

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WEWLYN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 28TH APRIL 2009 AT
THE PARISH CENTRE LOCKLEYS DRIVE WELWYN
WHICH COMMENCED AT 7.45PM**

PRESENT: Councillor J Blackburn (Chairman) and Councillors, M Benson, I Colpitts, C Hukin, R McKay, L McLusky, P Neville, H Ober and I Skidmore.

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Butler

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

2009/045 OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chairman welcomed all present and opened the meeting.

2009/046 DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

There was no Declaration of Interests made.

2009/047 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31ST MARCH 2009.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 31st March 2009 be approved and signed.

2009/048 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 31ST MARCH 2009

Minute no. 2009/035. CASUAL VACANCY- OAKLANDS/MARDLEY HEATH WARD

Following the resignation of Councillor Page, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) was advised and a notice advertising the Casual Vacancy was posted in the Parish. Members of the public had until the 15th April to call an election if they so wished. WHBC advised that no election had been called therefore the Casual Vacancy could now be filled by co-option. A notice had been posted in the Parish requesting application to fill the vacancy in the Oakland's/Mardley Heath Ward. Following discussion it was agreed that Councillor Colpitts would also include a notice advertising the vacancy in Neighbourhood Watch literature.

Minute no 2009/037. As the Council is unsure whether a letter had been sent to the Scouts Group, advising that the Council is not in a position to lease the Whitehill Centre to any organisation, Councillor Skidmore agreed to investigate this matter on the Council's behalf.

Minute no 2009/038. Councillors were advised that WHBC had been informed of Welwyn Parish Council's (WPC) adoption of the WHDC Core Strategy Issues and Options document.

2009/049 APRIL REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

Planning and Licensing Committee. Cllr Hukin, Chairman of the Committee, presented a report of the meeting held on the 7th April 2009 and answered questions

Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Committee. Cllr Benson, Chairman of the Committee, presented a report of the meeting held on the 14th April 2009 and answered questions. . Councillor McLusky's name was added to the list of Councillors who attended the Allotment Inspection meeting held on the 5th April 2009.

Minute no 2009/036. Countryside Management Services (CMS) requested WPC endorsement of their proposed improvement plans to Mardley Heath. These plans to include clearing of debris, fallen trees etc, also to ensure signs marking the route of the horse ride are visible. At the moment horse riders are using the footpath instead of the horse ride, as the horse ride signs are not visible. Funding for the proposed works is to be supplied by Herts. County Council (HCC) and other organisation, once CMS plans have been endorsed by WPC. No funding is to be requested from WPC.

It was proposed by Councillor Benson "that WPC fully endorse CMS improvement plans for Mardley Heath".

Unanimously Agreed.

Councillor Skidmore advised he is to meet the Environment and Landscape Officer of WHDC on Thursday 30th April at the Parish Centre at 9.30am. At the moment WPC do not have a direct input into how monies are spent in the parish, however they are charged via Special Expenses for these works. Councillor Skidmore to request that WPC are consulted on any proposed works in the parish prior to implementation.

It was reported that the Forestry Commission are selling Harmer Green Woods and although WPC were initially informed of this proposed sale, they were not informed of any progress made towards this objective. Councillors Benson and McLusky attended a Harmer Green Woods meeting and were very impressed with the enthusiasm of commitment of the Oaklands Residents who have made a bid to purchase the area and, if successful, intend to maintain the area as open space for community use. Bids for the land had to be submitted the following day. The Oaklands Residents had raised a large sum to purchase a long lease of the woods. WPC are very concerned that they were not kept fully informed of this issue considering the impact on the local community the sale of this land will have. Councillor Hukin

advised the Council that he had been informed that the residents initial bid had been unsuccessful, however they have the support of their local Member of Parliament (MP), and are to pursue this further. It is not known who made the successful bid for the land.

Following discussion it was agreed that the Forestry Commission be requested to inform WPC if any of their land in the parish is to be sold in the future, to enable the Council to consider the community benefit of the proposed land, prior to a public sale.

2009/050 FINANCE

A paper was tabled by Councillor Skidmore and is attached as

Appendix 1

The scheduled Finance Committee meeting had been cancelled as, due to the Clerks absence, the March accounts had not been prepared.

The External Auditor has determined the dates which WPC must display a notice advising the community that their records are available for public inspection. The notices to be displayed 11th – 24th May advising that records would be available for public inspection from the 26th May – 22nd June 2009.

The Council discussed the possibility of employing a temporary Clerk or a temporary Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to prepare the accounts for Audit should this becomes necessary. As the situation, at this moment is unclear,

It was proposed by the Chairman “ that Councillor Skidmore, Chairman of the Finance Committee, be given the authority to contact the External Auditor, if the Clerk has not returned to work by the end of week commencing 27th April 2009, to request an extension due to the difficulties the Council are experiencing at the moment”.

Unanimously Agreed

A new Bank Mandate form is required as three signatories are no longer Councillors and the two new Councillors need to be added. A new Bank Mandate form to be brought to the WPC Annual Assembly meeting.

The Acting Clerk advised it is in order to employ an Acting Clerk or RFO, with the relevant experience to complete the payroll in the absence, due to illness, of the Clerk.

2009/051 ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report, following minor amendments and the addition of an entry by the Parish Plan Group, had been agreed by the Council therefore the Chairman and the Office Administrator will progress the document for presentation at the Annual Assembly meeting. The

Annual Report to include details of newly co-opted Councillors and the forthcoming Public Meeting to discuss funding a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)

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.

2009/054 CLOSURE OF MEETING

The Chairman thanked all present and declared the meeting closed at 9pm.

Signed.....Chairman, Welwyn Parish Council

Dated 26th May 2009