

Toppesfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting Held on Thursday 4th October 2012 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield at 8.00pm

12/42. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Peter Moore – Chairman

Andrew Bull

Shaun Sheldrake

David Bagnall

Clare Condie

Alan Collard

Also in attendance:

Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council

3 Members of the public

Apologies were received from

Councillor John Levick.

12/43. Declaration of Members Interest on Agenda items

No declarations of interest were made.

12/44. Open Session for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council

Dave Dyson reported that at the last Village Hall meeting it was agreed to set up a “Mature People’s” group. Possibly meeting on Friday afternoons, 3pm – 5pm, there would be no formal structure to the meetings, refreshments would be provided and the attendees will be asked how they would like the group to develop. There could be a request for funding from the Parish Council in the future to assist the group. Advertising will be carried out by flyer and word of mouth.

Andrew Colley reported that Mervyn Stutter is willing to come back again next year, hold his cost to that of his previous visit, however this would be his third time in five years. Andrew stated that he is not able to take on the organising of the event this year due to personal commitments and lighting for the stage area needs to be sorted out to support performers. The village hall committee are setting up a fund and raising monies for the lights required. Andrew stated he is willing to book Mervyn Stutter but someone else would have to organise and promote the event or should a break be taken for a year. The chairman thanked Andrew for his hard work in organising previous events and the councillors will discuss this later in the meeting.

12/45. Village Plan Reports

Ann Read reported that she will be meeting with Simon Taylor the county Enforcement Officer on the 11th October 2012 to discuss the P3 scheme any problems around the parish’s footpaths.

Leisure and Recreational report – see 12/60.

The chairman asked if the action groups could give quarterly updates on progress. Peter will speak to Malcolm Braithwaite regarding this. Andrew will prepare a programme management spread sheet to bring to the next parish council meeting.

12/46. Minutes of the last meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2012 were questioned - 12/36.2 should not have read that a contract was signed. This point was corrected to say 'other quotes a contract was reviewed a need'. No formal contract has been received and so there is not one in place at present. The minutes were then approved and signed by the chair as being correct.

12/47. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

No matters arising were raised.

12/48. Actions from Previous Meeting:

- 12/48.1 Kaaren Berry to contact Essex County Council regarding fallen footpath signs – Kaaren has spoken to Ann and this will be brought to the attention of Simon Tyler. Kaaren is still to contact Essex County Council regarding the rails which are down near the 'new road'.
- 12/48.2 Shaun Sheldrake to quote for replacement Christmas lights for the pump house – quotes gained and emailed to Kaaren. These have also been forwarded to the insurance company.
- 12/48.3 Peter Moore to look at hydrant cover near pump house with regard to vehicles parking on it – Peter has looked at the hydrant and following discussions it was agreed that no suitable action could be taken to prevent this.
- 12/48.4 Alan Collard to prepare Actuals v's Budget forecast to year end – this was emailed to all councillors prior to the meeting.
- 12/48.5 David Bagnall, Alan Collard and Kaaren Berry to progress Quality Status reports with costing's and involvements – see 12/54.
- 12/48.6 Kaaren Berry to contact the monitoring officer regarding the completion of the register of interest forms – contact made and advice given to Councillors during the meeting.
- 12/48.7 Kaaren Berry to contact Foxearth PC regarding County Broadband's continuing service – Kaaren has spoken with Mr Waite and he reported that they have had County Broadband for 3 or 4 years and with only the odd glitch, they are very pleased with the service overall.
- 12/48.8 Andrew Bull to write to Braintree District Council to confirm action for the Holm Oak – Andrew has received an acknowledgement letter but no confirmation for the work to be carried out.
- 12/48.9 Kaaren Berry to contact Braintree District Council re grass cutting area – Andrew has contacted Braintree and has a meeting with them on Monday to ask them to quote for extending the cutting area in the Toppesfield Recreational area and to cut the Gainsford End Recreational area.
- 12/48.10 Shaun Sheldrake to write to UK Power regarding power lines and kite flying – no progress at present.
- 12/48.11 Kaaren Berry to request analytic reports regarding the parish council website – Analytic reports from April 2012 to date have been received.
- 12/48.12 Kaaren Berry to follow up SLCC membership invitation – membership form sent off but nothing received back as yet.
- 12/48.13 Alan Collard to report on Neighbourhood Plans – report emailed to all Councillors prior to this meeting – please see appendix B.
- 12/48.14 Kaaren Berry to prepare and display posters re closure of the playing field for the 28th September 2012 – posters were prepared and displayed.

