

COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT COLNEY HEATH JMI SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 3rd AUGUST 2023 at 7.30pm

Members in attendance	
Cllr C Tallents (Colney Heath Ward) Chair Cllr J Clemow (Colney Heath Ward) Cllr N Pettit (Colney Heath Ward)	Cllr H Brazier (Colney Heath Ward) Cllr G Shaw (Colney Heath Ward) Cllr S Parish (Tyttenhanger Ward)
Other attendees	
Clive Payne (Minute taker), Michele Gilbert (Finance Officer, Parish Council) and 18 members of the public attended the meeting.	

23/24-28	APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS The Chair explained the necessity for this meeting and that unfortunately the Clerk could not attend. Apologies were noted from Cllr T Burns who was on holiday and the apology was accepted for the reason stated. It was noted that some Councillors and members of the public were audio recording the meeting.
23/24-29	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST a) Cllr Parish explained that he may have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in relation to the item later in the agenda concerning the Charles Morris Hall. This was noted. No other Declarations of Interest were disclosed. b) It was noted that no written requests for dispensation were received. c) It was confirmed that no dispensations had been received in advance and no verbal dispensations requested.
23/24-30	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC <i>7.42 pm Standing Orders were suspended so members of the public could have the opportunity to ask questions/make statements to the Council.</i> The Chair asked for any questions from members of the public and the following questions were taken.

	• It was asked by a member of public if the Parish Council had any plans to reinstate the community bus. It was explained that this matter had been discussed by the Council but as the previous bus had not been well used with little take up, there were no plans at this time to reinstate the service. • It was asked if the Parish Council were aware of what were the St Albans District Council's intentions in respect of the Ellenbrook Fields gravel pit. The Chair confirmed that the Council was unaware of their intention in respect of this site. 7.40 pm Standing Orders were resumed.
23/24-31	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 22nd June 2023 were noted as circulated and taken as read. The following amendments to the Minutes were proposed. Item 23/24-17a It was proposed that that this the minute be amended to read as follows:- "As a member of various community organisations Cllr Clemow declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 20c in relation to the review of the grant policy but that he considered he did not have a conflict of interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct. This was noted. There were comments regarding the necessity of this declaration. Cllr Shaw also noted the same potential nonpecuniary interest and no conflict of interest." Proposer: Cllr Clemow Seconder: Cllr Shaw. It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands that the Minutes be amended as set out above. Item 23/24-22k In order that the decision, be more fully understood by the community it was proposed that the following amendment be inserted after "<i>and noted ...</i>" "Regarding the Neighbourhood Plan boundary, it was noted that the Parish boundary should exclude that part of Bullens Green Lane in Welwyn Hatfield borough and the couple of properties in Church Lane in Hertsmere Borough. While residents in these areas are part of the Colney Heath village community, including these areas in other administrative Councils would create complexity and could result in invalidation of the Neighbourhood Plan at the formal approval stages." Proposer: Cllr Clemow Seconder: Cllr Shaw

	It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands that the Minutes for the Council meeting held on Thursday 22nd June 2023 be amended as set out above. The Chair asked for any further comments as to the accuracy of the minutes. As there were no other comments regarding their accuracy, the Minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 22nd June 2023, as amended by the above, were duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. Motion carried.
23/24-32	FINANCE a) Schedule of payments Approval was sought on the schedule of payments made by the Parish Council for June 2023 (retrospectively) and those for July 2023. The following questions were raised on the schedule. • Clarification was sought on what was meant by the “Chairman’s allowance” and what it is meant to be spent on. It was explained that this was an annual allowance, and it was open to the Chair on what it was used for. The Finance Officer suggested that the amount stated in the schedule was for the last municipal year. • Cllr Pettit raised the extent of the expenditure shown in the schedules on tree and associated work as it seemed excessive. It was understood that this needed to be reviewed and could be considered as part of a future budget review. b) Schedule of income and expenditure The Chair explained that it had not been possible to circulate the schedule of income and expenditure by budget heading on 30th June 2023 in advance of the meeting so could not be discussed. He confirmed that the schedule would be circulated to all Members by the Finance Officer following the meeting. Proposer: Cllr Clemow Seconder: Cllr Brazier It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands that the schedule of payments for June 2023 be retrospectively approved and that July 2023 be approved. Motion carried.
23/24-33	GOVERNANCE a) Parish Council Vision and Strategic Plan

The Chair explained that following discussions it was considered that the new Council needed to make their Vision and Strategic Plan for the Council clear to the community. A report on the proposed Parish Council Vision and Strategic Plan for 2023/2024 had been submitted with the agenda and the meeting was asked to review and approve it.

