

East Donyland Parish Council
 Annual Parish Council Meeting – 12th May 2016
 St Lawrence's School, Rectory Road, Rowhedge starting 7.00pm.
MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Tony Pullon, Phil George, Doug Clay, Nina Crouchman, Richard Helliwell, Peter Case, John Rowland; Ward Councillors Adam Fox & Lee Scordis; Clerk – Nicki Matthews and 12 members of the public.

The Chairman, Cllr Tony Pullon, opened the meeting at 7pm.

19/16 To elect a Chairman for the ensuing year and for the newly appointed Chairman to sign the declaration of acceptance of office: Cllr Helliwell proposed Cllr George, Cllr Case seconded. No other nominations were received, all agreed that Cllr George be elected as chairman. Cllr George took over as chair of the meeting, and thanked Cllr Pullon for all his hard work during his 2 years as chair.

20/16 To elect a Vice Chairman for the ensuing year and for the newly appointed Vice Chairman to sign the declaration of acceptance of office: Cllr Pullon proposed Cllr Helliwell, Cllr Rowland seconded. No other nominations were received, all agreed that Cllr Helliwell be elected as vice-chair.

21/16 The newly elected councillors to sign declarations of acceptance of office: all signed.

The Chairman, Cllr Phil George, closed the Annual Parish Council Meeting and continued with the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting.

22/16 To receive and accept apologies and to note absences: Apologies received from County Cllr Kevin Bentley and Colchester Borough Cllr Mike Lilley.

23/16 To minute pecuniary & non-pecuniary interests of members relating to items on the agenda: JR – pecuniary 27/16; PG – pecuniary 27/16 & 36/16 iv)

24/16 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th April 2016:

TP asked NM to clarify the outcome of the concern raised in item 9/16 regarding whether the council had followed proper procedure. NM confirmed that she had spoken to the CBC Monitoring Officer following the meeting, who confirmed that the council had adhered to proper procedure. The minutes were proposed as correct by PG, 2nd RH – all agreed; minutes approved.

25/16 Have your say! The Chairman will close the meeting for a max.15 minutes to ask members of the public to speak on any matters relevant to parish business:

The following points and questions were raised:

- Item 36/16 i) – Residents raised concerns regarding this application, citing the Principal Planning Officer's assessment of the proposed development as scoring 'poor' against the Buildings for Life criteria, and the Contamination Officer's letter dated 23 March regarding the need to further assess pollution risks as insufficient detail has been provided. The council was urged to object to the proposal on these grounds.
- Item 36/16 ii) – Residents raised concerns regarding this application, noting that the paperwork available is difficult to understand, but that clearly neither the road nor the footpath have been completed. There are ongoing issues regarding vehicle speed, emergency access, surface water and potential pollution risks. The council was asked to object to the proposal on these grounds.
- Item 36/16 iv) – A concern was raised regarding the potential impact of introducing a drop kerb to this residential property on parking in the street.
- Pump House – P Donnelly spoke regarding this vacant building, sited at the end of the High St adjacent to the wharf development. PD has been in conversation with the owners who were planning to sell the building and site to the developers, and they are now prepared to offer it to the community of Rowhedge instead, at a reduced price. Its position is between the existing village and the new

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development and it could help to bring these two parts of the village together if used as a community facility. PD would like to see it used as a museum / to store artefacts, and hopes that the parish council will carefully consider whether it could be purchased as an asset for the village.

- Item 34/16 – it would be good to offer an initiative like this to residents, but it requires a commitment from participants to attend for the duration of the course. Introducing a small charge to cover the cost of the band and a contribution towards the course would potentially increase retention rates.
- Ownership of land between the village hall and the school – K Malcolm, Head of St Lawrence Primary School, spoke regarding the proposed extension to the village hall. There was a recent meeting which took place to clarify the boundary of the land belonging to the diocese, who own the school site. Neither KM nor EDPC were invited to attend. KM is aware that following on from that meeting EDCA are now intending to apply for planning permission; however, there is confusion over who owns the remaining land, EDPC or CBC, which the parish council are currently trying to clarify. KM wanted to make the parish council aware of how this project is progressing and requested that the school be considered favourably when future use of this piece of land is being considered, particularly in light of potential capacity issues and future need for play space. The school will continue to support the extension for the pre-school but if possible would like the land to be leased to the school, to safeguard pupils in future years, and potentially also allowed shared use of the space if appropriate and necessary. K Jones and S Allen noted that previously the parish council had agreed for the land to go to the school in exchange for use of the hall. PG advised that the council will respond to KM to clarify the ownership of the land and the boundary as soon as possible. *Action – the Clerk.*