12/49. Transport / Highways Issues

The 30mph will be in the Halstead Gazette this week and signed off by the 15th October. The signs should be up within the next 10 days. There is no progression on The Causeway footpath.

12/50. Village Pump

Repairs completed but the area by one of the plinths still needs tarmacking. Peter Moore to contact Mr Mason regarding the tarmac.

12/51. Village Hall Update Report

Councillor Sheldrake reported the village hall garage sale trail appeared to be a success with approximately 22 sellers as well as stalls in the village hall.

12/52. Broadband

County Broadband have received the set-up fee and the equipment could be installed within 2 – 3 weeks. If the initial receiver cannot be placed on the Church tower then another location will be found. The geographical mapping has been carried out.

12/53. Community Amenity Asset Register

This means that anyone can identify a property or area of special interest and register it with Braintree District Council. It would mean that if it were to be sold the community would have the right to raise funds in order to buy it; the community would have first option of purchase. The lawyer involved with the community purchasing of The Green Man thinks this may be a good idea however if the pub was put up for sale in the future the same process would apply. This could also apply to a change of use for the pub. The Community Amenity Asset Register can also apply to the school playing field and the land around the Gainsford End playing field. Kaaren Berry to acquire the forms for registration to see what is involved.

Alan Collard reported that the pub purchase is still progressing and an update will be sent out shortly.

12/54. Quality Council Status

At the September meeting Councillors agreed to take action to seek Quality Council Status, requesting reports on what measures were necessary to meet the various Requirements. The Clerk reported that since that time she had been informed that no further applications were to be accepted until changes to the Requirements were published later in the year. However it was agreed to proceed with the current arrangements, adjusting them if necessary when further information was made known.

An assessment of the Parish Councils current position showed that of the 10 mandatory requirements, 4 were considered fully met, 1 ongoing, leaving 5 to be worked up.

Of the 9 Discretionary Requirements, 1 was considered to be fully met, there being a total of 16 alternatives from which to choose the other 8.

Two Mandatory Requirements were considered as follows.

- a) Promotion of Democracy and Citizenship – It was agreed to make enquiries to all local schools concerning appropriate curricular content, or whether such activity takes place elsewhere in school activities, or could be encouraged. Councillor Bull to lead on this item. Appropriately worded posters, website content, and articles in the Parish Newsletter could be produced. The Electoral Reform Society and local political organisations could be asked to assist with the supply of appropriate material. Councillor Bagnall to lead on this.
- b) Councillor training, statement of intent – Informal training takes place on a regular basis, as and when issues arise. The recent attendance of the Clerk to a teach in on the Code of Conduct, and subsequent distribution of and discussion of this information, being an example. More formal arrangements will include making budget provision next year for training related items, obtaining appropriate material from Principal Authorities and other sources for dissemination to Councillors, having training as a regular item on the monthly Council meeting agendas to allow such issues to be raised, and annual Member appraisals to be carried out to determine future training requirements.

One Discretionary Requirement was discussed, this being the benefit of holding regular Councillor/Parishioner surgeries, the possible venue being the Council office, albeit this is a rather compact area. It was agreed that surgeries be held on the first Saturday in the month, between the hours of 10am and 11am, the first surgery to be held in December, to be staffed by the Chairman in

the first instance. These arrangements to be reviewed in the light of experience. The service will be advertised on the notice board, village shop, village hall, and the Newsletter, the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements. A sign will be obtained identifying the Parish Council Office. It was accepted that wheelchair access into the office was not possible, but should it be necessary, the village hall could be utilised on such occasions. Any costs likely to exceed £200 in respect of these issues will require the approval of the Parish Council.

12/55. Register of Interests

Register of Interest forms have been received from most Councillors. Some forms still need to be returned to the Clerk.