Vision

The proposed vision for the Parish Council is for Colney Heath Parish Council to be a "Good Council" which means:-

- to be representative of and actively involve all parts of our community.
- to work positively and closely with voluntary and community groups, articulating community needs through effective communication and plans for the parish.
- to be effectively and properly managed.
- to work in partnership with other local authorities and agencies to get the best deal in service delivery for the local community.

Strategic Plan

It was proposed that once the Council has engaged with the community through in-house surveys/questionnaires, community conferences and statements of intents, the Council will refine and develop their initial objectives and plan of action. The aim is to complete the initial consultation by November 2023 to inform the budget for 2024/2025.

At this stage it is proposed that the plan of action for 2023/2024 will include the following initial objectives:-

- to oppose inappropriate development proposals
- to commence development of a neighbourhood plan
- to enhance the Parish environment
- to understand resident's issues
- to inform residents
- to support community groups
- to resolve legacy issues
- to simplify bureaucracy
- to provide value for money.

Proposer: Cllr Parish

Seconder: Cllr Pettit

It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that the Vision and Strategic Plan for 2023/2024 submitted to the meeting be approved and in due course published on the Parish Council's website.

b) Parish Council Logo and Newsletter Masthead

Cllr Pettit introduced a proposal to review and update the Council's logo and Parish

Council newsletter Masthead. It was felt that having a newly designed logo would underpin the new parish area and the expected change for residents. In addition, the new logo would become directly associated with the new parish and make a strong first impression whilst in due course becoming its' cornerstone. It will be introduced correctly and help provide a unifying role with the residents.

In addition, it was proposed that the adoption the kite, which was a common sight across the Parish, as a symbol for the Parish to replace the previous use of a kingfisher and to become a key part of the new masthead, would be a recognisable image and distinctive emblem for the Parish Council to provide a unifying choice for the whole Council.

It was confirmed by Cllr Pettit that the copyright for the above would be released to the Parish Council at no cost.

Proposer: Cllr Shaw

Seconder: Cllr Brazier

Having been duly proposed and seconded, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that the new Parish Council Logo and newsletter masthead be approved and introduced as soon as practicable.

c) Parish Council Newsletter

Cllr Pettit reported on the discussions at the Council's Communications Group on the need to review and approve a new format for the Parish Council newsletter, the proposed method of distribution and the potential recipients. A mock-up of the proposed new newsletter was included in the Council meeting Agenda. It was proposed that it would contain local news of the whole Parish, proposed events, and general information on relevant Parish Council activities. Advertising space would be made available within the newsletter. It was explained that it would be non-political in content and have 8 or 12 pages (depending on the extent of news items and advertising sales) and be coloured in A4 format which would be less expensive than the previous A5 version. The newsletter would be prepared to strict deadlines and issued every two months with the first edition being aimed at September 2023. It would be linked to the Council's website

It was suggested that the newsletter would be distributed by volunteers on foot or, if necessary, by post across the whole of the Parish area and be made available to the public in such places in newsagents, schools, public houses and any other relevant outlets. There would need to be a protocol developed to cover the actions required of volunteers and the distribution process to be followed.

Proposer: Cllr Clemow

Seconder: Cllr Shaw

It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that the format submitted for the new Parish Council newsletter be approved along with the recommended processes set out above.

d) Member to serve of Staffing Committee

The Chair explained that there was a need to appoint the third member of the Staffing Committee to fill the current vacancy. Cllr Parish was asked if he was willing to serve in this role and he accepted the nomination. No other nominations were received.

Proposer: Cllr Brazier

Seconder: Cllr Shaw

As it had been duly proposed, seconded it was unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that Cllr Stephen Parish be elected to serve as a member of the Staffing Committee.

e) Appointment of Vice Chair of the Parish Council

The Chair explained that he had taken advice and there was a need for a Vice Chair of the Parish Council to be appointed, to support and act in the absence of the Chair when required. This was discussed and it was agreed that such an appointment was necessary. One nomination was received namely that of Cllr Clemow who accepted the nomination.

Proposer: Cllr Shaw

Seconder: Cllr Brazier

As it had been duly proposed and seconded, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that Cllr John Clemow be elected to serve as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.

f) Formation of a Budget Committee

The Chair outlined wish to form a Budget Committee and the need to appoint three Members to serve on the Committee for this municipal year. The rationale behind the need for this new Committee was mainly to assist with the preparation of the annual precept but full terms of reference for the Committee would be considered by the Committee.

Nominations were sought to serve on the Committee and Cllrs Tallents, Clemow and Shaw were proposed and accepted by the Councillors concerned.

Proposer: Cllr Pettit

Seconder: Cllr Brazier

It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that a Budget Committee of three Members be constituted, and Cllrs Tallents, Clemow and Shaw serve on the Committee for 2023/2024.

