

MINUTES OF ARDELEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD IN ARDELEY VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 2ND JULY 2018 AT 7.30 PM

Councillors present: Cllr Tim Noble, Chairman
Cllr Adrian Waygood, Vice-Chairman
Cllr Andrew Cannon
Cllr Jim Egginton
Cllr Stuart Norman
Cllr David Young

Officer attending: Lorna Ewen, Clerk
Others present: 6 members of the public

18.022 **Apologies for absence:** None.

18.023 **Declarations of interest:** Cllr Waygood regarding Church Farm.

18.024 **To appoint a new Clerk to Ardeley Parish Council:** Lorna Ewen is now in post and was welcomed by the meeting.

18.025 **To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday May 8th 2018**

These were received and approved as a correct record, proposed by Cllr Waygood and seconded by Cllr Norman and adopted unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

18.026 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING:**

18.026.1 **Signing off the last year's accounts**

Since the previous meeting, the Chairman has met with the independent auditor and the finances for last year have now been signed off as correct.

ACTION: Cllr Noble said that this was part of the Annual Governance Return that has now been completed and needs to be posted on the Parish Council website by 2nd July 2018. Cllr Noble agreed to post it on the website.

18.026.2 **Data Protection**

It was confirmed that at the last meeting that Ardeley Parish Council had resolved not to appoint a Data Protection Officer as it is not mandatory for parish councils to do so.

18.026.3 **Ponds at Moor Green**

Cllr Egginton reported that the Herts Wildlife Trust have no resources to practically assist, either this year or next year but are able to give advice regarding pond clearance. The growth of blackthorn in the area may need curtailing, but this has to be balanced with the habitat needs of nesting birds. The brambles in front of Fir Tree Farm also require attention. Because of the susceptibility of wildlife, the Chairman suggested that the matters concerning the management of the area are left until September and then if the money is available, the Council could seek quotes. Cllr Waygood noted that a resident of Moor Green had cut the area of grass in front of his house again this year although Cllr Young commented that it was no shorter than it would be if a hay crop were taken, and therefore Ardeley Parish Council would not be raising this with the resident. There was a discussion on whether the residents have a right to graze or crop the common land and it was generally agreed that the rights run with certain properties on Moor Green.

18.027 **Chairman's report**

This was Cllr Noble's first meeting as Chairman and there was nothing to report.

18.028 Finance

18.028.1 Financial report and cheques for approval: Nothing to report. No cheques were payable.

18.028.2 To report on update of bank mandate changes:

The Clerk had attended Barclays Bank at Buntingford and attempted to remove the previous clerk as a signatory but was informed that the process has to be carried out by post. The countersigned form nominating the new clerk as a replacement signatory has been posted and the bank's reply is awaited.

18.029 Planning

18.029.1 To report on planning applications (list attached). There have been 2 since the last meeting:

Conversion of a barn to a residential dwelling at Highbury Farm, Wood End, under permitted development rights: The Council have no objection to this application.

Reserved matters at Redbrick Cottages for the land and garages: Email returns from councillors indicated a split decision so the matter was left for full discussion at this meeting. It was noted that there were 4 letters of objection and no letters of support. Most concerns were to the three storeys which was not in keeping with the outline planning permission applied for originally. It was noted that the proposed building would overlook an adjacent one and a half storey house and that there are no other three-storey buildings in that part of the village. The garage is excessively large and virtually the same footprint as the proposed house in terms of size, making the site overcrowded. Height was a concern, as opposed to simply the number of floors. This is the last building in the conservation area and the position of the triple garage was very close to the road. There is also no turning circle and the site has a public footpath adjoining it.

There was a majority vote against the application as currently presented.

Cllr Norman agreed to draft a letter of objection specifying the precise concerns of the Council.

Rose Cottage: The application was granted on 9th May and the clerk will amend the list accordingly.

18.030 Car park

18.030.1 To discuss action for trimming of trees/hedging around village car park

Cllr Cannon observed that the trees are so low they touch the cars, but it was noted that the land belongs to the church. A local resident voluntarily cuts the hedge. He will continue to cut it as long as the church authorities are happy to allow this.

Cllr Waygood noted that there is another query about the yew trees up School Lane but this matter was not pursued.