12/56. Winter Gritting Team

Kaaren Berry to organise and display posters asking for volunteers for the winter gritting team and then a group leader will be appointed.

12/57. Complaints Procedure

The parish council adopted a complaints procedure during this meeting. Kaaren to forward a PDF copy to Andrew for the website.

12/58. Senior Citizens Lunch

Andrew Bull suggested a date of Thursday 6th December. Discussions followed and it was agreed to list the 'Fors and against's' for this event together with costings. Andrew Bull to arrange this and to speak to Dave Dyson to see if the parish council could do this in conjunction with the village hall committee.

12/59. Central Group Calendar

Andrew Bull and John Levick have a meeting next week with representatives from the community groups to pull together a list of activities/regular meetings to be listed in the next newsletter. Andrew to report back at next parish council meeting.

12/60. Recreational Areas / Open Spaces

12/60.1 Progression on tree works – Councillor Bull to report on the Holm Oak near the school entrance – no other report than that in 12/48.8.

12/60.2 Gainsford End swings – this is on standby until the funds are available. ROSPA still need to carry out the water safety report for Toppesfield Recreational Area.

12/61. Financial Accounts

12/61.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval – payments approved as per appendix A.

12/61.2 Audit Commission report returned – no issues raised and signed by the Audit Commission.

12/61.3 Budget considerations and precept for 2013/2014 – Alan Collard and Kaaren Berry to circulate last year's budget and all councillors to review and bring forward projects for next year which need consideration and budgeting for. Discussions to be held at next month's meeting.

12/62. Correspondence

12/62.1 Field Work – Autumn Edition – available to be viewed.

12/62.2 Clerk & Councils Direct – September Issue available to be viewed.

12/62.3 Action Essex – Autumn Issue – Peter Moore has for reading.

12/62.4 National Grid – Bramford to Twinstead proposals for preferred alignment – report should be available in the next few weeks.

12/62.5 Anonymous letter re property in the parish – no further action required as Braintree

District Council already aware and looked in the complaint.

12/62.6 Glasdon – trade brochures received.

12/62.7 Urban Forestry – introduction leaflet – passed to Andrew Bull.

12/62.8 Essex County Council – Bus Passenger News – no changes to the Toppesfield Service.

Late arrivals were:

Essex County Council – Highways Closure for part of Gainsford End Road – posters to be displayed.

National Grid – delays in footpath closures – posters to be displayed.

Copy of Essex Life featuring Toppesfield Stores in a piece on Community stores.

12/63. Any Other Business

Agenda item for next time – Christmas Celebrations.

Toppesfield Parish Council have won a competition run by the EALC – we submitted our village plan for the Localism in Action Award. Toppesfield won this section and were presented with a certificate and two sets of Christmas lights. The judges' comments were "The Village Plan has a good Chairman's introduction, excellent response rate, summary action table, informative and detailed. An outstanding publication.'

12/64. Date of Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting on the 1st November 2012 at 8.00pm, at Toppesfield Village Hall.

12/65. Close

The meeting was closed at 10.45pm.

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Chairman

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Date

Action Summary:

Peter Moore to speak to Malcolm regarding quarterly updates from the village plan working groups.

Andrew Bull to prepare a programme management spread sheet for the next parish council meeting regarding the progress of the village plan.

Kaaren Berry to contact Essex County Council regarding the railings near the culvert by the new road.

Peter Moore to contact Mr Mason regarding the area of tarmacking that still needs to be completed.

Kaaren Berry to contact Braintree District Council for Community Amenity Asset Register forms.

Andrew Bull to talk to the local schools regarding the promotion of Democracy and Citizenship.

David Bagnall to follow up with the Electoral Reform Society and local political organisations to supply of appropriate material for the promotion of democracy and citizenship.

Kaaren Berry to arrange advertising of the surgeries and costs for a Parish Council Office sign.

Kaaren Berry to organise and display posters for volunteers for this year's winter gritting team.

Kaaren Berry to forward a PDF copy of the complaints procedure for the website.