26/16 To receive and note reports from:

- i) County Councillor, Kevin Bentley: apologies received, no report.
- ii) CBC Councillors Mike Lilley, Adam Fox & Lee Scordis: Apologies received from ML, who asked for the following to be noted:
 - Wharf development – ML and the parish council are both awaiting the result of the site visit by the Planning Enforcement Officer from CBC regarding the surface water and drainage issues.
 - CB Homes will be holding a mini day of action in October in Stephen Cranfield Close.
 - AF & LS introduced themselves. They will formally become councillors on 26th May. ML has been invited to become a cabinet member also.
- iii) The Clerk: noted.
- iv) Village Bus Representative – Elizabeth Trellis:
 - ET has a supply of the new timetables in her porch if anyone needs them.
 - The issue regarding the lack of a boarding stop at the top of the High St is ongoing, and ET is now considering what further action could be taken given the lack of response to date from ECC to both ET and the parish council. All ideas welcome.
 - DC noted that the football club are holding a youth tournament on 15th May, but they do not anticipate any repeat of the problems with the bus service which arose last year as a result of one person parking inconsiderately. The club will be patrolling the High St – please contact DC on the recreation ground should any issues arise.
- v) Latest EDCA meeting – Cllr Clay:
 - The next meeting is on Monday, a copy of the minutes of the last meeting are with the Clerk.
 - DC asked to step down as the parish council representative due to other time commitments. The council will seek to find another councillor to attend these meetings.
 - PG asked whether DC was aware of the issues raised by K Malcolm in item 25/16. DC was not aware that the meeting had been arranged without KM until after it has taken place. DC also has concerns regarding safeguarding pupils at the school.

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- vi) Rowhedge Residents’ Association – Trisha Curran:
- The next public meeting will be on Thursday 19th May at 7.30pm
 - The open gardens will be on 5th June
 - Residents have raised concerns with the RRA regarding the water on the wharf site and potential pollution of the site, which TC has already passed to the Clerk, as well as concerns regarding rubbish bags being left out – can the council address this?
 - The RRA also have concerns regarding EDCA and want to ensure the parish council are involved in what they are doing.

27/16 To agree the payments list already checked by Cllrs George & Helliwell (refer attached):
Cllrs George & Rowland left the room due to their pecuniary interest in this item. DC proposed, NC 2nd, all agreed. *Action – the Clerk.* PG & JR re-joined the meeting.

28/16 To note the draft minutes from the Maintenance Committee 20th April and any proposals/recommendations as a result:

Noted - RH advised that the committee are progressing work at the burial ground including reinstating the paths and landscaping the area recently cleared.

i) To agree the councillors who will be members of the committee for the following year:

It was agreed that Cllrs Crouchman, Clay, Case, George, Helliwell and Rowland will form the committee.

29/16 To note the draft minutes from the Finance & Personnel Committee 4th May and any proposals/recommendations as a result: noted - TP thanked the Clerk for her work in preparing the year end papers.

i) To agree the councillors who will be members of the committee for the following year:

It was agreed that Cllrs Crouchman, Clay, George, Pullon and Rowland will form the committee.

ii) To recommend that the Council approve the Review of EDPC’s Internal Controls, carried out 31.03.16: PG proposed, RH 2nd, all agreed.

iii) To recommend that the Council approve the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31.3.16: PG proposed, TP 2nd, all agreed.

iv) To recommend that the Council approve the Accounting Statements for the year ending 31.3.16: PG proposed, NC 2nd, all agreed. *Action – the Clerk*

30/16 To consider allowing residents and local businesses to place advertising postcards in the Crow’s Nest window with a donation payable to a local charity (service previously offered by Post Office):

TP proposed this be agreed, NC 2nd, all agreed. *Action – the Clerk*

31/16 To consider whether EDPC would like a seat on the Essex Coastal Forum (invitation extended to all parish councils with a tidal frontage) and/or form a new Colne Forum with Wivenhoe Town Council, Thorington & Alresford Parish Councils with a focus on maintenance of the River Colne and promotion of the area:

