



COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Highfield Park Office
 Highfield Park Visitor Centre
 Hill End Lane
 St Albans AL4 0RA

Village Office
 83 High Street
 Colney Heath
 Hertfordshire AL4 0NS

Tel: 01727 825314 Email: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

**MINUTES OF COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
 HELD AT COLNEY HEATH SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2021, 7.30pm**

Members in attendance	
Cllr K Barnes (Highfield Ward) Cllr H Brazier (Hill End Ward) Cllr P Cook (Chairman) (Highfield Ward) Cllr J Llewellyn (Colney Heath Ward) Cllr J Mulroney (Highfield Ward)	Cllr G Shaw (Colney Heath Ward) Cllr K Slaughter (Colney Heath Ward) Cllr R Solts (Highfield Ward) Clerk of the Council, Ms. L. Chaplin

Other attendees 25 members of the public
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21/22-47	APOLOGIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS No apologies were required. It was noted that two councillors and one member of the public were audio recording the meeting.
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21/22-48	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST a) The Clerk confirmed that in addition to the flowchart produced earlier this year a sheet had been issued to each councillor which, for the time being at least will be issued at every meeting. The document confirmed on one side the process for conflicts from pecuniary to non-registerable on the reverse is a reminder of the NOLAN principles. The source for this document as the District Council's Monitoring Officer is noted and confirmed on the sheet. The Chairman went through all noted interests of each councillor and confirmed it is the personal responsibility of each councillor to update their declarations accordingly and ensure these are kept up to date. b) All councillors in attendance confirmed by a show of hands that the published declarations were correct and up to date, Cllr Shaw confirmed he would send an update shortly. c) None received or noted d) Councillor Slaughter requested a dispensation to speak at item 54a on this agenda and this was unanimously agreed.
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21/22-49	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC <i>7.46pm Standing Orders were suspended so members of the public could ask questions/make statements to the Council.</i> The following was noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A postcard put through doors by a pressure group. Will the Parish Council put this on their website? <i>Answered at Item 21/22-55</i> • Concern raised regarding the issues surrounding Roestock Hut. <i>Statement made did not require an answer</i> • Payment Month 6 – Payment to St Albans District Council for Pre-Application planning advice, question on what this payment was for. <i>Answered during the meeting at item 21/22-51b</i> • Issue raised from previous Emergency Council meeting about losing the Parish Council office. <i>It is stated that the eviction notice was issued, and Council chose to accept the notice and not expend further funds in a legal battle. Should the new Council in 2023 wish to have a presence in the Village Hall office then this could be negotiated at that time.</i> <i>7.52pm Standing Orders were resumed.</i>
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<p>21/22-50</p>	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 22nd July 2021 were noted as circulated and taken as read. Chairman asked for any comments as to their accuracy, there was one typographical error – removal of ‘and the’ at item 38a there were no further requests for any amendments, The amendment was made by hand, the minutes were duly proposed, seconded, and RESOLVED by a majority show of hands to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. Motion carried. The minutes were signed by the Chairman Councillor Cook for posting on the parish website. Minutes of the Emergency Parish Council Meeting held 9th September 2021 were noted as circulated and taken as read. Chairman asked for any comments as to their accuracy, the addition of ‘Emergency’ was added to the top of the first page there were no further requests for any amendments, The amendment was made by hand, the minutes were duly proposed, seconded, and RESOLVED by a majority show of hands to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. Motion carried. The minutes were signed by the Chairman Councillor Cook for posting on the parish website.</p>
	<p><u>FINANCE, AUDIT & GOVERNANCE</u></p>
<p>21/22-51</p>	<p>FINANCE</p> <p>a) To retrospectively approve payment Month 5 (August 2021) There was a question as to who was cleaning the bus shelters. The Clerk confirmed that the contract was with Veolia since March 2021. There was a question regarding the grant being held for Smallford, this was confirmed as in ear marked reserves due to COVID delaying works and planning permission. It was confirmed that Councillors Brazier and Mulroney signed off the payments and the bank reconciliations for August 2021. There were no further payment queries the payments to be made for August 2021 in the amount of £15,006.17 were duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands. Motion carried.</p> <p>b) To approve payments for Month 6 (September 2021) The payment sheet was noted as circulated and questions were welcomed. There was a question on the St Albans District Council Pre-Planning Application payment, it was confirmed that this was expenditure confirmed by Council at the July 2021 meeting and was to meet with a senior planner to obtain appropriate planning advice on the site at Roestock Hut. It was confirmed that Councillors Brazier and Mulroney signed off the payments and the bank reconciliations for September. There were no further payment queries the payments to be made for September in the amount of £9,503.33 were duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands. Motion carried.</p> <p>c) To receive an update on the external audit 2020/21 The Clerk confirmed that the external audit has been returned stating that ‘On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.’ This therefore confirms that both internal and external audits for 2020/21 financial year have been closed with no issues to action or note. All information relating to these audits will be posted on the CHPC website by the statutory deadline of 30th September 2021.</p>