Motion carried.

23/24-34	REPORTS FROM WORKING PARTIES Reports were received on the activities of the following Council's various Working Parties. a) Planning There were no questions or comments on the report. b) Communications There were no questions or comments on the report. c) Charles Morris Hall There were no questions or comments on the report as it was noted that there was an item concerning Charles Morris Hall to be discussed later in the Agenda. d) Roestock Park Hut The report was noted, and Cllr Clemow proposed that a report was needed on the current condition of the Hut. e) Environment There were no specific questions or comments on the report, and it was noted that further discussions on the matter are ongoing. Proposer: Cllr Brazier Seconder: Cllr Pettit It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands that the above reports be duly noted. Motion carried.
23/24-35	PLANNING & CONSULTATIONS a) Rule 6 Party, Inquiry for land at the rear of Tollgate Road Cllr Clemow advised the meeting that the Parish Council's Rule 6 Party Statement of Case for the Inquiry into the land at the rear of Tollgate Road had been submitted for the Planning Inquiry in respect of the land at the rear of Tollgate Road and that the deadline for the preparation of the Council's evidence to the Inquiry was 22nd September 2023. There had been a Case management conference held on 1st August 2023 which had been attended by Cllr Clemow and Mr M Rawlings. Comments following that conference were required by 21st August 2023. Details of the Inquiry arrangements were on the St Albans District Council website.

Cllr Clemow advised that the Inquiry would be dealing with matters on a case-by-case basis and the topics to be covered would include the five issues of which the Council was already aware.

The Inquiry was scheduled for 19th to 22nd September 2023 and 25th to 28th September 2023 and it would be held in the Council Chamber in the St Albans District Council Offices.

It was proposed that the Rule 6 representatives for the Parish Council at the Inquiry should be Cllr Tallents, Clemow, and Burns plus Mr Rawlings subject to their availability.

Proposer: Cllr Tallents

Seconder: Cllr Shaw

It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that the above be noted and approved.

b) St Albans District Council's Draft Local Plan

Cllr Clemow reported to the meeting that consultation of St Albans District Council's draft Local Plan closed on 25th September 2023. The Parish Council therefore needed to produce its' evidence on the Plan would be needed for submission by 22nd September at the latest.

The intention was to discuss at a workshop arranged by the Parish Council, and it was noted that the District Council would be holding consultation meetings and the Council would be advised of the dates once known.

Proposer: Cllr Tallents

Seconder: Cllr Clemow

It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that the report be noted.

c) Meeting with Brett Aggregates, Smallford Residents Association and Ellenbrook Area Residents Association

A meeting that had been held with Brett Aggregates, Smallford Residents Association and Ellenbrook Area Residents Association on 3rd July 2023 was noted.

The Chair explained that Brett Aggregates had lost a public enquiry into the site but had been granted a temporary licence to last for 40 years. The Company were required to produce an access strategy to the site for residents and although they had claimed to have consulted on the issue this had happened properly.

Proposer: Cllr Clemow

Seconder: Cllr Shaw

	It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands that the above be noted. d) Planning Applications The Council was advised by the Chair that it was not possible to discuss this item and to review any planning applications received by the Parish Council to make comment as a consultee as, due to the Clerk's absence, it had not been possible to determine if any such applications had been received since the last meeting. The options to obtain access to the Clerk's Council email account were mentioned to get the Council planning applications until the return of the Clerk were discussed and including deciding with St Albans District Council for them to be emailed temporarily to the Finance Officer. It was noted that a weekly list of planning applications was set out in the District Council website from which applications for the Parish Council could be identified. Cllr Clemow advise the meeting that Cllr Burns had drafted a response to Bellway Application on Roestock Lane. It was proposed that Cllr Clemow be given delegated authority to submit the response. Proposer: Cllr Tallents Seconder: Cllr Brazier It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands that the most appropriate means of obtaining any planning applications for the Parish until the return of the Clerk be explored including asking the District Council to send them temporarily to the Finance Officer and Cllr Clemow be given delegated authority to submit the response prepared by Cllr Burns. Motion carried.
23/24-36	LEGAL AND LANDOWNER'S MATTERS a) Representations regarding Gloucester Park The current position regarding status of the representations regarding Gloucester Park was raised and the Chair advised that that there should have been a review of any proposals for Gloucester Park, but it appeared that St Albans District Council were not progressing this matter. Concern was expressed about what process was happening to assure the future of Highfield Park. The situation was noted. b) Football Club lease The Chair advised the meeting that a meeting held been held with Colney Heath Football Club regarding the football club lease. It had been clear that the Football Club wanted to have the lease agreed and in place and the Council was keen to get it

resolved. The current position is that the Football Club needed to determine their legal entity and the matter was in the hands of the lawyers and needed to be resolved before further progress was possible.