Councillors discussed whether the Essex Coastal Forum may be the wrong level of engagement for the parish, and that the Colne Forum has more potential to be relevant and useful. If successful, a rep from the Colne Forum could possibly attend the wider Essex Forum. This would reduce the time commitment for councillors which is already hard to manage. TP indicated that he would be willing to attend an initial meeting with the Colne Forum to assess whether it is worth pursuing. PG proposed that the council accept the invitation to be part of the Colne Forum on this basis, and put the invitation from Essex Coastal Forum on hold to be raised with the Colne Forum. RH 2nd, all agreed. *Action – TP / the Clerk*

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- 32/16 To discuss the potential future use of the Pump House as a community facility, and consider whether;**
i) to give the owner a commitment that the council wishes to explore the option to purchase the building;
ii) to agree a maximum expenditure of up to £2,500 to investigate this further, e.g. to facilitate surveys, land searches and to cover any necessary professional fees:

Having viewed the property, RH advised that the cost of £120,000 quoted by the owners to purchase the facility is likely to be significantly lower than market rates and his view is that the council should look into this further, and this will require use of funds. TP noted that the village plan survey results indicate that the community would like a facility for arts, crafts, storing artefacts etc and this could be an ideal fit. The proposed funding would enable the council to determine if the project is viable. There was general agreement that this is an opportunity that the council should pursue, and has the potential to bring the old and new sections of the community together. TP thanked P Donnelly for his enthusiasm and hard work in getting this proposal put forward. TP proposed that the council agree parts i) and ii) as stated, NC 2nd, all agreed. *Action – the Clerk*

- 33/16 To agree how to proceed with regard to co-option of two further members to fill the vacant seats on the parish council:**

PG noted that the council is not obliged to advertise the vacancies but it is good practice to do so, and the council's protocol is to include on the advert the skill set required for the roles. Councillors discussed the potential skills gaps in the existing council, and PG proposed that the council advertise the vacancies within the community, in particular seeking those with accounting experience, communication and media skills, HR knowledge, and willingness to participate in outdoor work as part of a team. PC 2nd, all agreed. *Action – the Clerk.*

- 34/16 To consider a proposal from Cllr Pullon for EDPC to sponsor a health and wellbeing project for the over sixties to promote core strength and balance. Taking note from a national health initiative TP would like the Parish to fund a six-month programme of weekly 1 hour sessions at a local venue (TBA) at a total cost of £1500 (Venue and Instructor) and exercise bands for up to 20 participants (20 x £7.00 = £140.00). TP would like those who can to offer a voluntary contribution to help recover some costs as he does not want cost to be a barrier:**

In response to the comments made in item 25/16, TP noted that this project is likely to take some time to attract participants, and may require advertising (the cost of which can be met from the proposed funds). The aim would be to encourage people to sign up even if they cannot attend every single week, and the benefits are not just for their health, but also to prevent isolation, increase confidence and develop friendships and community. Over 60s is a key age group for this type of project. Councillors asked whether making a small charge could increase the level of commitment from participants, and if offering the course free of charge may devalue it. Could the first session be free, with a small charge then for the rest of the course? TP responded that he believed even a small charge could be a barrier to participation, and advised that the cost is likely to be less than the total requested, potentially around £900. RH suggested that if the course is successful and the council decided to extend or repeat it, they could then consider whether introducing a charge would be appropriate. TP proposed that the project be approved as stated, at a total maximum cost of £1500, and the course offered free of charge to participants, JR 2nd, all agreed. *Action – TP/the Clerk*

- 35/16 To deal with matters arising from the previous Council minutes not dealt with elsewhere in this agenda (refer attached Action List):** Typography error noted. No other matters arising. *Action – the Clerk*

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36/16 To discuss planning applications and note decision papers as listed (refer attached):

- i) Planning application 160551, Rowhedge Wharf site; demolition of existing vacant commercial units and comprehensive residential redevelopment comprising 86 no. new residential dwellings, together with associated hard and soft landscaping, access, car parking and servicing, amenity space, etc:**

This is the site to the northwest of the Bloor development, further up the Haul Rd above the footpath to Fingringhoe. The parish council was approached earlier this year by the developer, Hills Group, who then met informally with a number of councillors on March 3rd to present their proposals. A number of questions were put to the developer, and answers have not been received to date. The developer also refused to discuss the S106 agreement.

Councillors discussed their concerns, those raised by members of the public and issues regarding the documentation provided within the planning application. In particular councillors were seriously concerned that claims have been made in the Planning Statement regarding requests from the parish council for funding towards a footbridge and the Social Club. These requests have never been made and the parish council has not been invited to participate in any discussions on this subject.

