

**MINUTES OF WESTMILL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 1 December 2021 AT 7.30PM IN WESTMILL VILLAGE HALL**

**Councillors: Michael McRae (Chair)**  
**Jim Beaven**

**Winston Pickup**  
**Anne Downes**

**Bernadette King**  
**Ray Partridge**

**County Councillor: Jeff Jones (EHC & HCC)** **District Councillor: Andrew Huggins (EHC)**  
**Officer attending: Sarah Kubica (Clerk and RFO)**

**Public present: 12** **Police representatives: Sergeant Terry Alcock, PCSO Karen Broad**

21.070 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** All present

21.071 **DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST** Cllr McRae and Cllr King declared an interest in matters relating to the Greg Trust in their capacity as Trustees of the Greg Trust

21.072 **MINUTES OF MEETING** The minutes of the WPC meeting held on the 8 September 2021 were proposed as a correct record by Cllr Partridge and seconded by Cllr King

21.073 **CO-OPT JAMES BEAVEN AS PARISH COUNCILLOR** It was agreed unanimously to co-opt Jim Beaven as parish councillor. The declaration of acceptance of office was signed by Jim and the Clerk.

**UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT (UD) ON CHERRY GREEN LANE (CGL) UPDATE**

21.074 Cllr McRae reminded all of the two dates of importance from the High Court Order relating to this UD whereby occupants should vacate the land (26 November) and restore the land to its previous condition (3 December). Cllr Huggins summarised that he was with Cllr Jones when informed of UD on CGL and East Herts Council (EHC) began the legal process immediately with an injunction obtained on the weekend of UD followed by a hearing on 15 October for both parties to make representations. A planning application had been received by EHC but as this was not validated by the council this was not open for consultation. As of today, there is no 'live' planning application and as such the option of a right to appeal has been timed out. The occupants are now in breach of the Order and enforcement officers attended the site this evening and spoke to a single male on the site who confirmed that there were still occupants on site. EHC will now make a decision on whether to seek committal for the breach of the Order and enforcement is due to return to site on 6 December. There is budget for EHC for legal representation and Queen's Counsel. Cllr Jones concurred that EHC is committed to stop UD and Sir Oliver Heald MP is aware. Cllr Huggins added that there is a Bill going through to stop retrospective planning permission. EHC has offered alternative accommodation to the occupants of the site which was refused.

21.075 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** Q: Committal? Is this a common step for EHC? A: Cllr Huggins confirmed that committal was issued for the site in Little Hadham. Cllr Jones explained that 'serving' the paperwork was usually difficult. Q: Has EHC learned lessons from previous actions? A: Cllr Huggins reiterated that lessons have been learned by the experienced in-house legal team and outside QC and the process of submitting a planning application when followed is designed to fairly balance the needs of the existing community with those of the applicant. Q: How confident is EHC of success? A: Cllr Huggins would hope a Judge would consider the agricultural nature of the land. Cllr Downes asked if there was space on existing sites? Cllr Huggins will find out and Cllr Jones explained that he had asked an occupant if they would move to an existing site and they said 'no'. Members of the public explained that there is some anxiety particularly among the older members of the village and there is a range of feelings across the village. Cllr Jones confirmed that enforcement are following EHC's process which would be the standard course of action for any breach of planning regardless of applicant.

**Item 21.082 was addressed at this point in the meeting and following this Item, the Police representatives and 7 members of the public left the meeting. Item 21.080 followed, after which Cllr Huggins and Cllr Jones left the meeting along with one member of the public. Both Items minuted below:**

**FINANCE**

21.076 RFO distributed 2021-22 banking spreadsheet to members prior to the meeting showing all payments to date

21.077 The payments before council and expected payments to March 2022 are attached as an appendix to these minutes proposed by Cllr Beaven and agreed by Cllr Downes and Cllr Partridge. Clerk to arrange GDPR training in addition to new Councillor training

21.078 A detailed budget prepared by Cllr McRae was distributed to councillors prior to the meeting. Precept of £5,500 for 2022/23 was proposed by Cllr Downes and agreed unanimously. Increases in insurance premium, defibrillator maintenance and lime tree maintenance are expected next year to be offset against a reduced donation to The Greg Trust and a small contingency and budget for the newsletter which may not be required have enabled WPC to avoid a larger increase in precept for next year.