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	<p>Finance & Governance Chairman Councillor Solts commented that members should be proud of this achievement and credit should go to the Clerk and her team for this excellent result. Chairman Councillor Cook added that this was an extremely good achievement over the Clerk's period of office bearing in mind the situation she inherited in 2016. Councillors had no questions on the audit and passed on their thanks to the Clerk/RFO and all staff who contributed to the successful audit.</p> <p>d) Public Consultation 2021/22 The report was noted as circulated. There were 3 contractor bids, the Chairman summarised the bids. The debate about whether to have a text box was discussed at length. It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED to appoint contractor B (Eventure) at a cost of £8,850. Motion carried. The budget for this work would be discussed at the Finance & Governance Committee meeting in early October. It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED that a working party would be held virtually to look at the questions in more depth and decide on a draft, this would then come back to Council for approval. Motion carried.</p> <p>e) Roofing works to OA Shelter The report was noted as circulated. There were 3 contractor bids noted in the report. It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED to appoint contractor A (Anderson Roofing) at a cost of £6,615. Motion carried. The budget for this work would be discussed at the Finance & Governance Committee meeting in early October. It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED to carry out the tree works as described in the report at a cost of £240 in preparation for the roofing works. Motion carried.</p> <p>f) Revote of grant application The revote was requested by the RFO - Responsible Financial Officer, including residents also wrote in to raise the matter of perceived bias. There was a lengthy debate on the matter and then a vote was called for. It was duly proposed, seconded, and RESOLVED by majority vote that 4Colney Heath Residents Association were awarded a grant of £250.</p>
<p>21/22-52</p>	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>a) Community Governance Review (CGR) The report including the timetable for the review was noted as circulated.</p> <p>b) Review of Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places The report was noted as circulated. No comments were noted.</p>
<p>21/22-53</p>	<p>PLANNING</p> <p>a) Ellenbrook/Hatfield Quarry Appeal Chairman Councillor Cook reconfirmed that Colney Heath Parish Council had been granted Rule 6 Status in this appeal. Details were noted. It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED that delegated authority be given for Councillor Cook and the Neighbourhood Plan Project Officer to work with Ellenbrook Area Residents (EARA) and Smallford Residents Association (SRA) and proceed with submission and representation at appeal in November on behalf of the Colney Heath Parish Council.</p> <p>b) Hertsmere Local Plan – Bowmans Cross It was confirmed that the Hertsmere Local Plan had been issued for consultation and within that plan was a proposal for 6,000 homes on the site known as Bowmans Cross, currently Tarmac's quarry off Coursers Road. It was duly proposed,</p>



