

GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 11th 2013 AT 7:30PM IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, GREAT CHESTERFORD

Present: Joanna Francis
Gareth Bevens
Sharon Tricerri
Matt Rowan

Howard Rolfe
Neil Gregory
Julie Redfern
Tom Newcombe
David Hall

Alan Cattley – Clerk
PCs Simon Horne and Stuart Strange
Twelve members of the public.

13/189. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Rowan.

13/190. Declaration of Interests

To receive any 'personal' or 'prejudicial' interests relating to items on the agenda.

Cllrs. Redfern and Rolfe declared themselves as Cabinet members of Uttlesford District Council.

Cllr. Gregory declared himself a parent of a pupil at GC School and member of the Scouts.

13/191. Co-option of councillor

Tom Newcombe accepted co-option to the Council and signed an Acceptance of Office.

13/192. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting held on November 13th 2013 as a correct record of events.

13/193. Public Forum

A member of the public queried whether the Leylandii trees in Rookery Close (Agenda item 13/202) were actually the responsibility of the Council.

Apologies were given on behalf of Chief Inspector Richard Melton, District Commander for Braintree & Uttlesford who had been unable to attend the meeting. It was understood that CI Melton had offered to attend a future meeting if requested.

The PCs reported that enquiries into the recent spate of burglaries in the village were continuing. It was believed that the culprits were not local, but had taken advantage of the village's proximity to the M11. Uttlesford has suffered a large increase in burglaries in 2013, but the frequency had dropped after the arrest of a major offender.

It was suspected that recent local burglaries were opportunistic in nature and the culprits would have been looking for empty properties. Residents were urged to ring the Police if they witnessed any suspicious behaviour.

It was commented that receiving news of break-ins on the Google group was helpful, but that the means of entry was not reported.

The PCs replied that the means of entry had varied, but was often by breaking a window. They suggested that leaving a light on and a radio playing would be helpful to create the impression that a house was occupied.

In the event of a break-in, it was usual Police practice to ask ten neighbours if they had seen anything.

In response to a query about the expected speed of a Police response, it was stated that this would happen as soon as possible, but it was not possible to quantify.

One resident reported that a call to the 101 contact number had resulted in a recorded message suggesting that an email be sent.

Other questions included:

Q. What is being done by way of preventative measures?

A. Crime Prevention Days were planned, and free property marking was on offer.

Q. Were free security lights available?

A. No.

Q. Could street lights be left on throughout the night?

A. This was decided by Essex C.C., not the Police, although the Police could request a change if they thought circumstances required it. It was reported that crime figures actually fell in areas where the lights were left off.

Q. Are Police patrols in the village less frequent than previously?

A. This information not available.

The PCs also offered the following advice to help prevent burglaries:

- Activate alarms if fitted.
- Active Neighbourhood Watch schemes are effective.
- Plant thorny bushes under windows – DNA may be recovered from blood.
- Leave a radio on a speech programme to give the impression the house is occupied.
- Install automatic lights.
- Ensure newspapers are pushed fully through.
- Fit hinges on shed doors on the inside.

It was commented that the Neighbourhood Watch had fallen dormant. Cllr. Rolfe offered to contact Alan Johnson, the chairman of Uttlesford NHW for advice on reinstating a group in the village. It was thought that residents were more likely to join if they were approached directly. Cllrs. Francis and Redfern offered to suggest possible candidates who might be prepared to cover any streets for which no-one had come forward. **JF JR**

It was felt by some residents that the Council's policy of moderating postings to the village Google group had hindered the prompt dissemination of messages concerning burglaries and suspicious behaviour in the village. A Facebook page has now been set up by a resident to enable such information to be broadcast more quickly.

It was noted that door-to-door sellers needed a pedlar's licence issued by the Police and that it was illegal to trade without this.

It was asked whether CCTV cameras at the entries into the village could be provided; the PCs commented that they could be helpful, but needed to be of good quality in order to be effective. Cllr. Francis will investigate. **JF**

13/194 Burglaries.