18.031 Parish Book Swap

Cllr Waygood reported that there are people in the village who would like to see this happen. Discussion followed as to a suitable location for the box and various suggestions were made, including outside the village hall or near the school but no firm decision was reached. Cllr Waygood said that he was aware of interested volunteers who may assist and expressed the view that this is a worthwhile community venture. He will therefore obtain quotes for the costs involved.

18.032 Highways

18.032.1 To discuss progress on Ardeley Brook clearance

It was reported that the Environment Agency had met with the landowner and are putting together a plan in order to do some work to it.

18.032.2 To receive update on the blocked drains in Cromer

Cllr Norman met Mr James Vine, Ringways' local manager contracted by Herts CC to look after the road and reported as follows:

The discharge from The Cottage has been fixed by the owner.
The broken gully on the south end has been repaired.
Regarding the silted-up culvert on the way down from Cromer windmill, Highways will check who owns the land and if the local authority own it, Mr Vine will arrange to clear it, otherwise he will not be responsible for the clearance of blocked culverts on privately owned land.
With regard to the flooding and silting-up of Blind Lane, Mr Vine will inspect it and task a road-sweeper to clear the grit, also at the bend at the bottom of the windmill run.

18.032.3 Potholes on BOAT/car park on School Lane Ardeley.
Cllr Noble advised that it is a byway and should be maintained as a road and we need to notify Highways to fill in the potholes. Cllr Norman advised that Mr Vine had said that the best way to get action on potholes was to log the issue on the Council website.
ACTION: Cllr Norman to include this matter in his letter to James Vine of Ringways.

Discussion followed as to the correct siting of the footpath sign on this same BOAT. It was considered that it should be on the right-hand side to allow more parking spaces; at present it is in the middle.
ACTION: The Chairman will follow up the BOAT and the footpath sign with Julian Thornton, Access Officer, Countryside and Rights of Way, Herts County Council.

Cllr Young asked when the council would be cutting the grass verges in the parish as they are dangerous.
ACTION: Clerk to contact East Herts District Council

18.033 Church Farm

Cllr Waygood left the room at this point due to his declaration of interest
18.033.1 To receive update of response from East Herts District Council.
It was reported that Mr Paul Dean, EDHC Planning and Enforcement officer, said that Church Farm had applied for a certificate for lawful use but the agent subsequently withdrew the application as it was likely to be refused. There is unauthorized use on the site and Mr Dean will compile a report to take enforcement action. Camping on the site is another issue. Mr Dean said that in order to take action, this should exceed 28 days a year and suggested that Ardeley Parish Council keep a diary. This was considered by Ardeley Parish Council to be unnecessary due to the fact that the annual allowance of 28 days has clearly already been exceeded, given that the Church Farm website offers camping 365 days a year and has been extremely active since Easter, although camping has taken place throughout the winter months.
ACTION: Cllr Noble to respond to Paul Dean's email

18.034 Correspondence and clerk's report

Due to her very recent commencement, the clerk had nothing to report and there was no correspondence other than that considered under item 18, Planning.
The cost of £99 for an online training course for the clerk, Introduction to Local Council Administration, was authorized.

18.035 **Urgent matters not previously notified:** None

18.036 **Date of next meeting:** 3rd September 2018 at 7.30pm.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 8.42pm

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One long-standing villager said she has no objection to the house being built on the garage site adjacent to Red Brick Cottages.
The Applicant said he designed the new house to be the same height as the cottages and that there were two storeys with a room in the loft. Three parking spaces were approved in the original plans and there has been a history of garages going up with houses. The Applicant said that he had noted the concerns that had been raised.

Another villager who lived nearby to the cottages stated that she would welcome more neighbours to help keep an eye on the area.

It was suggested that there was a need for a speed restriction sign near Red Brick Cottages as this was a blind corner and cars approaching from the Moor Green direction are often speeding; as well as another sign on the opposite approach to Ardeley and that this should be an agenda item for the next meeting.

There was further discussion regarding the application for Red Brick Cottages; one person welcomed the original plan but said that the garages amounted to over-development of the site and were too close to the road.

A resident said that the land north of the bungalows in School Lane is owned by Ardeley Charities but it is thought that they do not own the playing field; this is maintained by Ardeley Parish Council.

A resident said that the Book Swap was said to be a good idea, and outside the village hall would be a good place to put it. Another villager said that she would prefer it to be sited in the playing field where children could have easy access. Cllr Egginton suggested that the box should have a shelf for magazines.

Lorna Ewen

Date: 11th July 2018