

MINUTES of the Meeting of Wivenhoe Town Council held in the Council Chamber on Monday 15 December 2003.

Present: The Town Mayor, Cllr. G. K. Primrose (Chairman)
Cllrs: P. Hill, C. Thompson, S. Glozier-Green, C. Liddy, R. Davies, D. Purdey, K. Rogers and P. Kraft.
Borough Cllr. R. Newman
County Cllr. J. Young.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs. J. Richardson, T. Roberts and Borough Cllrs. E. Kraft and D. Adams.

2. MINUTES. RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 17th November 2003 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments: 6.b) delete 'only' to read '*apart from a slight alteration the nature of The Folly would be unchanged*'; and the inclusion of Cllr. Roger's report under 7.8d) Police Matters.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES. None.

4. POINTS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. None.

5. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILS.

a) **Essex County Council:** Cllr. Young reported on the November 21st meeting of the full Council at which further discussion of the removal of funding for denominational school transport was discussed. Children whose parents are on income support will remain unaffected as will existing pupils already in receipt of subsidy. However, the set proposals, to withdraw provision of funding to new pupils, were adopted.

Cllr. Young reported that Essex County Council would be officially going for Beacon Status and a team had begun working on an action plan to put a bid together.

On Tuesday 9th December a meeting had been held with the office of John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, to ask the government's expectations for new housing in Essex.

Cllr. Thompson asked about the Draft Transportation Strategy, being concerned to know if the route of the southern bypass would come near Wivenhoe. He hoped for better access for the disabled; a bigger car park; a Park and Ride system; and if access from it to the A133 would make congestion worse. Cllr. Young replied that she shared his concerns regarding access on to the A133 at Clingoe Hill. Regarding his other points, she did not see the agendas for the other groups, including Highways, so would have to make enquiries before answering his points.

Cllr. Young reported that one recent success at Greenstead had been the securing of a bid from the Area Forum funding, to be used for lighting on Magnolia Field. She had been

told that Wivenhoe Town Council, although invited to bid, had not responded. Cllr. Primrose replied that they would have applied if aware of funding. Cllr. Young advised that a project needed to be ready for submission before application was made.

Regarding Community Safety – Crime & Disorder; Cllr. Young said that the support of all local councillors was needed.

b) Borough Council: Cllr. Newman reported that he had discussed quality issues with the Highways Department because of the problem of unsatisfactory work. Even if a contractor did a bad job, the County was still obliged to pay that contractor. He had also brought up the matter of the gulleys, which needed cleaning, being constantly blocked and therefore overflowing in wet weather.

The main issue had been the policy for the General Scrutiny function overseeing the four panels with regard to Best Value, to hold the CBC cabinet to account and involve back-benchers more closely in CBC affairs.

Several residents had consulted Cllr. Newman about their fears for the planned development of the Water Tower in Tower Road, considering it to be too intrusive into people's privacy. He has ensured that this application will not be officer-delegated but will be closely watched by the Planning Committee. Cllr. Hill suggested that it would be helpful for residents to have a meeting with Sue Jackson, CBC Planning Department, in order that comments might be constructive. Cllr. Newman replied that he would be happy to invite the officer to Wivenhoe for such a meeting. He remarked that, unlike Colchester's Jumbo, Wivenhoe's water tower is in an excellent structural condition. He had explained to residents that any objections to the scheme must be on sound planning grounds.

Cllr. Davies reported that he had attended a meeting with Sue Jackson and the PCT concerning the new Wivenhoe Health Centre. A decision would be made on whether outline or detailed planning permission should be submitted first. Cllrs. Hill and Davies would discuss a document of support from Wivenhoe Town Council to the surgery very soon.

Cllr. Davies reported that part of the Old Cemetery wall had suffered severe damage from a road traffic accident. Cllr. Davies had been assured by Essex Police that Wivenhoe Town Council would be informed of further developments regarding these incidents. He advised members that the Town Council's insurance does not cover repair to the cemetery walls and that the cost of the structural repair would have to be claimed under the driver's insurance, provided he had one. The Town Clerk reported that the wall had been made safe and estimates for the repairs were being sought.

Cllr. Thompson asked if anything further had been decided by CBC on road markings in the Colchester Road, the town's public toilets, and the access to the A133. Cllr. Davies replied that there was no news on the A133, or the markings on the Colchester Road, but said Cllr. Sutton had indicated that plans for a new-style public toilet in the public car park were being put on hold and that the existing toilets were to be revamped instead.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

6.1 Planning:

a) Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2003 were received and noted.

Cllr. Kraft asked for an explanation of the way in which Colchester Borough Council's Planning Committee comes to its decisions, as a recent application recommended for refusal by the Town Council had received permission. Cllrs. Hill and Davies explained that planning law works on a strict system of rules although appeals may be made against planning decisions. Very often the Borough Council does not see an application in the same light as the Town Council.

b) Section 106 Working Party: Cllr. Hill reported that the Town Council now should just want the document to be signed so that matters could go ahead. The result of Cllr. Gower's site visit needed to be seen by the Town Council. Cllr. Hill also informed members that a number of residents of Queens Road had recently met Cllr. Gower and that 54 residents had signed a petition stating the view that Queens Road is completely unsuitable as an access route to the Shipyard Development. The Town Council had taken the views of the residents into consideration, but that other vulnerable areas such as Brook Street, and Valley Road with its awkward junction at Park Road followed by the Belle Vue/ Park Road T-junction, were equally unsuitable. At least Queens Road has a clear site line.