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	<p>seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED that the Clerk be delegated to organise public meetings to hear residents' views and that the Clerk and Neighbourhood Plan Project Officer work collaboratively with London Colney Parish Council. Motion carried</p>
<p>21/22-54</p>	<p><i>Meeting suspended for comfort break 8.55pm-9pm</i></p> <p>LEGAL & LANDOWNER MATTERS</p> <p>a) Colney Heath Recreation Ground and Pavilion Lease The ground grading report was noted as circulated. The offer for preferential use of the lower pitches was noted at £500 per annum. This access is Saturday afternoons to 5pm July to May, Sunday morning and afternoon to 4pm September to May, and Monday to Thursday evenings when daylight allows. Council requested that this would be agreeable subject to the recreation ground being publicly available outside of these times. An additional break clause for this addition should be added in the event that the Club do not continue with youth football. There was debate as to the level of recompense for subletting (Section H), the draft heads of terms currently stated 50% and it was suggested that this amount should be amended to 20% and that subletting should not be without written permission of the landlord. With regards litter picking (Section R) this should be amended to tenant solely responsible. Subject to these amendments and ensuring that written permission includes emails and all future methods of communication of the time it was duly proposed, seconded, and RESOLVED by a majority vote to confirm with a letter of intent, subject to the other party's agreement a lease would be drafted. Motion carried.</p> <p>b) Roestock Park Open Letter – the correspondence from a member of the public was noted as circulated. It was considered a useful letter which outlines the process. Council requested the correspondence was noted and thanks were sent. Scouts' correspondence – the correspondence was noted as circulated. The draft response was discussed and agreed with no amendments. It was commented that pointing out the grant option was a good idea. It was duly proposed, seconded, and RESOLVED by a majority vote that the draft response was sent with no amendments. Motion carried. Building Access – It was suggested that as the building was no longer occupied that all items be removed as they were currently uninsured. A reasonable amount of time should be agreed for clearing the contents of the building, the Law of Torts was quoted. It was duly proposed, seconded, and RESOLVED by a majority vote to request that the contents of the building be cleared completely in a reasonable time. Motion carried. Pre-application Advice – as approved at the last Council meeting a pre-planning advice meeting was organised with a senior planner from St Albans District Council held today. The report will be issued within the next 2-3 weeks.</p> <p>c) Other legal matters Tyttenhanger Green Annual Bonfire & Fireworks Event Council noted the report received. It was noted that the insurance documents could not be provided until Council approved the event could go ahead. it was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED that subject to receipt of the insurance policy the event could go ahead. Motion carried. The Clerk was also asked for the missing information on bank signatories to be confirmed.</p>