Andrew Bull to list for and against's and costings for a senior citizens lunch and to speak to Dave Dyson re a joint venture with the village hall committee.

Andrew Bull to report back re community group meeting / activities list for newsletter.

Alan Collard and Kaaren Berry to circulate last year's budget to all Councillors.

All Councillors to review budget and bring forward projects for next year which need consideration and budgeting.

Appendix A

Accounts – 4th October 2012

National Savings Deposit Account:	£	£
Balance as at 5 March 2012	2508.27	
Community Account Statement Balance as at 31 August 2012		15,488.33
Subtotal:	----- 2508.27	----- 15,488.33

If all previously issued cheques cashed / receipts cleared balance should be;

	Total	15,458.67
Income Received		
Hedingham Buses –banked 02.10.12		1183.20
Braintree District Council – precept (received 25.09.12, included in above figure)		5834.00

Payments to be approved:

Chq No:		
101401	E.on – Changing Rooms	18.41
101402	Toppesfield Village Hall Committee – quarterly invoice	283.50
101403	K.Berry – 2 nd Bench Fixings	30.99
101404	mh-p domain renewal	19.18
101405	mh-p – hosting 27/10/12 – 26/10/13	72.00
101406	mh-p – Councillor updates	18.00
101407	D. Mason Developments Ltd	1183.20
101408	P. Chinery – verge cutting	518.40
101409	P. Chinery – verge cutting	518.40
101410	William Boome Associates Ltd – newsletter expenses	48.42
101400	K. Berry September’s wages	198.47
		----- 2908.97

Bank Charges will be deducted on 5th October 2012 5.00

Balance	----- 2508.27	----- 13,727.90
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Last bank statement received up to 28th September 2012.

Appendix B

To: Toppesfield Parish Council
From Alan Collard

2nd October 2012

Re. Neighbourhood Plans

i. What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of Community Led Plan, introduced by the Localism Act. Such plans complement other types of plan, the main ones of relevance to us being Village Plans and Local Plans.

The Act gives local communities the right to produce a Neighbourhood Plan setting out policies on the development and use of land within the community.

Once a plan is made and adopted it becomes part of the local authority development plan (the Local Plan). The latter is a statutory plan used to judge planning applications.

For Neighbourhood Plans to be adopted they will need to conform with local and national planning policies and be able to demonstrate that they have the support of the community.

It is different to a Village (or Parish) Plan, which focuses on services desired by the community and results in an action plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan focuses on land use and results in policy.

ii. Why produce a Neighbourhood Plan?

The intent is that communities should be empowered to play a greater role in deciding on the future development of their area. This would include what growth would look like, where it should go and where it should not go.

iii. Who needs to be involved?

The process would be led by the parish council or a neighbourhood forum but with involvement of the wider community. Others with a role to play would include county and district councils and councillors, RCCE, CPRE, EALC etc.

iv. What is involved?

A typical plan would take 18 months to complete and the process would be similar to that undertaken by the recent Village Plan. Once completed the Plan would be a statutory document.

v. What is the relevance to Toppesfield?

Currently, of course, we have no Neighbourhood Plan. As part of BDC's Local Plan which was completed earlier this year, we agreed that the existing village envelope be retained (there were a couple of minor changes, reflecting the status quo). There is thus a predisposition against new development. Developing a Plan would be appropriate if there was demand for new development (for example housing) and the community wanted to control the location and style of development.

Summary

Neighbourhood planning is optional, not compulsory. However, it would be wise for any Parish Council to be aware of the possibilities arising from the legislation.

It is effectively a mini version of the Local Plan. It is intended to be 'pro-growth'.

At this stage it would not seem appropriate for Toppesfield to undertake the development of a full plan.

However, as part of this whole process, it will also become possible from 12th October for Parish Councils and community groups to develop a Register of Community Assets. In this way, a community can stipulate that it wishes a particular asset (a piece of land, a building etc) to be protected. It could determine that a piece of land be protected from new development or the use of an existing site to be maintained. Examples could possibly include that a school playing field be kept as a field and not built on and the site of a public house be maintained for that purpose. Should an owner seek to sell such a site, the community would be given, by law, time to put together a bid to buy it.