RH proposed that the council object to the application and comment as follows:

- i) *There are factual inaccuracies in the Planning Statement submitted - the parish council has made no request for funding towards a footbridge to Wivenhoe, or for funding to enhance the Rowhedge Social Club. Later within this comment is an initial list of potential areas where the parish council believes that contribution would be more appropriate.*
- ii) *Within the Planning Statement, there is reference to Haul Road as being a two lane road with pinch points - this contradicts what was agreed within the Bloor Homes application, for a one lane road with passing points, and could lead to potential speed / traffic issues in the future.*
- iii) *The initial report from the Principle Planning Officer scores the application as 'poor' with 48% in the Building for Life Assessment - the parish council would ask that the Planning Committee take heed of this low rating and make their decision on this application accordingly.*
- iv) *The documentation suggests that the environmental surveys required are incomplete and in light of the concerns raised and ongoing issues regarding contamination and pollution on the adjacent development site, this work needs to be fully completed and any issues resolved before a decision can be taken.*
- v) *The documentation suggests that the site may have architectural significance and this needs to be investigated prior to any decision.*
- vi) *The parish council strongly believes that the infrastructure of the village, including the school and doctors surgery cannot cope with this increase in population without support / enhancement. There is insufficient evidence provided that shows how this will be achieved, which is a serious concern.*

The parish council also wish to comment on the S106 contributions that would need to be agreed as part of any planning consent. The parish council has not been involved in any discussions or consulted on this, and would like the following to be considered for inclusion:

- i) *Greensward open spaces proposed as part of the development - the parish council to have input into how these are developed, with ownership of these to be transferred to the parish council on completion.*
- ii) *PROW - the developer to be responsible for ensuring that the PROW between the site and the existing Bloor site is developed as necessary to make it usable, accessible and fit for purpose. To include appropriate surfacing, drainage and lighting, taking into account the varying ground levels between the two sites. Arrangements for long term management of this path to be agreed to prevent any future gaps in service provision. The developer to make an appropriate contribution towards improving the PROW between Rowhedge and Fingringhoe.*

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- iii) *Pump House - the parish council is currently investigating the purchase and development of the Pump House, adjacent to the proposed site, as a community facility. No decision has yet been reached regarding whether this is viable, but if this does go ahead, this would be a more appropriate use for community facility contribution than the Social Club.*
- iv) *Traffic calming - with the increased population from the wharf development, the parish council is aware that the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles in the narrow village streets is likely to increase. The council is seeking to investigate potential ways to mitigate this problem, and it may be appropriate for the developer to make a contribution towards traffic calming measures e.g. 20mph speed limits/zones.*
- v) *The recent Village Plan survey results have just been made available, and indicate that there is a potential need for further sporting facilities within the village. This is another potential area for s106 contribution from the developer.*

To conclude, the parish council feels that they have been provided with insufficient evidence that all the implications of this development for the village have been carefully considered, and wish to have further involvement in discussions, in particular with regard to S106 contributions before any approval is granted.

PG 2nd, all agreed.

ii) Planning application 160792, Rowhedge Wharf site; application to discharge conditions 29 (piling and timing) and 45 (parts a, b and c) (highway works including provision of ROW to recreation ground) of application no. 144693:

PG noted that as raised in item 25/16, the documentation provided with this application is difficult to understand and there is a lot of technical detail. However, as stated there are contamination concerns regarding the piling (condition 29), it is clear that the road is not complete (condition 45 a) and there is no evidence of a detailed plan for the footpath (condition 45 c). DC contended that the planners may be suggesting that the footpath is not viable and that they do not intend to build it. PG proposed that the parish council objects to the application on the grounds discussed, JR 2nd, all agreed.

iii) Planning application 160818, 8 Rowhedge Road; proposed first floor side extension:

PG proposed that the council has no objections to this application, TP 2nd, all agreed.

iv) Planning application 160857, 7 Regent St; extension to rear, two roof windows and matching slate roof; new doors opening in to garden; replace all existing windows with UPVC double glazing to match existing style and neighbouring terraces:

PG proposed that the council does not object to the application but makes a comment highlighting a concern regarding the potential impact of the drop kerb on parking in the street; TP 2nd, all agreed.

v) Planning decision 160390/1, 20 High St; conversion of sail loft – conditional approval granted: noted.

vi) Planning decision 160548, 87 Rectory Rd; variation of planning condition – conditional approval granted: noted.

Action – the Clerk.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Agreed as a true record.

Signed: Date:

Chairman