



# Theydon Bois Parish Council

Parish Office, The Village Hall, Coppice Row,  
Theydon Bois, Essex CM16 7ER

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Jennifer Endean  
Assistant Clerk to the Council: Mrs Julia Gale

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held virtually by Zoom at 8.15pm  
on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020

- **Councillors Present:** Cllr Gooch (Chair), Cllrs: Hannibal, Purkiss, Philip, Burn. Plus, Additional councillors: Amos, Blake, Morton, Soutar
- **County Councillors Present:** Cllr Chris Whitbread (Epping and Theydon Bois)
- **Officers Present:** Jennifer Endean (Parish Clerk) Julia Gale (Assistant Clerk)
- **Members of the Public:** The Meeting was not attended by any members of the public.

## **1046. Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Wood

Cllr Gooch opened the meeting by asking all members to agree to provisions set out within the new 'Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations, 2020' that came into force on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020. This allows Local Councils to conduct Public Meetings via video conferencing. **APPROVED.**

Cllr Hannibal asked about the signing of Minutes; Cllr Philip confirmed electronic signatures are Allowed.

## **1047. To discuss & approve the Minutes of the Last Full Council Meeting held on Thursday 27th February 2020.**

**APPROVED.**

## **1048. Disclosure of Interests with regard to specific items on the Agenda (existence of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or existence and nature of Other Pecuniary Interest or a Non-Pecuniary Interest). The Council has adopted the Essex Public Law Partnership Code of Conduct.**

None.

## **1049. Public Participation session with regard to Specific Items on the Agenda**

None.

## **1050. Police Liaison**

PC Cook did not attend.

### **1051. Correspondence – Clerk’s Report**

1. Police update: We received an email statement from PC Cook, which we published on the Parish Council website and the village Facebook, to say overall the villagers were adhering to the social distancing rules.
2. The Parish Office has been very busy this month with allotment renewals. We have been calling allotment holders for their email addresses to expand our database.
3. There were several crime incidences which were unfortunately outside of our CCTV zones. When inspecting the CCTV we realised that it needed updating and we have since had Essential in the office to upgrade the hard drives, which will hopefully speed up the system.
4. After our last Full Council Meeting in February, The Rural Preservation Society wrote a letter to the Essex County Council strongly objecting to their proposed changes to include advertising, and lighting, within the village bus shelter on the Green.
5. Jen shared personal news she was expecting a baby in October.

### **1052. To receive reports from Parish Council Representatives on Outside Organisation**

Cllr Burn gave a report on the EALC 'Video Forum for Chairmen and Councillors' that she and Clive Amos attended on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020, this being the first 'virtual forum' run by the EALC.

The meeting was conducted via video conferencing, with 12 attendees, and was chaired by Pearl Wilcox of the EALC. The discussion was mostly of a general nature, and focused on how local councils in the Epping Forest, and Chelmsford, areas have been contending with the challenges faced during the Coronavirus outbreak. Concerns were raised that some older residents, who may need to be 'shielded', had not received letters from the Government, and that food parcels distributed within some local authority areas did not contain items suitable for those with special dietary needs.

The schedule for training courses run by the EALC is currently under review. Ms Wilcox drew attention to the many 'Covid-19 Updates' forwarded by the EALC in recent weeks, and to the emerging Government legislation and advice relating to the conduct of Local Council meetings via video conferencing. These meetings should be made accessible to the public and any virtual "links" should be advertised in the usual way, via noticeboards and websites.

### **1053. To receive reports from District and/or County Councillors**

Cllr Whitbread (Essex County Councillor) applauded his staff for their hard work, they have achieved a good 93% percent of loans to businesses. There is lots going on in County. As of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020, Cllr Whitbread will be taking over as councillor in charge of Finance on ECC's Cabinet. Highways will be trying to progress their program until June.

Cllr Philip (District Councillor) gave an update on Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) matters: All functions are continuing to work. There has been a slackening off in the payment of Rates and Rent to EFDC, which will lead to a black hole in finances. Lots of planning applications in March, which still must be considered. Enforcement is a problem as officers cannot presently visit sites.

EFDC are working with the Corporation of London to reduce visitors to Epping Forest from outside the area by closing car parks.

Uttlesford DC have had to withdraw their Local Plan after £6 million spent. EFDC, by contrast, are more confident in their Local Plan and continue to move forward, although this has slowed due to current crisis.

EFDC have set a date for their virtual AGM for 21st May.

#### **1054. Finance and General Purposes Committee**

**1055.** To receive an update on Finance & General Purposes matters since the last Meeting.

**1056.** To approve the payments made since last meeting: **APPROVED.**

Cllr Hannibal noted that the internal auditor RBS is coming in on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020 to close the accounts and formalise the figures. The draft accounts must be ready by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

Ian Morton asked about the amounts set aside for infrastructure and planning advice.

