

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2009 AT
THE PARISH CENTRE LOCKLEYS DRIVE WELWYN
WHICH COMMENCED AT 7.45PM**

PRESENT: Councillor J Blackburn (Chairman) and Councillor M Benson, A Blakett, S Butler, C Hukin, R McKay, L McLusky, P Neville and I Skidmore

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors I Colpitts and H Ober

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: No members of the public attended the meeting.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chairman welcomed all present and opened the meeting.

2009/148 DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

There were no Declarations of Interest.

2009/149 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26th October 2009

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 26th October 2009, be approved and signed.

Unanimously agreed.

2009/150 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26th October 2009

2009/141 POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER (PCSO)

A briefing paper and Service level Agreement for the part funding of a PCSO attached as **APPENDIX 1**

Following discussion it was agreed that once the Service Level Agreement has been completed by the Police, the document would be presented to Full Council for approval.

The Council have been advised the PCSO will liaise with the Council to address issues of the day however the Police's targets will drive the deployment of the PCSO. The PCSO is required to spend the majority of his/her time as a visible presence in the parish and his/her performance will be reviewed by PC Deal to ensure these targets are achieved. The Council will not have access to a daily log charting were the PCSO has been deployed; however, a report of his/her activities will be made once or twice per month.

2009/151 CIVIC CENTRE

- 1 Repairs to the Civic Centre Roofs. Permission is being sought from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) to repair the flat roofs with a felt overlay system. If this is agreed comparative quotations will be obtained for discussion.

2. Removal of Asbestos in the Boiler room. Air samples were taken of the boiler room prior to any works being undertaken and these confirmed the area was not contaminated. A report was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 1

The category 'A' asbestos was removed on the 13th and 14th November 2009 and an air test was carried out following these works. This confirmed the area is a safe environment. A report was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 2

The Acting Clerk advised a search of the archives had confirmed that in 2001 the Parish Council had an asbestos inspection of the Civic Centre undertaken. This had identified asbestos boarding in the boiler room and a company had been employed to remove this asbestos. However the asbestos in the pipe lagging had been left in situ with a note to monitor this area.

3. Quotations to conduct all works classified as category 'B' 'C' and 'D' in the Asbestos report are being sought,

4. The boiler room flooded after heavy rain the evening before the asbestos work was to commence. A submersible pump was hired to clear the water at a cost of £ 113. The existing pump had to be replaced at a cost of £ 150. An inspection of the drainage system has found a blockage in the drains on the boundary of the Civic Centre. A blockage has also been located in the down pipe from the Civic Centre roof. Quotations are being sought to remove the blockages.

5. A meeting with Grant Shapps MP is to take place on Friday 8th January 2010 in the Parish Centre commencing at 4.30pm. The Council have requested his support in their campaign to obtain ownership of the Civic Centre following the termination of the existing lease in 2014.

2009/152 ASBESTOS LOG FOR ALL COUNCIL OWNED PROPERTY

Quotations are being sought to complete the log of asbestos on all property owned by the Parish Council. Following discussion, it was recommended that in future an annual inspection is made of all documents the Council are required to have in place to ensure such documents are kept and updated as required.

2009/153 GRANT AID REQUESTS

1. Welwyn United Charities requesting a donation. Details were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 3.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor McKay, seconded by Councillor McLusky and

RESOLVED “ that a donation of £ 200 to the Welwyn United Charities was agreed”.

**Vote: 9 for
1 abstention**

Agreed by a majority vote.

2. Stop Stansted Expansion requesting financial support. Details were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 4

The Council’s policy is to only give grants and donations to organisations within the parish, therefore this request was declined.

2009/154 FEES FOR THE HIRE OF THE CIVIC CENTRE, THE PAVILION, THE PLAYING FIELDS AND THE WHITEHILL CENTRE

Details of hall hire fees attached as **APPENDIX 2**

Following discussion, the Council, although acknowledging that running costs of the Council’s facilities had increased, the Council agreed to subsidise the use of their facilities during 2010-2011 to help local clubs, organisations and the community, who are facing their own problems during these difficult times. Charges for the use of facilities would be re-considered for the 2011-2012 year.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Blackett and

RESOLVED “that fees for the hire of Council facilities would remain unchanged for the 2010-2011 financial year”.

Unanimously agreed.

2009/155 WELLINGTON PUBLIC HOUSE, THE ONE WAY SYSTEM AND THE EFFECT ON THE VILLAGE

The Chairman advised he had put this item on the Agenda as parishioners were expressing concern at the time the wide scaffolding has been in place at the Wellington Public House and also inactivity on the site. An article in the Welwyn Times had criticised the need to have such wide scaffolding. Councillor McKay advised he was not a building structures expert but to qualify in mechanical & aeronautical engineering he did have to study theory of structures, strength of materials, stress analysis, etc. All architects would be the first to agree that they have to employ a structural engineer to ensure their designs are viable.

