

Little Bardfield Parish Council



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Minutes of meeting

Wednesday 24th July 2019 – 7:30pm

The Hydes, Thaxted, Dunmow, Essex, CM6 3QB

1. Members Present

Cllr T Cutmore (Vice Chair); Cllr A Davies; Cllr C Beeston; Cllr C Simpson and Liz Williamson (Clerk)

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr W Gardiner (Chair)

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

4. Planning Application – UTT/19/1674/CLE – Pauls Farm – Use of 5 no. caravans as a residential dwellings for over the required 4 year period

Concerns were raised regarding the proposal to regularise the use of the caravans as residential dwellings. The caravans were originally intended for seasonal use for agricultural workers. The documentation submitted with the proposal is insufficient and does not provide the level of evidence considered to be acceptable to prove the use of these caravans for a period of 4 years. It would be expected that the evidence provided should include:

- Tenancy agreements for the last 4 years
- Electoral roll evidence of existing and previous tenants
- Council tax bills for the last 4 years
- Sworn affidavits from people with personal knowledge of the existing use.

It was noted by the Parish Council that UDC Enforcement team have had previous involvement with the site and a letter was issued by the Enforcement Team, dated 2013, stating that it was not expedient to take enforcement action given that the caravans were used for seasonal workers.

The current proposal states that the submission of a Lawful Development Certificate is to regularise 5 no. caravans, which are marked in red on the submitted block plan, but it is noted that two additional caravans are on the site marked in blue on the plan, making 7 no. caravans in total.

Concern was also expressed regarding the drainage/sewage arrangements for the caravans. It is unclear how waste matter is disposed, and this could lead to issues regarding health and hygiene on the site.

Action: Clerk to draft letter to UDC Planning Department objecting to the proposal on the grounds of insufficient evidence being provided with the application and a letter to be drafted to the Environmental Health Team at UDC raising concerns about the drainage/sewage arrangements.

5. Planning Application UTT/19/1654/FUL – Pauls Farm – Erection of light commercial buildings under B2 use, similar to buildings already on site

The Parish Council raise an objection to this proposal. The objection is based on several concerns raised regarding:-

Access from the unmade road onto Bell Road;
Increased traffic movements;
The proposed use is not connected to farm business;
A commercial building is not appropriate in the countryside

Action: Clerk to draft letter to UDC Planning Department objecting to the proposal for the reasons outlined above.

6. Planning Application – UTT/19/1598/FUL – Phoenix House – Change of use of agricultural land to garden land

The Parish Council raises no objection to this proposal.

Action: Clerk to draft a letter raising no objection to the proposal.

7. Unlawful works at Frenches Farm

An email has been received from a parishioner who has raised concerns about possible unlawful works at Frenches Farm. Frenches Farm straddles both Uttlesford DC and Braintree DC. Planning permission has not been sought to carry out the works on the site and therefore the parishioner is seeking the involvement of the Parish Council. The Parish Council will request the involvement of the UDC Enforcement Team to investigate the works that are being undertaken.

Action Cllr Simpson to draft letter to UDC Enforcement Team requesting that the site is visited and the works investigated. Once drafted, the clerk is to send the letter together with a copy of the e-mail from the Parishioner to UDC.

8. Other Matters

Budget/Finance

The Parish previously received a grant from ECC towards grass/verge cutting which hasn't been applied for since 2016. Therefore, the verges are being maintained from money paid from the treasurers account. The clerk for Gt Bardfield has confirmed that the parish of Gt Bardfield receive a grant towards grass cutting, therefore Little Bardfield PC should be eligible to receive a grant for the same purpose.

Action: Cllr Cutmore will check previous accounts to see when the grant was last received from ECC and seek advice as to whether the parish council is eligible for grants in the future.

S137 Donations

Section 137 donations towards charitable organisations are currently provided from monies within the treasurers account. It was discussed and agreed that any future donations be given from the community fund account. The community fund account will also fund any website costs as the website is for the benefit of the community.

Action: Cllr Cutmore to transfer monies from the community fund account to the treasurers account relating to website costs and S137 donations. It will appear on the accounts spreadsheet as "Reimbursement of Section 137 and Website admin payments". Cllr Gardiner to second this transfer as required by the banking security.

Accounts Spreadsheet

To simplify the accounts and provide an accurate record of account balances, Cllr Cutmore together with the Clerk have been working together to provide a spreadsheet that is user friendly but informative. Going forward the new accounts spread sheet will provide an up-to-date, accurate record of the status of both the treasurer and community fund accounts. The spreadsheet is still in draft form but will be finalised and will be available to view within the next few weeks.

Action: Cllr Cutmore and Liz Williamson to continue to update and keep accurate records of the status of both accounts.

Parish Council Website

Cllr Cutmore has been working with the web designer to make the website more user friendly and upload additional information. The website now has a search function. Users are now able to click on tabs whereby you will be directed to the relevant page/section of the website. Cllr Cutmore is uploading minutes of meetings from previous years for anyone that wishes to view them. It is hoped that there will be minutes from 2016 to the current day will be available to be viewed. All Cllrs thanked Cllr Cutmore for continuing hard work in maintaining and improving the website.

District Councillor Alan Storah

Cllr Storah has advised that he would like to attend the next PC meeting and one item that he would like to comment on is a small discretionary fund to which he has access.

Action: Clerk to invite Cllr Storah to the next meeting and add an agenda item

Parishioner Concern

A parishioner has raised concerns that the footpath/bridleway behind The Old Rectory is being backfilled with building waste. A hole is being dug and it is unclear what waste is being disposed of.

Action: Clerk to draft letter to the Environment Agency regarding the backfilling of the hole

Clerk Contract

The new clerk has signed and is in receipt of her contract of employment. It was discussed that the clerk may not be on the correct grade within the pay scale and given her qualifications, could increase by two points within the existing scale.

Action: Clerk to be paid at the revised rate

Planning application at Squirrels

UTT/19/992/HHF - Squirrels Little Bardfield Road Little Bardfield
The planning application at Squirrels has been refused

Present for outgoing Clerk

It was discussed that a gift should be given to the outgoing clerk to thank her for work during her period as Parish Clerk. It was unanimously agreed that this was a good idea.

Action: Cllr Gardiner to source a gift

Meeting closed at 8:29pm

Next meeting to be held on Monday 9th September 2019 at a venue to be agreed.

Signed as a true record

Cllr Terry Cutmore (Vice Chair)

