**LHPC09b Little Horkesley Parish Council**

**meeting held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 18 September 2019**

**Present:** Maria Oats (Chair)

Chris Exley

Chris Jacobs

Hannah Taylor

Susie Goldring

Roger Drury (Clerk)

With Cllr. Nigel Chapman (CBC Rural North) and Joanna Petersen (Clerk Designate).

Chris Jacobs declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 2.

**1. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 July were agreed as an accurate record.

**2. Replacement of the Clerk**

Jo Petersen was welcomed to the meeting and it was noted that she would take over as Clerk with effect from 1 January 2020. In welcoming her the Chair pointed out that she would strengthen the Council by virtue of her IT skills and would progress several stalled projects this autumn.

Jo had been provided with a Job Description and advised on the renumeration package, but the Clerk was requested to seek from EALC a standard Clerk’s Contract covering HMRC issues.

The Clerk reported on preparations for the handover by tabling details of Parish Council documents now lodged at the Essex County Records Office details of which are held permanently in the Minute Book. There appear to be no parish records held in Chelmsford prior to 1999.

He also issued copies of the current Standing Orders last reviewed May 2014 and it was agreed that the Clerk should obtain a current “standard” version for comparison and the Standard Orders reviewed at the November meeting.

**3. Affordable Housing**

Chris Exley reported that the Hastoe HA lawyers were yet to draft letters to Landowners of sites that may be of interest – there was general disappointment at the rate of progress but the Council had been advised that 2/3 years was a normal lead in time.

**4. Emergency Assistance Plan**

Chris Jacobs reported that she was finding the current Emergency Plan over complicated and therefore difficult to update/amend. It was pointed out that when the original plan was produced there were no CBC guidelines to follow and the plan did in fact become too complex.

It was agreed that the plan should be simplified in line with the CBC proforma and in consultation with Lauren Warsap, CBC Resilience Office, and resubmitted for approval to the November Meeting.

**5. Clerk’s Report**

a. Little Horkesley PC Website

The meeting discussed the list of amendments proposed by the Chair to improve accessibility and drew the following tentative conclusions:

* It must be the vehicle to meet the requirements of the Transparency Code to inform the public on financial matters;
* It should seek to promote the village to those outside our community and photographs were an important part of this promotion;
* It should incorporate all aspects of the village e.g. St Peter & St Paul, the Village Hall etc;
* be accessible on a wide range of devices.

Jo Petersen was invited to take on this project as a consultancy task over the autumn and be remunerated at the hourly rate she will receive as Clerk from 01/01/20.

Part of this project should be to use the website host to provide email addresses [name@littlehorkesley.gov.uk](mailto:name@littlehorkesley.gov.uk) for the Parish Councillors.

The first step in this should be to establish that the current website author wishes to stand down.

b. Internet Services

The Gigaclear letter on 1 August was noted and all those who received it were encouraged to register their interest even though Gigaclear did not seem to acknowledge such registrations.

It is necessary to keep a highly visible interest in their activities.

c. Playing Field

The quote from Stuart Mosley of £535 to remedial work on the playing ground equipment to meet the recommendations of the RoSPA Inspection Report was approved.

The concrete on which the rubber pads under the swings was not felt to be hazardous.

d. May 2019 Election Survey

Councillors were thanked for completing the NALC Questionnaire on the 2019 Parish Council elections. It was assumed that the exercise was seeking to understand the low number of individuals standing and existing gaps in councils.

e. Roads and Hedges

It was noted that complaints had been received on the state of Crabtree Lane after the potato harvest in adjacent fields but no permanent damage to the road surface had been identified and there was no basis on which to complain.

However, the general state of Crabtree is appalling with grass growing through the full length of the lane – this would be reported to ECC Highways.

Damage to the corner of School Lane and School Road was noted and would be reported.

Here was a lively discussion on the use of various obstacles to protect verges outside their properties.

The Clerk was invited to seek guidance from ECC Highways on what was permissible and the consequences if vehicles were damaged hitting these obstacles.

There was a discussion on salt boxes around the village – the questions raised were:

* what liability arises when intermittently salting roads;
* who would do the spreading.

It was agreed that the main route into/out off the village School Road and Water Lane were dealt with by CBC.

**6. Planning**

a. Application No: 192082 Priory Farm, School Road, Little Horkesley

The letter from the Parish raising no objections but raising concerns that the proposed structure should be hidden behind the existing wall on School Road and no access through that wall should be permitted.

Other concerns on the location were raised but considered outside the Council’s remit.

b. North East Essex Local Plan – Technical Consultation

It was agreed that the Parish Council had nothing to contribute to the consultation on the current proposal for “garden communities” to the south and east of Colchester which were being considered by the Planning Inspectorate.

The risk remained that if the “garden communities” were turned down much more building to the north of Colchester would be required to meet building targets.

c. Colchester Local List Selection Criteria

It was agreed that there were no outstanding features in the village apart from currently listed properties which should be considered.

d. Investigations into the potential risk from the reservoirs to the east of Water Lane were continuing.

It was felt that this potential flood should be mention in the Emergency Assistance Plan.

**7. Finance**

a. The following expenses were approved:

* Maria Oats £66.00 – Fasthosts Village Website rental;
* CBC £62.41 – Election expenses May 2019.

b. Essex Air Ambulance

It was agreed that as a rural community a contribution of £50.00 should be made.

c. Online Banking

The Chair and the Clerk should pursue the setting up and security issues of online banking.

**8. Correspondence**

The following correspondence was noted:

* EALC August Legal Update – Maria Oats reported that there were no current plans to enforce a limit e.g. 5% on precept increases but it was agreed to use the Parish Magazine to inform the community of future budgeting plans.
* RCCE Essex Warbler;
* DV & SV August Update;
* ECC Highways Highlights.

**9. Items for the Next Agenda**

**………………………………………………………………………. (Maria Oats – Chair)**

**………………………………………………………………………. (Date)**

**The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 16 October 2019.**

**Date of the November Meeting has been changed to Wednesday 13 November 2019**