21.079 **PLANNING** Planning application details attached as an appendix to these minutes

21.080 **HIGHWAYS** Cllr McRae noted that Highways had not returned to resurface the patch repair at the north exit to the A10. Cllr Jones confirmed that this should happen as it is part of the repair programme. Cllr Downes has had no response regarding the increasing gap between the road and the field at the south exit to A10 and the dropped drain which is considered dangerous. Broken manhole cover, pothole by the football pitch have been addressed and the road to Wakeley Farm resurfaced. Cllr Downes has recently reported fly tipping of tyres by Gaylors Cottage.

21.081 **RISK ASSESSMENT** Recommendation to aerate and mulch the large Lime tree on village green is not considered practical. Cllr Downes advised that 2 quotes should be obtained for dead wooding the tree and she will ask the arborist who is doing work in the village for a quotation and also a visual inspection FOC. Cllr Beaven mentioned that the metal cage on the oak tree needs attention. Cllr McRae to ask Mark Robertson (decorator) to quote for telephone kiosk painting. Cllr Partridge has ordered new batteries and pads from CHT for the defibrillator included in the maintenance fee. Clerk to email Aspenden clerk for details of their new noticeboard.

21.082 **POLICE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH UPDATE** PCSO Karen Broad and Police are patrolling the area and will step up patrols if required by EHC in relation to enforcement on UD issue. New Sergeant, Tony Alcock introduced himself and encouraged the reporting of any concerns or issues to help build a local picture and assist in making a case for increased resources. The Sergeant promoted use of the ECHO app where residents can text their views on what is important to them and has a forum meeting on 9 December to look at feedback and set out a plan for the locality. There was one crime in the area (flytipping) during the last period. Cllr Jones confirmed that the Aspenden tip will not reopen. Cllr Pickup asked Police if they were aware of 2 incidents of anti-social behaviour (one at Buntingford vets). Terry will check with Buntingford Officers, but they were not aware of anything.

21.083 **GREG TRUST UPDATE** The amalgamation of all the charities into one is progressing through the Charity Commission after the appropriate consultation with residents. Play equipment in the Westmill Playground has been serviced by a specialist company recently. Next meeting is on 6 December.

21.084 **CLERK/RFO REPORT** Clerk has attended a second Town and Parish Engagement meeting with EHC and has briefing notes and the regular bulletins if any councillors wish to see these. Clerk has received a buyer query on 2 Church Cottages regarding access over WPC owned land and Cllr McRae has referred this request and is awaiting response.

21.085 **MATTERS ARISING** Cllr McRae and Cllr Pickup confirmed that neither would standing for re-election after May 2023. Cllr King is keen to publicise the Herts Lynx on demand bus service and would like to draft 'how to book' information to distribute to villagers who may not have smart technology but who could benefit from the service. Cllr King also recommended a session on defibrillator training, Cllr Partridge will look into this and Cllr Downes suggested asking local PCSOs for free training. Clerk will share information on East Herts small grants for community projects with Cllr King. Cllr Beaven asked about verge cutting and poor visibility at the north exit onto the A10. Cllr McRae confirmed that this is Highways responsibility.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING** 21.086 2022 Meetings: 2 March, 18 May (and annual meetings), 7 September, 30 November

