

East Donyland Parish Council
Full Parish Council Meeting – 11th February 2016
St Lawrence's School, Rectory Road, Rowhedge starting 7.00pm.
MINUTES

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs Tony Pullon (Chair), Phil George (Vice-Chair), Peter Case, Doug Clay, Nina Crouchman, Richard Helliwell, Gordon Malcolm, John Rowland; Ward Councillor Mike Lilley; Clerk – Nicki Matthews and 9 members of the public.

189/15 To receive and accept apologies and to note absences:

Apologies were received from Cllr Nelly Randall and County Cllr Kevin Bentley.

190/15 To minute disclosable, pecuniary & non-pecuniary interests of members:

NC – non-pecuniary 198/15.

191/15 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2016:

Proposed PG, 2nd NC – all agreed; minutes approved.

192/15 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:

- Borough council elections - Cllr Justin Knight, CBC councillor for Old Heath, introduced himself. From May the ward boundary change will take effect and Rowhedge will become part of the Old Heath & the Hythe ward. If elected, Cllr Knight sees his role as being supportive to the parish council, and offered his help as needed. Susan Allen also introduced herself as a new candidate for the borough elections for our ward.
- Rectory Road resurfacing – why was the junction with the wharf development road not done at the same time? This will lead to further disruption and damage to the new surface at a later date. TP noted his agreement, and that this will need to be raised with Bloor Homes to ensure they reinstate the road adequately.
- Item 195/15: ear marking £1,500 reserves for archiving work - what is the proportion of the precept being spent on data bases, information security etc? Given the size of the community isn't this excessive?
- Item 199/15: lighting in the holm oak – concern raised regarding the safety of children climbing the tree.
- Item 200/15: outdoor gym equipment – although the gym is great idea, is it well enough used to justify further spend on this scale? The proposed cost for the new piece of equipment is around 40% of the original spend on seven items.
- Dog fouling – there is an issue on the path between Thanet Walk and Marsh Crescent, where it appears that the same dog is being allowed to foul regularly. Could a poster be put up asking for information on the owner responsible for this? Also, could a new dog bin be installed between Marsh Crescent and the kissing gate as lots of bagged dog waste is being left by the footpath.
- Bus turning circle – a meeting was held on Monday between residents who live near the circle, CBC Cllrs Mike Lilley & Dave Harris, and Parish Cllr Doug Clay. The purpose was to discuss the current poor state of the circle; it is used by lorries as well as buses, and is not fit for purpose with vehicles driving over the central section and mud being transferred onto the road. This makes the corner of Rectory Rd more unsafe as well as being unsightly. The outcome of the meeting was a proposal that the current grassed area be reduced to increase the size of the turning circle, the circle to be tarmac not concrete, and high kerbs to be installed. They would like the parish council to support this proposal as it goes forward. TP noted his complete support for this.
- Kerbstones – report of the poor condition of many around the village, notably Donyland Way and Heath Road.

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- Buses – why don't the electronic bus signs in Colchester town show any information? ET noted that she has not been able to get an answer to this yet.
- Second phase of wharf development – as a planning application for this is expected to be submitted soon, what consideration has been given to schools / doctors etc for the new residents? Surely the council should say no to this? TP advised that councillors are hoping to meet with the developer who is planning to submit an application soon and will raise these questions.

193/15 To receive and note reports from:

- i) County Councillor, Kevin Bentley: apologies received, no report
- ii) CBC Councillor, Mike Lilley:
 - High St flooding – there has been no progress on this. Bloor have advised they are waiting for Anglian Water, and vice versa. The issues relate to remedial work required to the drains that discharge into the river, and disturbance of underground springs on site. ML is liaising with S Jackson (CBC Planning) on the issue, and has asked her to put a hold on their current application to discharge planning conditions relating to surface water and drainage, pending resolution of this outstanding issue.
 - Chugging – ML has received a number of calls regarding charity workers going door-to-door in the village. They are required to be licenced and have been operating all around Colchester recently. There are rules that they have to follow and if anyone has any concerns, please contact ML.
 - Telegraph pole in Regent St – has now been removed. A concern has been raised about the finish of the work done, and ML will contact ECC to ensure that a flatter permanent finish is achieved. There was also a concern about the proximity of wires to houses from the new pole, but there is no evidence to support this at present.
- iii) The Clerk: noted.
- iv) Village Bus Representative – Elizabeth Trellis:
 - ET has been asked to find out how many bus users in Rowhedge travel to North Station or beyond towards West Bergholt. This question to be added to the Friday catch up to gather responses, with ET's contact information given as the bus representative for any problems or questions.
 - The issue of buses not being allowed to pick up at the Co-op bank is ongoing.
- v) Latest EDCA meeting – Cllr Clay:
 - Mostly general maintenance issues; the outdoor ashtrays keep being vandalised; the extension project is ongoing.
- vi) Rowhedge Residents' Association – Trisha Curran:
 - They hope to hold an Open Gardens in June, and are looking for participants.
 - They still need more volunteers for the proposed neighbourhood watch scheme.
 - Anyone wanting posters or placards for the Save Rowhedge campaign should contact them.
 - They are planning to hold a public meeting in the next couple of months.
TP asked if the website and facebook page are up to date as there has been limited activity recently; TC advised that ML is responsible for these, and SA noted that minutes are being added after each meeting.

