



**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON
MONDAY, 18TH JANUARY 2021 AT 7.30PM**

Present: Andrew Marchant
Simon Bagnall
David House
David Oxley
Amanda Parker
Jan Pledger

Members of the Public: Daphne Bailey

District/ County Councillor: CC Jeff Jones

Apologies: DC Peter Boylan, PC De Bruyn

Officer present: Caroline Jones (Clerk)

The chairman welcomed councillors and a member of the public to the first meeting of the year.

- 37.1 Apologies** received from DC Boylan who is co-ordinating the Stevenage vaccination centre and PC De Bruyn.
- 37.2 Personal / Prejudicial Declarations** : none.
- 37.3 Public Comments** : None.
- 37.4 County Councillor Comments** : CC Jones wished everyone a happy new year. He reported on county news which was mostly COVID related. There was a huge amount of work being carried in the region out rolling out the vaccination and COVID testing. Robertson House, Stevenage has become one of the seven major UK vaccination centres and will be able to vaccinate 40,000 people per week! Letters invited members of the public to be vaccinated are going out and it will give information on how to book an appointment online or phone to arrange one. The over 70's should be contacted this week. As a county we are doing quite well. The Government are keen to get up to the 4 million target.

CC Jones voiced his concerns over the infection rates – Buntingford including the villages of Anstey, Hormead and Brent Pelham currently have 861 cases today which is remarkably high. Harlow is 1,200+ and 4th highest in UK. Our area is particularly high and in comparison, Puckeridge extending down to Thundridge is extremely low. There has been a Buntingford campaign supported by councillors, local police, fire officers and East Herts COVID marshals where leaflets were given out to advise people the rates were high in the town. Track and Trace didn't pinpoint any particular reason, but it is thought the high number was related to schools and shopping. There have been many of social media comments in Buntingford about a lot of people out in groups of 6+ and they are going to get the COVID marshals to revisit the town next Sunday to try to get the message across that we must adhere to the lockdown.

CC Jones' Locality Budget ends in 3-4 weeks' time and there is funding remaining. Anstey PC to confirm any local groups that need funding. The budget covers the community, especially COVID related.

Cllr Jones has been chasing highways with regards to the flooding at Silkmead. It is still to be established who has the responsibility for the ditches along the roadside. Cllr House will speak to the landowner and update CC Jones.

Buntingford Refuse Centre will not open until we have social distancing measures relaxed. Cllr Jones suggested it is not fit for purpose if it cannot be open; the Watermill Industrial Estate also has added issues of no parking and a lack of turning space. Local Plans are to build super sites currently and Buntingford's size doesn't warrant one. CC Jones agreed that the Buntingford Business Park would be an ideal site and suggested we all made comments via the Waste Consultation that is currently open.