**MEETING CLOSE** 21.087 Meeting closed at 9.32pm. Cllr McRae thanked everyone participating

**APPENDIX** Payments since last meeting 8 September 2021

Cheque/DD	Item Description	Amount (VAT incl)	Payee
BACS	LITTER SEPTEMBER	96.00	M.MASON
BACS	LITTER OCTOBER	96.00	M.MASON
BACS	LITTER NOVEMBER	96.00	M MASON
DD	ELECTRICITY SEPTEMBER	0.18	EON
DD	ELECTRICITY OCTOBER	0.42	EON
DD	ELECTRICITY NOVEMBER	0.68	EON
BACS	CLERKS SALARY JUL-SEP	231.80	S KUBICA
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL SEPTEMBER	9.60	IONOS
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL OCTOBER	9.60	IONOS
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL NOVEMBER	9.60	IONOS
BACS	GRASS CUT SEPTEMBER	98.00	M FOSKETT
BACS	GRASS CUT OCTOBER	49.00	M FOSKETT
BACS	ADMIN EXPENSE LAMINATING SHEETS	5.00	R PARTRIDGE
BACS	PAINTING ELECTRIC CABINET	50.00	M S ROB
BACS	CHRISTMAS TREE	120.00	PARKINS DANE END
Payments expected to March 2022			
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL DECEMBER	9.60	IONOS
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL JANUARY	9.60	IONOS
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL FEBRUARY	9.60	IONOS
DD	WEBSITE & EMAIL MARCH	9.60	IONOS
BACS	CLERKS SALARY OCT-DEC EST	270.00	S KUBICA
BACS	CLERKS SALARY JAN-MAR EST	270.00	S KUBICA
DD	ELECTRICITY DECEMBER EST	0.30	EON
DD	ELECTRICITY JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH EST	0.40 x 3	EON
BACS	DEFIB MANAGEMENT FEE	151.20	CHT
BACS	LIME TREE MAINTENANCE EST	250.00	IF PROPOSED
BACS	ST MARY DONATION	200.00	ST MARY
BACS	GREG TRUST DONATION	1500.00	GREG TRUST
BACS	LITTER DECEMBER	96.00	M.MASON
BACS	LITTER JANUARY	96.00	M.MASON
BACS	LITTER FEBRUARY	96.00	M.MASON
BACS	LITTER MARCH	96.00	M.MASON
BACS	NEW COUNCILLOR & GDPR TRAINING	45.00	HAPTC

Planning Application Consultation	Location	Deadline/ Decision Date	Description/Comments	Decision	LPA Appeal Ref
<b>3/21/1880/LBC</b> <b>3/21/1879/HH</b>	4 Pilgrims Close	20/08/21	New window and door to rear elevation, existing entrance door to be permanently fixed shut with existing fixed entrance door to be re-instated for operational use	Pending	N/A
<b>3/21/1577/FUL</b> <b>3/21/1898/LBC</b> <b>3/21/2044/LBC</b>	Coles Hill House	22/07/21 18/08/21 05/11/21	Installation (below ground) of ground source heat pump array and installation (above ground) of PV (photo-voltaic) array Internal alterations: Ground level - re hanging of door, removal of partition wall in corridor and creation of doorway, reinstatement of joinery and plaster, replacement of staircase. First floor- Creation of new access to bathroom, creation of window and insertion of rooflight on second floor. Internal alterations: formation of solid ground floor; installation of three LPG boilers with fan assisted flues to east elevation; replacement timber doors; alterations to external doorway and structural repairs	Pending Pending Granted subject to conditions	N/A
<b>3/21/0795/LBC</b>	Keepers Cottage	17/05/21	Ground floor remove internal wall, first floor install new door opening	Appeal	20/00134/REFUSE 20/00135/REFUSE
<b>3/21/0909/LBC</b> <b>3/21/0908/FUL</b> <b>3/21/1792/LBC</b> <b>3/21/1791/FUL</b>	Knights Hill Farm	10/05/21 09/08/21 10/08/21	Convert agri building to 3 bedroom dwelling. Demolition of ancillary outbuildings/stairs. Install new walls, internal stairs. Change of use. Change of use of a group of agricultural farm buildings into 4no. dwellings and associated works	Pending	N/A
<b>3/21/0406/HH</b> <b>3/21/0407/LBC</b> <b>3/21/2442/LBC</b>	1&2 Knights Hill Cottages	17/03/21 15/03/21 26/10/21	Erection of two storey side extensions & rear single storey extensions. Replace roofs and garages Erection of two storey side extensions, single rear storey extensions to link dwellings to the existing detached stores, replacement pitched roofs and two detached garages. Alterations to fenestration and openings	Pending Pending	N/A
<b>3/21/1694/HH</b> <b>3/21/2335/LBC</b>	The Tallett 2 Cherry Grn Barns	04/11/21	Removal of oil tank and installation of an air source heat pump to rear.	Granted subject to conditions	N/A
<b>3/21/0549/HH</b>	Dowers, 1 CGrn Barn	01/12/21	New red brick wall to replace existing fence on northeast boundary	Refuse	N/A
<b>3/21/2664/LBC</b> <b>3/21/2663/HH</b>	Archers Hall	23/11/21	Single storey extension with roof lantern to main dwelling. Creation of patio with planting beds, demolition of garden wall and erection of new garden wall. Single storey extension to outbuilding and insertion of window to flank elevation.	Pending	N/A