Estimate for cemetery income has increased. He also noted that local councils are not eligible for Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Discussion of possible donation to Epping Forest Community Transport (which is a registered charity) for the SB09 bus route from Abridge to St Margaret's Hospital. They have a large loss of £4400p.a. and approached the Parish Council for a donation as 8/10 passengers a week are from Theydon Bois. A figure of £1000 was suggested. It was decided that more information was needed. The Parish Clerk will ask Angela from the charity to attend next meeting to advise.

It was agreed that the Parish would cancel the Annual Parish Meeting as it is unlikely that any members of the public would attend. It was suggested an annual report be posted on the website in lieu of an Annual meeting. The AGM will be postponed until the end of the May and added to the end of the normal May meeting. The new councillors will then be co-opted, and the Chairman and Vice Chairman voted for and Committee membership decided.

#### **1057. Planning Committee**

**1058. To receive an update on planning matters since the last meeting:**

**Since the last Full Council Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February, the Planning Committee met 4 times to consider a total of 20 applications. Of those 20 applications, the Planning Committee raised 4 objections and 6 strong objections.**

Meetings are now held via video conferencing: details relating to public participation are included on the respective agendas. Objection was raised to four applications, and strong objection to six. Those of most concern were generally sited within the Green Belt. During the same period, Epping Forest District Council ('EFDC') granted ten applications and refused five. One householder appeal was allowed.

A 'split decision' of particular concern related to the proposal to replace the existing signage at The Bull Public House, a Grade II Listed Building, with a modern equivalent, and to add floodlighting to the front façade. The Planning Committee raised strong objection to the use of floodlighting, due to the local residential environment and the Dark Skies Policy, but this element was permitted. Cllr John Philip, Planning Portfolio Holder, was requested to make further enquiries, since such proposals, where objected to by a local council, would normally be put before an Area Planning Sub-Committee meeting of EFDC before any decision can be made.

## **1059. Highways, Cemetery and Environment Committee**

Cllr Purkiss, Chairman, provided an update on Highways, Cemetery and Environment matters within the Village. Highways has been quiet recently, due to the Covid 19 situation.

The Parish Allotments paid for two grab lorries to remove a build-up of mixed green waste from the site now that weather conditions permit.

After some discussion, the Cemetery in the Abridge Road has remained open. The City of London have cleared the overgrown path through the Hoppitt leading to the rear entrance to the Churchyard which assists with the Parish project of re-vitalising this area.

St Mary's Church have installed new metal gates to the entrance in Piercing Hill. Cllr Purkiss stated that the blocked drains on the crossroads with Coppice Row and Piercing Hill have been reported to Essex County Council verbally and electronically on numerous occasions but have been ignored. As a consequence, a letter has been written to the Chair of Essex County Council to seek an answer. County Cllr Whitbread will assist.

Cllr Purkiss noticed the loss of the conifer tree and front hedge at 1, Poplar Row and asked whether the new tenants had permission to do this and whether the dwelling is still designated for elderly persons? It was also noted that there should be more stringent controls in place to protect different aspects of the Village and street scenes. Cllr Philip is going to report back on this issue after discussing with planning at EFDC.

A majority of residents in Sidney Road have signed a petition requesting double yellow lines at the exit onto Coppice Row to gain better sight lines onto a busy road to be put forward to NEPP. Councillors agreed to give full support for this action.

Residents of Sidney Road would like to have double yellow lines at the neck of the turning for safety, a petition has been signed. Councillors agreed to give their full support to this.

## **1060. Community Liaison Committee**

The V.E. Day event has now been cancelled. The Parish Council has lost money on the deposit for the dance floor, as the company has ceased trading. The Village Association (V.A) donated £2500 towards the cost of the event. Cllr Gooch suggested that half of that should be returned to the V.A. It was suggested that all costs should be checked and that once the final figure is known some refund be made to the V.A.

The Christmas Tree. It was agreed that the same tree from the same company would be ordered. The position of the tree was also discussed, suggestions that it would look better on the Green. The problems of electrical supply and vandalism were pointed out and it was decided to retain the position outside the Village Hall.

Lighting trees at the end of Forest Drive was discussed. The Clerk is to get a quote and report back.

It was decided to leave the matter of the Christmas Market until later in the year when more will hopefully be known about public gatherings.

## **1061. Any Other Urgent Business for report (without decision)**

Please note that no decisions can be lawfully made under this item. The Local Government Act 1972 section 12 10 (2) (b) states that business must be specified; therefore the Council cannot lawfully raise matters for decision.

**None.**

## **1062. Public Participation session with regard to items of interest to the Parish**

**None.**

Cllr Gooch closed the meeting at 9:53 PM

Signed: ..... Cllr Peter Gooch (Chairman) Dated: 28/5/2020