

23LHPC11b

Little Horkesley Parish Council

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 20th November 2023

Present: Jonathan Eddis (Chair)
Hannah Taylor
Susie Goldring
Tracy Le Grys
Jo Petersen (Clerk)

Apologies

Jo Morris

Lewis Barber

Darius Laws

There were no declarations of Pecuniary or Non-pecuniary interest.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Meeting held on 18th September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Public Questions

There were no members of the public present

3. National Grid “GREEN” Pylons Scheme

- a) All councillors confirmed that they were receiving update emails from the Essex Suffolk Norfolk Pylons campaign group.

4. Playground

- a) Cllr Eddis and the clerk confirmed that Michael Devine had not yet responded to the email sent on 6th September asking if he would begin the process of drafting a licence to send to the owner of 7 Orchard Cottages. This is still the preferred option as it prevents the Parish Council bearing the cost of reinstalling the fence. Cllr Eddis will contact him again for an update.

The clerk will begin the process of obtaining quotes for a new fence in case the licence option is not agreed.

- b) The clerk confirmed that she had submitted the application for the grant from Enover on 4th October. The only query was whether the Parish Council would like a grant for £20,000 with a 10% 3rd party donation or a total of £22,000 with a 10% 3rd party donation. It was agreed that for an extra £200 from Parish Council reserves we would apply for £22,000 as the extra £2,000 would go towards the cost of the preparatory groundworks.
- c) A funding opportunity from a company called Monkey Challenge was discussed. This company provides climbing walls for Parish Councils and will apply for a National Lottery Grant on behalf of the Parish Council. It was agreed that climbing walls are popular with children and that it would certainly be worth investigating whether we would be eligible for the free equipment. The clerk will contact the company and instruct them to submit an application on behalf of Little Horkeley Parish Council.
- d) An email from Cllr Lewis Barber was discussed which gave details of a "Tree Initiative". This is a scheme run by ECC which enables Cllr Barber to choose ten sites across his County Council division for the planting of trees. Although the Parish Council doesn't have any suitable sites for the planting of trees, it was suggested that perhaps we could apply for a hedge which could be planted at the rear of Orchard Cottages as an alternative to fencing. It was agreed that the clerk would contact Cllr Barber to discuss.

5. Roads, Verges and Footpaths

- a) The Parish Council again discussed the issue of flooding at School Lane after a request from Christopher Orme. It was noted that the flooding had been significantly improved since the works carried out in September 2020 and that even with the recent heavy rain and extensive flooding elsewhere in the Parish, the area in front of the Village Hall on School Road had remained clear. It was agreed there was no immediate need to take action on this issue but that the Parish Council would be happy to help where possible in highlighting further issues to Highways and Colchester City Council.
- b) The ditch at the top of Water Lane was again discussed at length. The clerk confirmed that she had written to the Environment Agency on behalf of the Parish council to reiterate that the issue has not been resolved. It was agreed that the Parish Council would monitor the situation and
- c) Following the recent heavy rain, it was noted that there have been a number of roads in the parish which have suffered from flooding. It was agreed that the clerk would investigate who is responsible for ditch clearance in the parish, whether the landowner or Highways. Once we have established responsibility, the Parish Council will email all landowners and request that they keep ditches clear to reduce the likelihood of flooding.
- d) The clerk confirmed that she has contacted Cllr Barber and Cllr Laws to investigate the road markings at the junction of Vinesse Road and what is known locally as "Piggy Lane" as there have been a number of near accidents at this location. Cllr Barber noted that the initial advice from officers was:

“Additional signs could be considered through the LHP, but there does not appear to be a pattern of personal injury road traffic collisions at the junction of Vinesse Road with Park Farm Road.

As a suggestion a refresh of the existing road markings (as a highway maintenance issue) may help to address the concerns of the Parish Council”.

All councillors agreed that this would be sufficient. The clerk will contact Cllr Barber to have the work scheduled.

6. War Memorial

- a) The renovation of the railings at the War Memorial will be scheduled by Get It Done once the weather is more favourable.

7. Bus Shelter

- a) The clerk is currently waiting for a quote from Get It Done for the renovation and repair of the bus shelter.
- b) The clerk applied for a £200 grant from the “Love Essex Fund” in order to purchase a cupboard to use as a “book library” at the bus shelter.

8. Dog Waste Bin

- a) The clerk received an email from Mrs Orme (a Village Hall trustee) asking whether the Parish Council would be able to purchase a dog waste bin for the village. A number of residents have noticed an increase in the number of discarded dog waste bags close to the Village Hall.

The clerk made enquiries with Colchester City Council, and Caroline Law informed her that CCC are not currently installing new dog waste bins. She did however give the clerk details of companies that provide dog waste bins and the charges made by CCC for emptying the bins.

The minimum cost to purchase a bin is about £250 and CCC charge £31.50 to empty the bin. It was agreed that the Parish Council has sufficient funds to purchase and install the bin. The cost of maintenance will be included in the budget calculations for 2024/25. The clerk will start the process of purchase and installation of the dog waste bin and liaise with Mrs Orme about a preferred location.

As a short-term measure, Caroline Law very kindly installed some signs near the village hall encouraging people to take their dog waste home with them.

9. Budget

- a) The clerk had previously sent the proposed budget to all councillors. This was discussed at length and a number of changes were made which resulted in a reduction of the proposed budget from £7,214.57 to £6,654.57
- b) All councillors agreed the proposed budget of £6,654.57 for 2024/25

- c) Again, the precept calculations had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting and these were discussed.
- d) All councillors agreed the precept request which will result in a decrease of 1% on the Council Tax for Parish Purposes.
- e) The clerk noted that she has been contacted by Barclays Bank as there is an issue with the classification of the Parish Council bank account. It appears that when the account was opened, it was classed as a “club” and not Parish Council. This may result in the account being closed and a new one opened.
The clerk is waiting for a call back from the Business Manager to discuss and rectify the issue.

10. Items for the Next Agenda

Flood signs – who is responsible?

..... (Jonathan Eddis - Chair)

29.11.23

..... (Date)

Date of the next Parish Council Meeting Monday 15th January 2023 (Little Horkesley Village Hall)