- 37.5 Police Report :** Due to the Bank Holiday and other operational demands in the first week of January 2021, PC De Bryun sent the December crime statistics before Christmas. There was only one crime to report on which was a non-dwelling burglary where a residential shed was broken into by unknown suspects and various items were removed from within. Unfortunately, all enquiries have been completed and no suspect has been identified. CC Jones reported that several dog thefts had been reported. A Transit Van was seen in Chipping and Wyddial and although the registration number was taken (vehicle was not taxed) and reported to the police, no action was taken but the police did speak to the driver.
- Local police priorities remain speeding and fly-tipping. Regular patrols continue to be carried out in the local area. Police are also continuing to work with COVID breaches.
- 37.6 Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th November 2020** The minutes were reviewed and it was unanimously agreed that they were a correct and a true record of the meeting held on 16th November 2020, and the Chairman was authorised to sign them after the meeting.
- 37.7 Planning**
- 37.7.1 Coltsfoot SG9 ODE Ref. 3/20/2542/HH** – Retention light windows. There were three main issues and the Parish Council made the Planning Officer aware of renovations undertaken a few years ago without permission but received no reply. This application is retrospective planning. One was for the listed property.
- 37.7.2 Coltsfoot SG9 ODE Ref. 3/20/2543/LBC** – see 37.7.1 above – Parish Council gave a neutral response on this.
- 37.7.3 Coltsfoot SG9 ODE Ref. 3/20/2545/VAR** - see 37.7.1 above – Parish Council objected to this due to the amount of change, absence of adequate parking or turning area, the Parish Council objected to this planning application.
- 37.7.4 Silkmead Farm House SG9 ODX Ref. 3/20/2297/HH** – Planning Application **APPROVED** 11/1/21.
- 37.7.5 2 Castle Cottages SG9 OBW Ref. 3/20/2102/HH** – Planning Application **APPROVED** 16/12/20.
- 37.7.6 Land at St. George’s End Ref. 3/20/1208/FUL** – No decision, information sharing still ongoing from 27/10/20.
- 37.7.7 Plot 64 Ref. 3/20/2139/FUL** (Replaces 3/19/2256/FUL) Change of use of land to Gypsy / Traveller residential : no news or decision.
- 37.7.8 Enforcement re: High Trees** – no response received from the Planning Officer with regards to works continuing at High Trees. This is to be chased by the clerk and will be chased again. There is particularly concerns about paving being installed, a new hardstanding in agricultural land, removal of existing gates to the house and fencing, together with a new entrance.
- 37.8 Finance**
- 37.8.1** The Financial Report was approved and accepted.
- 37.8.2** The Bank Reconciliation was approved and accepted.
- 37.8.3** The payments for January and February were approved. Cheques signed at end of meeting.
- 37.9 Phone Box**
- The repair to the K6 phone box undertaken by BT was substandard and no further repairs were expected. A pane of Perspex is now missing and rain is getting in, clerk to chase BT again.
- 37.10 Highways / Vegetation :**
- The Well is untidy; signs and vegetation has been dumped in there. Cllr Oxley will tidy it. Cllr Pledger agreed it would be a good idea to plant the well in the Spring. Pothole at Anstey Bury to report – Cllr House.
- 37.10.1 Silkmead :** covered in Cllr Report, 37.4 above.
- 37.11 Playing Field :** Ronnie Barker Caylers Farm, Nuthampstead. cut the hedge today and will cut the car park. Clerk to arrange a thank you letter to be sent. It was noted that the village hall carpark is being used by dog walkers.
- 37.11.1** Pathway, tree and goalposts will be organised after the lockdown, to remain on Agenda.
- 37.12 Church :** Cllr Parker has liaised with the landowner’s assistant with a view of replacing /repairing the gate, the landowner has confirmed to cover the cost for new oak gates to be fitted at the end of January. Issue reported at St George’s church steps where aluminum strips were added but deemed slippery, these strips have now been removed. Church has been locked but should be open again now.



- 37.13 School / Parking** : There are 20x salt bags to be collected from School, chairman / Cllr Parker will organise. The parking situation at the school/church has improved since Ann Grimsdale highlighted the issues to the vicar. During the past few church services cones have been put out. The main problem is now the school.
- 37.14 Speeding** : There was no update on speeding.
- 37.15 Village Hall** : Cllr Oxley confirmed there was little to report, the hall was certainly not being neglected and regular checks were being undertaken. There is currently no school use.

It was noted that at present we have walkers from outside the area parking in the village hall car park (6 were noted at one time last week), which is contrary to current COVID regulations and this coupled with the very wet weather at present was making the footpaths locally impassable in places. Cllr Oxley commented that our countryside is a facility to be used by Buntingford residents as we use their facilities (i.e. shops etc.) and they had a right to do so, Cllr House agreed with Cllr Oxley and discussions went no further.

- 37.16 Anstey Quarry** : There was nothing to report. Cllr Parker updated the Council on an East Herts environmental visit.
- 37.17 Defibrillator** was checked today, all in good working order, it hasn't been used.
- 37.18 Correspondence** – a list of correspondence received and sent was received.
- 37.19 Any other Business** – none.
- 37.20 Next Meeting** : The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday, 15th March 2021 – to be held via Zoom or at the Village Hall depending on COVID-19 recommendations.

Meeting closed at 20:41pm.