To consider possible actions in response to the recent spate of burglaries in the village

This item was covered in the course of agenda item **13/193**.

13/195 Community Centre Liaison.

To appoint a representative of the Parish Council to liaise with the Community Centre Committee

It was agreed to accept Mr. Peter Philpott's offer to fill this role.

13/196. Planning

To consider any comments to be returned to Uttlesford District Council (UDC) on the following applications:

Ref. No: UTT/13/3221/HHF Conversion of existing detached garage.

Location: Magnolia Cottage Carmel Street Great Chesterford Essex CB10 1PH

Resolved to submit no comment.

Ref. No. UTT/13/3095/OP Outline application for removal of structures and the erection of 6 No. dwellings with all matters reserved except access and scale.

Location: Springwell Nursery Josephs Farm Walden Road Little Chesterford Essex CB10 1UE

Resolved to object.

13/197 Finance

The report of receipts and payments made since the last meeting was noted without comment.

13/198 School Safety Proposals

To receive report from the School governors and decide on appropriate response.

With the reservation that the Council would prefer not to lose parking spaces on account of the dropped curb the Council voted in favour of the proposals. It was also suggested that the teaching staff be encouraged to use the parking spaces offered by the Crown & Thistle.

13/199 Uttlesford Local Development Framework.

To consider the PC's response.

It was resolved to submit a short supportive response.

13/200 Scout Hut.

To receive an update on developments with the Scout Hut and decide on any required action.

It was noted that the Cambridgeshire Scout commissioner had resigned after a dispute with the Regional Commander.

It was reported that ownership issues and the means of handover of the hut had now been resolved and that matters were in process. It was hoped that the hut would be handed over by mid-January.

13/201 Cam Corridor Strategy.

To consider an offer from a resident to act as a representative.

It was unanimously agreed to accept Mr. Colin Day's kind offer to act as representative.

The clerk was asked to prepare a letter of confirmation.

AC

13/202 Leylandii trees in Rookery Close.

To consider whether trees should be pruned as originally planned or removed completely.

To approve extra expenditure if required.

It was understood that the tree surgeon had advised that the trees were unlikely to fall if they were reduced in height, but it was pointed out that the roots were also causing damage to the wall which could prove to be dangerous.

The quoted costs were £200 to reduce the trees' height or £450 to remove them. In view of the possible hazard presented by wall damage and the continuing costs of regular height reduction, it was decided to approve the cost of removing them if it could be confirmed that they were on Council owned land or to request that the land owner undertake the work if not.

The clerk was asked to ascertain ownership from the Land Registry entry.

AC

13/203 Village Google Group Moderation Criteria.

To consider the adoption of guidelines for the moderation of messages posted to the Village Google Group.

After some discussion, it was resolved to accept Cllr. Redfern’s offer to draw up a list of general principles which would be posted to the Group..

JR

13/204. Items for Information

1. 12/35. Council Standing Orders

Cllr. Hall has examined the existing Standing Orders and has some suggested changes. These will be discussed with the clerk and proposals made for consideration at a later meeting..

2. 13/30 Proposed Cycle Path

To report on progress.

A UDC cabinet member has proposed that a strategy be adopted for foot and cycle paths.

It was noted that new members had joined the ECC Infrastructure Team.

Work was to begin on cycle paths from Hinxton and Granta Park.

It was hoped that there may be benefits arising from advertising connected with the passage of the Tour de France through the village.

13/205. Matters for further discussion.

To consider topics for possible inclusion in future meetings.

Suggestions included:

Setting the precept for 2014/15.

Progress report on the village plan.

Setting a date for the next Village litter pick.

Decide on a new location for the grit spreader.

13/206. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Parish Council is to be held on Wednesday 8th January 2014 at 7:30pm in the Sports Lounge at the Community Centre

Meeting Closed at 9:50 pm

Signed (Chairman).....

Date: 15th January 2013