

STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL**F&GP**

MINUTES of a meeting of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held at 7.45pm on Wednesday 30 March 2011 in the Council Offices, Crafton Green House, 72 Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex

PRESENT: Cllr P L Jones (Chairman), Cllrs B Gott, J Loughlin, R Rawlinson, J Salmon and G Sell

ATTENDING: Mrs R Clifford – Clerk

371 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Hudson and J Rich.

372 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None.

373 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

374 MATTERS ARISING

316 – it appears that further objections have been received by Highways to the proposed residents' parking scheme for Lower Street and Grove Hill. These are still being considered by the legal department at Essex County Council. After discussion, members agreed that if further delay to implementation of the scheme was likely, then the High Lane section should be omitted for the time being. 317 – Effectiveness of Internal Audit – the Chairman reported that since the last meeting, and indeed the Annual Parish Meeting, this requirement has been repealed for Parish Councils.

375 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Essex Police – The Reform Programme – details of the current review of the Essex Police Authority. The Clerk confirmed that she had received no detailed response to her letters to the Chairman of the EPA and Chief Constable – reminders to be sent. Two major issues face this parish – the levels of policing and maintenance of these levels.

376 FINANCE

- a The list of cheques for signature was approved.
- b Parish Grants – the Clerk's Report detailed applications received prior to the meeting, but a further application from Buffy Bus had been received earlier in the day. Members held a brief discussion over the merits of the various organisations. It was generally agreed that as an entry fee is charged for the Gardens of Easton Lodge, then a grant was not necessarily appropriate. However, the other three organisations clearly gave support to parishioners.

Information received from the Buffy Bus did not list Stansted Mountfitchet within its visits, but most members were sure that it did provide a facility at Foresthall Park. Subject to the Clerk confirming this to be the case, and acknowledging that Home-Start also receives funding from ECC and NHS West Essex, Cllr Sell proposed the following

RESOLUTION that grants be made to three organisations as follows:

- a) Uttlesford CAB £600
- b) Home-Start Uttlesford £275
- c) Buffy Bus - £600

Agreed unanimously.

377 LIGHTING

a The Clerk reported an on-going problem with column JR5 in St John's Road which was sometimes in full lighting and on other days only flickered. The light has been referred to the electricity supplier for further investigation.

Cllr Sell reported that he has been asked about the possibility of lighting the junction of High Lane with the B1383. The Clerk reminded members that this has been discussed previously but members decided it would urbanise this part of the village. Members agreed that this was still their view.

b Cllrs Loughlin and Rawlinson had visited Sunnyside to view the lighting trial and agreed that they thought it was preferable to the "orange" lighting previously. The Clerk reported that she had not received any feedback at all from residents. Cllr Jones also believed that the lights were an improvement.

It was agreed that the Clerk should send a letter to residents inviting their comments and that a second area should be identified for a further trial, possibly the path known as Cooper's Alley.

Cllr Sell raised again the question of the Parish Council taking over lights currently owned by ECC in the village (although not the B1383). Agreed that a further letter should be sent stating that it would be preferable if all the lights came under the control of one authority and seeking their comments.

378 GUEST LIST FOR PARISH RECEPTION

Members were asked to let the Clerk have any amendments/suggestions at the earliest opportunity.

379 WINDMILL

a) Current Position - The independent report on the paintwork appears to show an error in the application of the paint during the refurbishment works. The Clerk confirmed that IJP, the contractors, were keen to put right the situation prior to the Easter opening.

b) Future Maintenance – Given the amount of work undertaken to the moving parts of the Mill, the Millers believe that it is essential that more regular checks are undertaken on a regular basis. Ideally, three or four times per year, the "millwright" works should be inspected and a report made to the Trustees. Annually, a structural inspection should be undertaken, as in the past. Cllr Jones voiced his concern at the cost of these additional inspections. The Parish already commits £2,000 per annum towards a new maintenance fund – the cost of the inspections will have to be met from somewhere.

Cllr Sell made reference to the New Homes Bonus which UDC would receive in the near future. As much of this income had derived from new homes at Foresthall Park, perhaps an application could be submitted for the Mill.

Cllr Jones reminded members that the Council has agreed to maintain this village landmark as it has always done, however, because of the work which has been undertaken at the request of the Millers (ie to have the cap turning), the revenue expenditure has more than doubled annually. It was agreed that a meeting should take place with a representative of the Millers and the co-Trustee Molly Clarke.

321 BONFIRE AND FIREWORK EVENT

It was agreed to maintain entry charges for 2011 and to ensure that these are shown on the website. To encourage greater response (and discourage private events in gardens) it was agreed to deliver fliers to properties in Foresthall Park to ensure that they are aware of the event. Clerk to approach local businesses for sponsorship of the event and to approach the ATC in good time for assistance with setting up.

322 WEBSITE

Cllr Owen has been in touch with Cllrs Freeman and Stiles regarding training and this should take place before too long. Cllr Jones had noted in the Local Council Review a section about websites of councils in Essex – Clerk to send links to members for their interest.

Cllr Sell reiterated his concern about the website being kept up-to-date - Cllr Owen cannot do all of it by himself. It was noted that future staffing at the office would take account of this, but in the meantime an update to the front page was required. Cllr Jones stated that he was happy to undertake this, with assistance, if someone else could post it to the site. Cllr Hudson also agreed to contact Cllr Owen regarding this.

323 COUNCIL OFFICES RELOCATION

Cllr Jones reported on his visit, with the Clerk, to North Weald where the Parish Council and library share facilities. Stansted's library is successful – there is no reduction in opening hours proposed by ECC and it was possible that a self-service scheme could be introduced in the not too distant future.

This would require a member of staff to be present to open the building, but this could be a shared person, perhaps also acting as front office for the police and/or parish council. It may be possible to redevelop the library building to provide the required accommodation.

Cllr Sell reported that UDC has now committed £10,000 in its budget for the provision of a Community Information Centre in Stansted and members must consider how best to achieve this.

Cllr Rich aired a note of caution as he believed any such scheme would require lots of enthusiasm. Cllr Jones agreed and confirmed that the Council must get its ideas together to come up with a scheme which could deliver.

Cllr Jones stated that the Crafton Green Working Party would be meeting on 21 February to progress this issue which should be one of the Council's top priorities.

324 POLICE MATTERS

Cllr Sell reported that Cllr Robert Chambers has resigned as Chairman of the Essex Police Authority. Our Inspector, Mick Couldridge,, has been given a new role and the Inspector from Saffron Walden now has authority for our area.

Meeting closed 9.35pm