Most scaffolding on buildings is supported vertically by Mother Earth and

laterally by the host structure. Fine for cosmetic work on windows, roofs, etc. Good examples are the work on the Prospect Close terrace, Guessens and even the near-by Indian restaurant.

The Wellington scaffolding on the other hand, is the host holding up the fragile structure!! Hence the double width and the tons of sand in bags along the base at the front - all designed to temporarily keep a 500 year old facade from falling.

The original internal support structure for the wall will have been weakened or destroyed in the fire and what remained was probably removed pending the design, approval and fabrication of a new steel structure to, hopefully, preserve the facade for another half century.

In the emergency circumstances surrounding The Wellington, and with no option for failure, he thought the Qualified Structural Engineers probably did an excellent job - sand bags and all.

Hertfordshire Highways had tried to resolve the traffic problems caused by the closure of the Codicote Road initially by installing temporary traffic lights but these had created more problems with the loss of parking due to queuing traffic. Eventually the temporary one-way system had been introduced and Hertfordshire Highways are monitoring traffic flows during the period this is in place, Views on the success of the one way system are very mixed with some traders doing well and some suffering through loss of trade. Following discussion the Acting Clerk to ascertain who owns the Wellington Public House to enable the Council to ascertain the progress of works to complete the restoration programme. Councillor's McKay and Blackett agreed to liaise to drive this matter forward,

Traders are campaigning for a 1.5 – 2hour parking restriction rather than the present 1hour restriction, which does not give enough time for visitor to the village to visit the restaurants and shops. Councillors McKay and Blackett to develop a proposal to solve this problem.

2009/156

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Planning and Licensing Committee. Councillor C Hukin Chairman of the Committee, presented a report of the meetings held on the 20th October and 10th November 2009 and answered questions. The Council thanked Councillor Skidmore and Jon Green for their hard work preparing the Council submission to the consultation on the East of England Plan.

Leisure Facilities and Opens Spaces Committee. Councillor L McLusky, Chairman of the Committee, presented a report of the meeting held on the 9th November 2009, and answered questions.

2009/109 Budget. Youth sub-Committee. Councillor Hukin commented that the area proposed for a children's play area next to the Elizabeth of Glamis Hall would need considerable tree clearance which the Friends of Mardley Heath may object to. Councillor McLusky advised through the planning process the Friends would have an opportunity to voice their concerns,

2009/109 Digswell Playing Fields. Councillor Neville advised a meeting had been held with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) and Finesse Leisure Partnership, who had advised that they would not agree to Welwyn Parish Council (WPC) standing in the shoes of WHBC to manage the

Digswell Playing field site. The Council could however enter into a separate contract with Finesse Leisure Partnership to enhance the maintenance of the area, as an addition of the maintenance programme Finesse undertake for WHBC. Following discussion the Acting Clerk to request a copy of the existing management programme for the area and the Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Committee to discuss this item at their next meeting.

Finance Committee. Councillor I Skidmore, Chairman of the Committee, presented a report of the meetings held on the 16th and 23rd November and answered questions.

Draft Budget

The following financial papers were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 5

- Draft Budget Summary for 2010-2011
- Income and Expenditure to the end of October 2009
- Forecast to the 31st March 2010
- Detailed Draft budget by Income and Expenditure code for 2010-2011

A report from the Chairman of the Finance Committee, Councillor Skidmore was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 6. Councillor Skidmore advised his report detailed the reasons why it was forecasted expenditure would exceed income in the 2009-2010 year. The proposed budget for 2010-2011 includes one half year re-payment of the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), the loan the Council are taking out to fund the refurbishment programme of their buildings and play equipment. The budget also includes additional legal expenditure and the part funding of a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

The Acting Clerk advised that she had zero budgeted every item in the budget and with Councillor Skidmore every line in the budget had been examined in detail. The draft budget shows a Precept of £299,678 as detailed in Appendix 5 of the Agenda. It was suggested that the Precept requirements of the Council could be reduced by using reserves. Councillor Skidmore advised the Council should ensure their reserves do not fall below three months spend of the Council,

The Acting Clerk advised the Bowls Club rent is being reviewed at the moment. A quotation from a Valuer has been obtained however historically the rent has been determined by negotiation between the Bowls Club and the Council. The External Auditors advice is to be sought before a decision is made.

Councillor Skidmore advised the draft budget is presented to the Council for comment and requested Councillors feed any comments back to the Acting Clerk and Councillor Skidmore by Monday 7th December 2009. The budget for 2010-2011 is to be agreed at the Full Council meeting being held on the 14th December 2009.

EXEMPT BUSINESS

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item 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 Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

2009/157 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING (EXEMPT BUSINESS) HELD ON THE 26th OCTOBER 2009

RESOLVED” that the Minutes of the Council Meeting (Exempt Business) held on the 26TH October 2009 be approved and signed”.

2009/159 The Chairman thanked all present and declared the meeting closed at 10.10pm.

Signed.....Chairman, Welwyn Parish Council

Dated 14th December 2009