



# Theydon Bois Parish Council

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

Clerk to the Council: Caroline Carroll  
Responsible Financial Officer: Caroline Carroll

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of Theydon Bois Parish Council held via Zoom at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

Councillors Present: Cllrs Hannibal, Cllr Gooch, Cllr Blake, Cllr Amos, Cllr Burn, Cllr Philip, and Cllr Wood  
Apologies: None  
Officers Present: Mrs Caroline Carroll  
Members of the public: Two members of the public were present

### **280. Apologies for Absence**

None

### **281. Confirmation of Minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**

**APPROVED**

### **282. Disclosure of Interests with regard to 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, however, Cllr Philip and Cllr Hannibal disclosed an interest later in the meeting as members of St Mary's Church PCC and congregation respectively with regards to a conversation relating to the planned work to the railings around the Hoppit during the budgeting discussion.

### **283. Public Participation session with regard to items on the Agenda**

Two members of the public were in attendance and Cllr Hannibal brought forward item 290 - other urgent business to allow Councillors to raise matters under this item that would be of benefit to the public in attendance.

### **284. 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.

Cllr Wood raise the matter of the tennis club netting of which the Buxton Trust and Tennis Club are currently in discussion concerning the £10,000 grant that was given to the Buxton Trust for the tennis club netting. Cllr Gooch and Cllr Hannibal left the meeting at this point given their roles on the Buxton Trust Committee (Secretary and Treasurer) – 7.34 PM – Cllr Hannibal had asked Cllr Philip to chair in his absence. Cllr Philip explained to the members of the public and to the Council that the grant under normal circumstances would

not have been asked to be repaid, but a condition on the agreement that the Tennis Club would not install any lighting within 5 years was broken therefore, the Parish Council would be within their rights to ask for the grant to be repaid.

However, we understand the Tennis Club and the Buxton Trust are now in discussion and Cllr Philip would now write formally to Cllr Gooch to ask for an update to report to the Council in due course. The Council were keen to draw a line under this matter and thanked Cllr Philip for Chairing this item and taking forward as appropriate

Cllr Wood and the 2 members of the public then left the meeting at 19.38PM

## **285. To Review the current 20/21 budget and spend**

The Committee reviewed the current budget against spend for 20/21. Most items were on track.

- Overspend on cemetery maintenance this year but this was justifiable in the work that has been carried out.
- Cllr Philip confirmed that the EFDC Grant for the Cemetery we have received of £10,000 is a Covid Grant awarded to small businesses who are in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief according to the business rates system. It was also noted that this grant is not ringfenced for a particular project.
- Cllr Gooch has asked the Assistant Clerk to order another PC flag, so we have a spare.

## **286. To discuss the first draft of the 21/22 budget**

- Cllr Gooch informed the committee that the cemetery rates were out of line not only with neighbouring Councils and there is a large difference between non-residents and resident. The Clerk is arranging a cemetery meeting to discuss further.
- Newsletter income will reduce next year due to the loss of 3 sponsors.
- Training should be kept at £3K due to a potential new Council in 2021 and the new planning clerk.
- Cllr Gooch informed the committee of the project Cllr Purkiss would like to undertake next year around the Hoppit – the land at the Coppice Row / Piercing Hill junction. The iron railings around the site need replacing and it was suggested the Parish contribute to this. Cllr Philip and Cllr Hannibal declared interests at this point as members of St Mary's Church PCC and the congregation respectively. No decision was made at this point.
- Payroll will be increased slightly to £35K to allow for a 3% increase in staff salaries.
- The Tree planting budget was discussed Cllr Burn updated the committee on the verge trees project and the future planning for this. It was agreed that the budget for replacement and new trees would be £1,000 and we would also allocate £2,000 from our reserves.
- Infrastructure – Cllr Gooch updated the committee on the situation with Essex Highways and the fact there is very little money to carry out Highways maintenance work – particularly kerbs and pavements which are considered low priority. The Parish Council will therefore need to decide if we allocate funds each year (either by raising the precept or using reserves) for this purpose. We note the positive feedback for the work to the paths around the village green. We also have an excellent contractor who is significantly cheaper than the approved ECC contractor. Cllr Philip was strongly against raising the precept for this – particularly this year due to the COVID pandemic. It was therefore agreed we would raise the usual budget allocation of £7,000 to £10,000 and allocate a total of £30,000 to our Ear Marked reserves (any money not spent this year would be carried over and make up some of this £30,000).

It was then proposed that the money needed for the Hoppit fencing would be taken from this Infrastructure budget.

**287. To discuss the precept in preparation for approval at the January 2021 Full Council meeting**

This item would be deferred to the next Finance meeting once we have a second draft of the budget.

**288. To discuss and agree the request for a donation to the churchyard to include the annual grant (2019 and 2020) and to approve a budget to the work required to the war memorial including the surrounding wall, paving and gates.**

The 2019/2020 annual grant was approved by all Councillors and it was agreed that funds would be allocated to the rebuilding of the wall around the memorial and the replacement of the paving and refurbishment of the gates. Cllr Hannibal is waiting to hear regarding a quote and should have this ahead of the next meeting. A figure of between £5-10K is likely.

**289. To discuss and approve the quote from EFDC for the annual costs to empty the playground bins**

The costs of emptying the playground bins - £328.35 per annum was approved and supported by the Committee.

**290. To note the payment received from Epping Forest District Council for £10,000 for the Cemetery**

Noted

Cllr Philip added that there are a number of COVID grants available for closed businesses and also open business who have all been affected by lockdown

**291. 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

**292. Date of next F&GP Committee Meeting**

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020

**293. Following Agenda items will exclude Public and Press:**

None

**Cllr Hannibal closed the meeting at 21:23**

**Signed on behalf of the Committee as a true record**

**Councillor Mike Hannibal Chairman.....Dated.....**