The situation was noted.

c) Lease for Charles Morris Hall

The Chair explained that the new Council was keen to meet with the Trustees of Charles Morris Hall to review and agree the principle of the lease for Charles Morris Hall. There were several issues and cost implications to be considered but, in principle, the Council would be proposing to issue a lease for 50 years at a peppercorn rent of £5 per annum.

However, there were several issues to be resolved before this could be done for example the need for the Trustees to review the structure and governance of the Hall, to clarify the registered name of the land and to determine the ownership of a part of the site. The Chair confirmed that it was the Council's clear intention and wish to enter into a lease agreement as soon as the outstanding issues can be determined and to proceed based on the above heads of terms.

Cllr Parish did not vote on the matter as he has a non-pecuniary interest.

Proposer: Cllr Clemow

Seconder: Cllr Shaw

It was duly proposed, seconded, and ~~unanimously~~ **RESOLVED** by a show of hands that the Council's intentions as set out above be noted.

d) Communication with Residents in the High Street

A report on the poor condition of the track behind the cottages to 53 to 81 High Street which was part of the designated Common land. This was a concern for the residents in the cottages. There was also over parking on the track which should not be permitted. There was an expectation that the new Council would resolve this matter, but the Council is not permitted by law to repair the track or permit parking on the Common and in addition the Council cannot by law permit residents to do repair works on Common Land.

It was clear that this matter is unlikely to be resolved quickly and it was felt that there was a need to review and approve the communication to residents in the High Street regarding the track behind the cottages. It was proposed that a timely communication with the residents would be helpful to residents and would be in the interests of the Council.

It was therefore proposed that a letter be sent to all residents involved explaining the legal position regarding the restrictions to works on the Common stating that:-

- residents' concerns are appreciated by the Council and the Council wishes to find

and to ascertain the position of the Council land surrounding and land it sits on.

by majority vote.

	• a suitable solution but the matter is complex and potentially difficult to solve. • the Council will actively look at the options and potential solutions and will keep residents informed on progress; and • if residents have questions these should be addressed to the Clerk. Proposer: Cllr Pettit Seconder: Cllr Parish It was duly proposed, seconded, and unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands that a letter be sent to all residents of properties 53 to 81 High Street explaining the legal position regarding the restrictions to works on the Common and the intention of the Parish Council to seek a resolution of the current problems. Motion carried.
23/24-37	REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES The following verbal reports were received. a) Ellenbrook Fields Trust It was noted that there was nothing to report on this matter. b) St Albans District Association of Local Councils The Chair reported that he had attended a meeting of St Albans District Association of Local Councils on behalf of the Parish Council held on 3rd July 2023. The only item on which he could report was that there would never be a zip wire in any playground in the district! The report was noted. c) Highways Liaison It was noted that there was nothing to report on this matter. d) Tyttenhanger Quarry It was noted that Cllr Clemow would be attending the next meeting over Tyttenhanger Quarry on behalf of the Parish Council which was planned for 5th September 2023.
23/24-38	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC <i>9.00 pm Standing Orders were suspended so members of the public could have the opportunity to ask questions/make statements to the Council.</i> • A question was raised by a member of the public concerning the future of Gloucester Park. The Chair responded and explained that the Parish Council had lost responsibility for it to St Albans District Council as part of the reorganisation and the demise of the previous Parish Council. It had been designated as an item

	• of community value but the Parish Council were questioning if the correct process has been followed by the District Council. This was the only action the Parish Council could take. The situation was noted. • A member of the public reported that the Trustees of the Charles Morris Hall had not yet met to consider the Council's initial proposal and Cllrs Tallents and Clemow confirmed that they would be willing to attend a meeting of the Trustees. It was also explained that the Trustees were undertaking a review of the constitution. • The Chair was asked if the Parish Council could consider meeting in Tyttenhanger once a year and it was confirmed that it was the intention of the Council to meet across the Parish area and this included in Tyttenhanger. • A member of the public advised the meeting that there was an open invitation to the Smallford Station Heritage Society open day on 10th September 2023 from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. The Open day would show the activities of the Society and the restoration works in progress. The event and the invitation were noted. 9.10 pm Standing Orders were resumed. The Chair thanked all for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.11 pm.
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The meeting closed at 9.11 pm.
Clive Payne
Drafted on 6th August 2023

Signed by Chair at meeting on 21st September 2023
Copy held on file

Signed by Cllr C Tallents
Chair
Approved by Council on 21st September 2023

CHPC638