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	<p>Money Claim - Agreement from legal representative of defendants 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9 received 16th September to cease all actions and not pursue the PC for costs. Defendant 3 who represents themselves also confirmed by email 16th September. Discontinuance paperwork issued with evidence sent to Watford County Court who confirmed today that the case has been closed. No further costs are anticipated in this matter other than the Clerk's time.</p> <p>Village Office Eviction – solicitors advised of intention to adhere to the eviction notice and vacate. The only secure and waterproof facility within the parish is Roestock Hut where the contents of the office will be stored until the current Council or the new Council May 2023 resolve the office requirements for the members of staff. Staff would continue to work at Highfield Trust Visitor Centre Office or from home, no staff would work at Roestock Hut, this would be a storage facility only. An alternative would be an offsite storage facility the closest one which in Ashley Road, St Albans which would be based on the nature and size required the quote for a 75sqft storage unit from October 2021 to May 2023 charged at £163 per month for the first two months and then £326 per month for the remaining 18 months required at a cost of £6,194.00. Council noted.</p>
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21/22-55	<u>PARISH ADMINISTRATION</u>
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	<p>a) Pressure Groups Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media group and website set up and called Save Our Scout Hut set up 6th August 2021. Those running this group are known to the Parish Council and should the group contact the Council directly engagement would be possible. Chairman shared his disappointment at his family members being accosted in the street as a result of the information being widely shared. It was made clear that the Scouts had not protected their position and issued a Section 26 notice. Concerns were also raised over funding of the campaign. The resident question raised at the start of the meeting with regards a link to the campaign group on the CHPC website was noted, there was no councillor willing to put this motion forward. Motion failed. • Colney Heath People is an anonymous social media pressure group set up 25th July 2021 by the unknown person/s 'Colney Heath' direct engagement is not possible, to date 8 complaints have been received on posts made on this group asking who they are, and complainants stating they are a current councillor, an ex-councillor or/and ex-employee. The Parish Council confirm that they are unable to engage with anonymous groups such as these as public money should only be spent engaging with the local community and those residents and organisations identified as within the Parish. <p>b) Highways meeting 11 October 2021 Councillors wishing to attend Colney Heath/Marshalswick meeting were asked to contact the Clerk directly.</p> <p>c) Statutory days for all staff 2021/22 As part of the staff employment two statutory days are permitted every year. The Clerk allocates these days and has again opted to allocate during the Christmas/New Year period. The decision for 21/22 is that the statutory days for staff will be Friday 24th December 2021 and Wednesday 29th December 2021</p>
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	<p>d) Freedom of Information Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 Freedom of Information requests made since April 2021. • 63 have been answered with a further 3 remaining to be answered. • 176 hours have been spent answering and researching questions which is an average of 7 hours per week every week for the 25 weeks of this year so far. • £5,436.66 public money has been spent providing answers to questions <p>e) Items to note that do not require a decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several residents on social media and councillors have commented on the continual and increasing legal costs in this Council. Council noted that the legal costs reduced in 2019/20 by 34% and again reduced by 68% in 2020/21 and the current legal costs expenditure for the first 6 months of 2021/22 is £2,866.00. • Next newsletter being prepared for issue in January 2021 any articles to be submitted to the Clerk by the end of Friday 19th November 2021. • HR Committee meeting 7th October 2021 has been cancelled for lack of business • Finance & Governance Committee meeting 7th October 7.30pm at CH School • Next Full Council meeting scheduled for Thursday 21st October – items for the agenda should be with the Clerk on the appropriate request form by 5pm on Friday 1st October 2021 <p>The Clerk asked if Councillors had any questions to raise, there were none.</p>
<p>21/22-56</p>	<p>REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES</p> <p>a) Highfield Park Trust Cllr Barnes gave an update including that Apple Day was 3rd October 2021 2pm-4pm at the YMCA gym.</p> <p>b) Police Liaison Group Cllr Mulroney reported on traffic issues in Colney Heath, the speed vans would be out in the parish again and that there was a new officer for the area.</p> <p><i>9.58pm Standing Orders were suspended.</i></p>
<p>21/22-57</p>	<p>QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC <i>The Chairman asked for any questions.</i> The following questions were asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting back in the Scouts to the building. <i>It was confirmed by the Finance & Governance Chairman that no one would be using the building until it was compliant, as confirmed by Chairman and Trustee of St Albans District Scout Council.</i> • Clarification with Chairman over comment made during the meeting on engagement with the Parish Council by 4Colney Heath Residents Association. <i>It was confirmed by the Chairman that engagement was part of representations made at the inquiry.</i> • Support for the reasoning for a non-Facebook survey and that it should be available by post and online. <i>It was confirmed that these options would be part of the agreed public consultation.</i> • A further request to allow access to the building at Roestock Hut and for them to be allowed to remove items. <i>Access to the building was approved during the meeting to allow removal of items, ongoing access was under continuing debate.</i>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will the Council measure the survey outcome and how will the outcomes be used in their decision making? <i>The Council hope to review the outcomes and use in their decision making but they can choose to make any decision they wish.</i> <p>10.11pm Standing Orders were resumed.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked all for their attendance and closed the meeting at 10.12pm</p>
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Meeting closed at 10.12pm

L Chaplin LCGI PSLCC CPFA CiLCA
Clerk to the Council
Drafted 04/10/2021

Signed by
Chairman Peter Cook
Approved by Council 21 October 2021