6.2 Personnel:

Cllr. Hill circulated several different plans for the refurbishment of the front office to convert it into a proper reception area in which to house Mrs. Bradley's replacement. Better lighting, carpeting and seating for visitors were proposed and a counter of two differing heights to cater for height-disadvantaged persons. Members AGREED with Cllr. Hill's proposal and approved expenditure of up to £1,000 from the contingency budget to finance the works. It was also AGREED that the Personnel Committee would sort out the finer details.

6.3 Best Value Committee: Nothing to report.

7. WORKING PARTY REPORTS.

7.1 William Loveless Hall Working Party:

a) Members received an application from Mrs. Margaret Davies for a reduction in the cost of the hall hire for a Valentine's dance to raise funds to provide medical equipment for Peldon Ward, Colchester General Hospital, on February 14th, 2004. It was AGREED that, on the grounds that many patients of Peldon Ward are from Wivenhoe, a grant should be made to cover half the cost of the hall hire.

b) Village Hall Funding: Signatures were needed to a petition by RCCE urging the Government to encourage more funding for village halls. Cllr. Primrose agreed that any action to obtain such funding should be supported and the document will be signed and returned by the deadline of 14th February 2004 to assist in the long-term capital grants funding aim.

7.2 General Amenities Working Party.

- a) Report of meeting held on 8th December was received.
- b) A quotation for the repairs of wet-pour safety surfacing and also repair of the net on the Multi-Play Unit in the King George V Play Area were considered and it was AGREED that the repairs, costing £662 + vat for wet-pour repairs and £494 + vat for the repair of the vandalized net, be carried out. The Town Clerk informed members that it is twelve years since this surfacing was laid down, and that such surfacing has a ten-year life-expectancy.
- c) **Elmstead Parish Council** – Cllrs. Hill, Rogers, Glozier-Green, Liddy, Primrose and Davies will attend the proposed meeting on 22 January at Elmstead Community Centre in the evening.

7.3 Wivenhoe Wood Working Party. Nothing to report.

7.4. Minibus Working Group: The date of the next meeting would be arranged when Cllr. Richardson was present.

7.5. Youth Facilities Working Party: Cllr. Liddy reported that this working party planned to look at various suggested sites for a skateboard park/youth shelter, and that Cllr. Purdey had been active in obtaining promises of funding. Enquiries about situation of the facility were on-going. Monies obtained would be spent in the next financial year so that all would be in place by the year after that. A press officer would be appointed to keep everyone informed on progress. Involvement of local youth would be important. Cllr. Rogers knew that they would be keen to join in and had a spokesman ready for that eventuality.

7. 6 Communications Working Group: Nothing to report.

7.7 Engine Shed Working Group: Cllr. Hill reported that the first draft of a consultation document on sound containment was in progress, and that an engineer's report was still awaited. This was needed to support the planning application. He asked members to approve the use of the CBC grant to pay for the cost of the Acoustics report and this was AGREED upon.

7.8 WRUG: Nothing to report.

7.9 Members' Individual Proposals or Reports:

a) **Mayoral Activities:** Cllr. Primrose had submitted a report on attendances at the FOSM Christmas Market on 22nd November; St. Mary's Christmas Market on 4th December; the Over-60s Christmas Lunch on 5th December; and the Old Rope String Band evening at the William Loveless Hall on 7th December, which so far had made £180 profit for the Mayor's Charity Fund. She had hugely enjoyed all these events.

b) **Police Matters:** Members received and noted the December report from Cllr. Rogers. He had been very concerned about the drunken youths outside Londis, and the recurrence

after a period of calm of bad behaviour at Mede Way, resulting in broken glass in the Play Area. Although he had called for police assistance none had attended. This Cllr. Rogers put down to the under-strength of the police force in this area, which needs improvement. The Youth Club was going well; the Community policeman had visited it, and not one problem had occurred, which was a credit to the ladies who run the Youth Club.

Cllr. Kraft brought members' attention to the fact that the Co-op wall, where youths congregate, may be breaking through natural causes rather than the behaviour of the youths, as she had observed a large crack in it. She had also noticed that this wall bends. The coping stones need fixing as they could fall on to people or vehicles below. The Co-op would be asked to get them repaired.

Cllr. Primrose reported that pansies had been uprooted from the boats outside the William Loveless Hall and other vandalism had taken place at the doctors' surgery. Cllr. Rogers replied that the culprits had been between 10 and 12 years old and that their parents would be spoken to about it.

c) Colchester Community Safety: the 2nd draft ASB Manual was received. Cllr. Rogers took the document to study.

d) Wivenhoe and District Sporting Facilities Trust: Cllr. Hill reported that as the companies concerned could not agree, two mobile telephone masts instead of one were to be erected at the Football Club. Also concerning the Football Club, a resident had complained about the model car track planned to be opened in the car park, because of the noise aspect of the venture.

8. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT.

8.1 The Town Clerk reported that one Burial Grant had been issued and two memorials had been approved since the last meeting. Two interments had taken place.

8.2 NALC Direct Information Service. Issue Nos. 567 to 568 had been circulated.

8.3 Tenancy Allocations/Changes from Colchester Borough Council. None.

8.4 Work Management.

a) General: The loan of a 'cherry-picker' vehicle had enabled the groundsmen to put up the Christmas lights easily and more quickly than last year. Thanks had been extended to the local resident who had arranged this. One bus shelter had been vandalised and work was in hand to make the shelter safe. Work had begun on trimming overgrown bushes on the perimeter of the dog exercise area in order that the view across to the river could be seen from the bench sited there. Greenery and holly had been cut for both churches as in previous years, and also for the Catholic Church.

An Indian Bean Tree, *Catalpa Bignonioides*, had that day been planted on land outside the William Loveless Hall, behind the seat, in memory of Philip Baines, Town Clerk of Wivenhoe for 12 years, who died this year. Mr. Baines, whose knowledge and love of trees was extensive, had particularly admired this species of tree.

The number of customers and visitors to the Council Offices for the month of November totalled 115.

Members noted the Town Clerk's report.

b) Headstones in New Cemetery: In accordance with HSE recommendations a record of unstable headstones in the New Cemetery had been given to the relevant stonemasons. Those found to be unstable had been covered with yellow identification covers pending repairs by stonemasons. Cllr. Liddy said that the Town Council had a Duty of Care to prevent anyone being injured by unstable headstones.

Cllr. Davies reported that there was a device now available for the testing of the status of headstones. Cllr. Primrose said that the General Amenities Working Party had already looked into this.

c) Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme: Cllr. Kraft reported further on this scheme from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to give recognition to well-ordered councils, urging members to agree to apply. At a cost of £100 every four years, she felt that it was well worth the financial outlay. Cllr. Davies asked what rewards were involved and Cllr. Hill hoped that no more pressure would be put on the office because of it. Cllr. Kraft said in reply to Cllr. Hill that nearly all the criteria for recognition were already being met by the office. AGREED therefore to apply for Quality Status.

9. FINANCE.

9.1 Current Financial Report.

a) The November Spending and Income Report was received and noted.

b) Budget 2004/05: A date for the budget meeting was set for Monday 5th January at 7.00pm

9.2 List of Cheques.

The list of cheques numbered 501805 – 501813 drawn since the last meeting of the Town Council was approved and signed. The list of payments from the Imprest Account since the last meeting was received and noted.

9.4 Motions under Standing Orders Recommending Expenditure:

Engine Shed Acoustics Report - £1944

Repairs to safety surfacing and Multi-Play unit net - £662 and £494

Modernisation of office reception room - £1000

9.5 Appeals for Financial Support: None.

10. NEW BUSINESS.

10.1 Correspondence.

a) CBC Parish Remuneration Panel Report on Members' Allowances – The letter from Andrew Weavers, CBC Monitoring Officer, containing a copy of the Parish Remuneration Panel's Report was considered. Cllr. Hill stated for the benefit of new members that it was not the policy of Wivenhoe Town Council

to claim for travelling expenses while on civic business within the parish boundary, but beyond that limit costs are reimbursable. However, this should only be at the discretion of other members as amounts can be quite substantial. The Chairman's Allowance was not included in this.

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Parish Remuneration Panel, as contained within the report, be adopted by the Wivenhoe Town Council, with the exception that the Chairman's Allowance be unaffected by the Scheme and that it be general practice for Councillors not to claim expenses within the boundary of the parish.

- b) **NHS – Improving Cancer Services** - Members received and noted a copy of the document which was in the office for perusal. Cllr. Davies offered to look through the document.
- c) **The Countryside Agency** – Members noted that the consultation period had been extended to 13th January 2004.
- d) **CALC** – Copies of the Minutes were received and noted.
- e) **Powergen Warm Front Annual Report** – The copy of the Report was received and noted.

10.2 Conferences/Seminars: Members noted the following:

Colchester 20-20 on Wednesday 21st January at 9.30am,
where Colchester's Community Strategy will be discussed.
Cllr. Davies offered to attend.

10.3 Notices. Members noted the following:

Congregational Church Carol Concert
Friday 19 December at 7.30pm

10.4 Licences. Members noted the following, although were unclear as to the nature of the variation:

Heavy Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence – Variation to existing goods vehicle operators licence at La Farge Ltd, Wivenhoe Quarry.

10.5 Highway Matters:

- a) **ECC – Programme of Winter service** – Members received copies of the Winter Service leaflets.
- b) **CBC – A133 Temporary Speed Limit:** Members noted the information that resurfacing work would be carried out in St. Andrews Avenue for five days beginning 17th December 2003.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm and an invitation was extended to all to be by Cllr. Primrose to join her and Mr. Primrose at their home for a festive drink.

CHAIRMAN

