28th MARCH 2011 AT
THE PARISH CENTRE LOCKLEYS DRIVE WELWYN
WHICH COMMENCED AT 7.45PM**

- PRESENT:** Councillor J Blackburn (Chairman) and Councillors M Benson, S Butler, I Colpitts, C Hukin and I Skidmore
- IN ATTENDANCE:** A Pack (Clerk to the Council)
- APOLOGIES** Councillors L McLusky, B Morris and P Neville.
- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** Two members of the public were present.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chairman welcomed all present and opened the meeting.

2011/025 DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

There were no declarations of interest.

2011/026 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28th FEBRUARY 2011.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 28th February 2011, be approved and signed".

Unanimously agreed.

2011/027 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28th FEBRUARY 2011.

There were no matters arising.

2011/028 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Planning and Licensing: Councillor C Hukin, Chairman of the Committee, presented a report of the meeting held on the 8th March 2011 and answered questions.

2011/029 FINANCE REPORT

It was noted that RBS Software Solutions are to close the Council's Accounts for the financial year 2010/2011 on the 16th May 2011 and the end of year Internal Audit is to be undertaken by Auditing Solutions on the 18th May 2011. The Finance Committee meeting scheduled to take place on the 16th May 2011 has therefore been postponed and will now take place on the 13th June 2011 to enable end of year accounts to be recommended for approval by the Finance Committee to Full Council

2011/030 PROVISION OF PUBLIC TOILETS IN WELWYN.

Councillor McKay previously circulated a draft 'Public Use of Private Toilet Facilities Agreement', plus copies of signage used by East Hertfordshire District Council. Copies attached as

APPENDIX 1

Councillor McKay reported that there are existing Community Toilet Schemes in Ware and Bishop Stortford and as these schemes are already in existence he proposed that the Welwyn scheme adopt the same name, as this would give consistency in the County. This was agreed. It was noted this will be the first Community Toilet Scheme in the Welwyn Hatfield District.

Following discussion it was agreed to change point 7 of the agreement to 'Annual Payment'. With this one amendment the agreement to be circulated to participating businesses for comment. Councillor McKay agreed to circulate the draft 'Public Use of Private Toilet Facilities Agreement' and to commence negotiations for discussion at the next Full Council meeting.

Councillor McKay to put forward a proposal for signage, locations etc at the next meeting. Once the location of signage has been agreed permission would be sought from Hertfordshire Highways to install signs on the highway.

Once the Community Toilet Scheme has been agreed, all local community groups to be given a history of the project, which would help to publicise the scheme to the wider community. The Welwyn Parish Council stand at Welwyn Festival Family Fun Day would also be used to publicise the scheme.

The Clerk to send a letter of thanks to the Chief Executive of East Hertfordshire District Council thanking her and her colleagues for all their help with this project.

2011/031

THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE CIVIC CENTRE BEYOND 2014

A meeting took place at 5.30pm today with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Councillors John Dean and Alan Franey, the Chief Executive Michel Saminaden, the Chairman, Councillor John Blackburn, the Chairman of Finance, Councillor Ian Skidmore and the Clerk. The Agenda for the meeting is attached as

APPENDIX 2

Notes of the meeting attached as

APPENDIX 3

To summarise the meeting, the Chairman reported Councillor Dean advised WHBC could not afford to give the freehold of the Civic Centre to Welwyn Parish Council as if they lost the £ 40,000 income they presently received annually from WPC (annual rental of £ 30,000 plus £ 10,000 arrears) they would have to find saving of the same amount in their budgets. The Chairman pointed out that WHBC could recoup this amount from WPC residents therefore the loss would be nil. Presently WHBC deduct the £ 40,000 through the Special Expenses Scheme, from the Council Tax WPC residents pay to WHBC. Mr Saminaden advised even though WHBC could recoup this amount via Council Tax, this could not be used to lessen their budget and for capping reasons they are reluctant to hand the freehold of the building to WPC. Councillor Skidmore tabled an article which demonstrated that Principle Council's throughout the Country are handing community facilities to local councils for nil consideration. Councillor Dean agreed to look into this matter further.

The Council to take advice from NALC regarding how other Council's have handed community assets to Town and Parish Council's for nil consideration and on the accounting process WHBC are using in this instance.

The Chairman advised at a previous meeting with the Head of Corporate Property, a lease of 125 years had been discussed with a review every five years. A five year review as an example would look at market value rather than RPI as it stands at the moment. Notes of the meeting with the Head of Corporate Property attached for reference as **APPENDIX 4**

2011/032 REFURBISHMENT OF THE PARISH CENTRE

A report to undertake refurbishment work to the Parish Centre was tabled and is attached as **APPENDIX 5**

The Clerk outlined the proposed refurbishment work to the Parish Centre to enable the extra member of staff to be accommodated and to create a reception area for visitors to the Parish Centre. The work is within the existing footprint of the Parish Centre and will not require planning permission. The work has been kept to a minimum as it is uncertain at this point whether the Council offices will remain on the same site after 2014. It is also proposed to tidy up the outside of the building by removing overgrown bushes and self set trees to include reducing the height of the front hedge.

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

RESOLVED "that the tender from BBP Building Services Ltd of £ 12,100.00 be accepted".

Unanimously agreed.

2011/033 PROPOSED SIGNAGE TO BE ERECTED ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND

Whitehill Play area boundary Fence. To consider erected notices advising "Danger Sudden Drop"

It was agreed that Councillors would inspect the area for discussion at the next meeting.

Welwyn Cemetery. Proposed signage was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 2

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

RESOLVED "that a sign be erected as detailed in Appendix 2 of the Agenda in the area of the cemetery in use at the moment".

Unanimously agreed.

Cobb Lane Common. Following escalating incidents of rubbish dumping on this area, consideration be given to erecting a sign to deter this behaviour in the future.

Following discussion it was agreed not to erect a sign at this time.

2011/034 PROPOSED MANAGEMENT OF BURNHAM GREEN

Datchworth Parish Council request Welwyn Parish Council consider entering into a partnership agreement to manage Burnham Green, which is owned by Hertfordshire County Council Notes of the meeting held on the 14th March 2011 were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 3

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

RESOLVED “that the Council agree in principle for negotiations to proceed”.

Unanimously agreed

2011/035 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A Progress Report by Councillor Skidmore circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 4, was noted.

2011/036 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS: HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL: MANAGEMENT OF SINGLERS MARSH

A report by Councillors Skidmore was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 5. A report given by the Chairman of the Parish Plan Action Group, Jon Green, prior to commencement of the Council meeting is attached as **APPENDIX 6**

The Council wished to record their thanks to Jon Green for his very informative presentation.

2011/037 LITTERPICKING AND GRASS CUTTING CONTRACT APRIL 2011 – MARCH 2012

A specification of the required work was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 6. As only one tender had been received, this item to be included on the Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Committee Agenda for determination.

2011/038 CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chairman thanked all present and declared the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Signed.....Chairman, Welwyn Parish Council

18th April 2011.