194/15 To agree payments list and bank reconciliations already checked by Cllrs George & Clay:
RH proposed, PC 2nd, all agreed. *Action – the Clerk.*

195/15 To note the draft minutes (previously circulated) from the Finance & Personnel Committee 27th January and any proposals/recommendations as a result:

- i) A proposal to earmark the following amounts from the reserves as of 01.04.16: £2,500 for interpretation panels; £1,000 for shipyard corner; £1,500 for archiving work:

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PG explained that the amounts relating to Shipyard Corner and the interpretation panels were donations received specifically for those projects and it is therefore good practice to ensure they remain allocated accordingly. The archiving amount was allocated in current year budget but will not be spent before the year end and ear marking that amount enables it to be used in the next financial year. NM noted that because the archiving work will now be done primarily in-house, the full amount may not be needed, and if so, the remainder would then go back into general reserves. PG proposed that the earmarking be approved, JR 2nd – all agreed. *Action – the Clerk*

196/15 To consider the proposed rural housing questionnaire (draft attached) and analysis to be carried out by RCCE as agreed by the council in 2015 at a maximum cost of £250 (minute ref 199/14) and agree distribution method and cost:

NM explained that the purpose of the survey is to identify affordable housing need within the parish, to enable CBC to plan accordingly. Surveys are distributed by the parish council and returned in prepaid envelopes to CBC for analysis by RCCE. This was originally agreed by the council last year, but due to RCCE staffing issues had been postponed. The cost to EDPC will be under £200, and distribution can be done alongside the Colne Life magazine at a cost of £25. RH noted that some of the financial questions are very personal; NM explained that this section is optional and only appropriate for those who identify themselves as being in need of affordable housing. This information is required to enable CBC to accurately assess needs, and all data is treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act. TP proposed that the council approve the draft questionnaire and take this forward as previously agreed; JR 2nd – all agreed. *Action – the Clerk.*

197/15 To agree the appointment of Jan Stobart to carry out the internal audit for EDPC for the financial year ending 31 March 2016 at a cost of £140 (refer attached letter):

This is the auditor the council used last year, and the service received was excellent. There has been no cost increase for 2015-16. RH asked whether the audit will consider VAT processes specifically. NM advised that it addresses all internal processes, including VAT, but is not focused on that area in detail. RH proposed the appointment be approved, NC 2nd – all agreed. *Action – the Clerk.*

198/15 To consider a grant application (refer attached) from RCRC for £200 towards the costs of obtaining temporary planning permission for the hut on the heritage land adjacent to Lion Quay:

RH asked whether planning permission has been submitted by RCRC as the named applicant. NC confirmed that this has been done. TP proposed the grant be approved, PC 2nd – all agreed (NC abstained). *Action – the Clerk.*

199/15 To receive a proposal from Cllr Rowland to install outdoor lighting in the holm oak tree on Lion Quay:

JR explained that the intention would be to install fixed lighting that could be used at Christmas and other times of the year as appropriate. Many other villages have festive lighting, and it would be a good addition to Rowhedge. There is electricity already in place to the hut on Lion Quay, and a metered underground cable could be run from this to the tree. A steel cased cable could then be attached to the tree with staples (would cause no harm to the tree), using the side of the tree less accessible for climbing children, and the undersides of branches. The lights would be installed around the edges of the top branches to emphasise its shape and keep them out of reach for children. The lights would be warm white LEDs, which are low wattage and low voltage. This makes them safer, more environmentally friendly and the electricity cost would be minimal. GM asked whether the bulbs would be able to withstand potential vandalism; JR explained that they are very small and this should not be an issue; the company that he has sourced supplies councils all around the UK and the lights are designed to be year round external lights. PC asked whether solar power would be an option – JR advised that the bulbs are

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so low energy it would not be an issue, and that solar lights might not have sufficient power in the winter months when they would be most used. The council agreed that JR should do further research with the Clerk's assistance to get quotes for full costs, including installation of electricity access.

200/15 To receive a proposal from Cllr Pullon to purchase and install a new piece of equipment (single leg press) at the outdoor gym on the recreation ground at a cost of £3,856 + VAT:

TP explained that the equipment currently focuses on upper body only, and that providing a lower body piece of equipment would significantly improve the facility. Although it has been less well used in the winter months, it is well used in the summer and autumn and has many regular users. It would benefit the health and wellbeing of the community, young and old, and is free to use. The leg press would be the most complex piece of equipment which is why the cost is higher than some others, but it can be met from the current year expected budget surplus.

RH noted his view that this might not be the best use of council funds, which could potentially be used instead to improve the footpaths with the same health benefit. The footpaths are more widely used already, and might be more beneficial to older people less likely to use the outdoor gym. TP proposed the council purchase the leg press, the motion was not seconded and consequently did not go to a vote.

201/15 To deal with matters arising from the previous Council minutes not dealt with elsewhere in this agenda (refer attached Action List):

Volunteer campaign – the parish council will have a stall at the village market on Saturday 13th February to encourage residents to get involved with various initiatives in the community, and TP asked those present to spread the word.

202/15 To discuss planning applications and note decision papers as listed:

i) Planning application 160202, Rowhedge Wharf development; discharge of conditions 3, 5, 32, 39 & 17 for planning permission 144693:

Bloor Homes are seeking to discharge the following conditions as having been satisfactorily completed:

- Flood response plan
- Street lighting design
- Surface water drainage
- Foul water drainage
- Tree protection plan

PG noted that as per ML's earlier comments, there are still ongoing issues relating to these areas that have not been resolved. TP raised a concern that this may indicate there could be issues in other areas as well. PG proposed that the parish council make a comment on the application, requesting approval from the Environment Agency before these conditions are discharged; JR 2nd – all agreed. *Action – the Clerk*

Part 1 of the meeting closed at 7.45pm.