

**Minutes of the Meeting of Cottered Parish Council held on
Monday 14th September, 2009
7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall**

Present: Bryan Pitman (Chair)
David Charles
Lesley Greensmith
Terry McGrath
Brian Murchie
Derek Newman

The Clerk and 9 members of the public

Action

1. **Apologies:** no apologies were received
2. The **minutes** of the meeting held on 13th July 2009, having been circulated, were approved as a correct record.
3. **Chairman's report**, matters brought forward
 - (i) **Gypsy & Travellers' sites** despite the objections made on the web site, 5 of which came from Cottered, a Ministerial ruling endorsed the requirement that EHDC must construct 25 new pitches. It appears this requirement will be legally imposed on EHDC, hence their Development Control Committee will have to approve new locations.
 - (ii) **Traffic calming:** with the new VA sign in place and working and the double height kerbs in place, apart from a small section of white line, the traffic calming measures are now complete, but it was noted that a few people are still parking on the grass beyond the double kerb height section.
 - (iii) **Brook End Lane** hedge cutting and clean up was undertaken.
 - (iv) **Magpie Farm** a second communication was sent to Ian Bishop at Herts Highways and Hazel Summerfield EH Planning when further work to re-instate the old access onto the A507 was observed. The Clerk has been advised that a formal planning application is to be made.
 - (v) An appeal was received from the Village Hall Committee that the Parish Council re-consider their decision not to allow Stevenage Borough Ladies football team to use the playing field as their home ground as this was seen as an opportunity to generate much needed income for the Village Hall trust during the winter months. After much discussion the Parish Council voted 4 to 1 against, the Chairman's vote was not needed
4. **Finances.**
 - (i) The balance of the current account is £2,659.17, the balance of the interest account is £5,288.80.
 - (ii) The external audit has been completed and the closure of the audit has been advertised. The Auditors verified that the restated figures for the year ended 31 March 2008 is now fairly stated and no recommendations were made.
 - (iii) The report of an interim Internal Audit conducted on the 7th September was circulated and read by the Clerk. The recommendations made by the report were discussed and it was decided that as expenses to councillors are very few and

Action

Clerk/
Internal
Auditor

that 3 signatures are required on the cheque paying the expenses that this was not an area that needed review. A proposal that the Internal Auditor and the Parish Clerk pilot a new system for the grass cutting contract was approved.

- (iv) Five month budget report to August 2009 as circulated was accepted.
- (v) A letter of thanks had been received from EHCAS for the Parish Council's donation.
- (vi) CPRE has raised its annual subscription from £28 to £29. The Council accepted the increase.

The following cheques were approved and signed:

547	Cottered Village Hall	£20.00	Hire of hall September meeting
548	J Diales	£20.70	Expenses August & September
549	E Hayden	£121.91	litter picking September
550	E Hayden	£121.91	litter picking October
551	BDO Stoy Hayward	£166.75	External audit
552	Kingsley Brothers	£49.02	Hedge trimming, Brook End
553	HAPTC	£25.00	Finance Training for the Clerk

5. Planning

Three planning applications have been received since the last meeting:

- (i) **Bowling Green Farm:** listed building consent for replacement of existing softwood casement windows and French doors. The Parish Council objected to this planning application due to the new replacement windows being out of keeping with a listed building of the Tudor period.
- (ii) **Grantchester, Baldock Road:** Demolish and re-build existing conservatory with single storey extension and new 2 storey extension to side. The Parish Council raised no objections.
- (iii) **4 Middle Farm Cottages, Cottered Road, Throcking:** Single storey side extension and terrace. The Parish Council raised no objection and permission has been granted.

Decision notices have been received for the following:

7 Parkside, Buntingford side extension and new roof to porch. Permission was refused.

Cripplegate, Warren Lane, permission was granted.

Land at Stocking Hill erection of wind-break fence. Granted.

3 Church Lane, Coopers Coppice, rear extension and front porch. Granted.

Lower Farm, Baldock Road, roof lights and new wood burner and flue. Granted.

Cumberlow Green: a response was received from HCC Planning enforcement and a follow up letter has been sent.

Planning information sessions for town and parish councils will be held on the 28th September and 7th October, the Chairman and the Clerk plan to attend, other members of the Parish Council are invited to attend.

- 6. **Best kept Village competition:** a meeting was held last week and with the village behind it a team of 3 or 4 will get together and report back to the Parish Council at their meeting in November. Brian Murchie has kept signs from previous successes.

7. Clerk's report.

- (i) The Annual Playground inspection report for 2009 has been received and all items were reported to be low or very low risk with no action required.
- (ii) ARC – Alternative Refuge Collection presentation will be held in the Village Hall on Friday 16th October at 7:30pm and will be advertised in the Parish Magazine.
- (iii) Notification has been received that a length of the B1037 Hare Street from its junction with Mill Lane to its junction with A507 will be closed, except for access, for up to 10 days sometime during the period 31 August 2009 and 1 December 2010 to enable highways maintenance work to take place. Once the date is known, the Clerk will contact those interested in clearing rubbish from the verge while the road is closed.
- (iv) BT are keen to know what local communities have done with their kiosk and how they are enjoying it and are offering a prize of £5000 plus runners up prizes to the winners.

Clerk

The following publications have been received:

Ageing well in Hertfordshire (a number of copies received will be distributed at the Luncheon Club)

HAPTC Annual Report 2008-2009

Governance Toolkit for Parish & Town Councils

Towards Better Transport in Hertfordshire Annual Progress Report 2008/09 with Road Traffic Collision and Casualty Facts and Transport Facts 2008

Fieldwork September 2009

Information from SSAFA Forces Help

The Clerk September 2009

Countryside Management Service : CMS News Summer 2009

8. Other matters

- (i) As the Grass Cutting contract comes to an end this year the process for going out to tender should be started. The Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman will progress.
- (ii) Drain cover missing opposite the Village Hall, report to Highways.
- (iii) Throcking Lane: water leak Hunters Mead report to Water Board. (28/9/09)
- (iv) Excess water in Warren Lane, David Charles will investigate.
- (v) Badly treated herd of sheep, RSPCA did nothing but Animal Health responded.
- (vi) Parking on the green verge beyond the new double height kerb section: investigate possibility of “no parking on the verge” signs, Clerk to write to Highways.
- (vii) Double white line down the middle of the road as you come in from Buntingford, does not appear to continue fully around the bend. *Post meeting note: The most likely explanation appears to be that traffic coming from Buntingford that needs to turn right into Throcking Lane, would have to cross the double white line if the double white line continued around the bend.*

Clerk
&
Chair

Clerk

Clerk

DC

Clerk

- (viii) After football games radio aerials were missing from cars after the bar is open.
- (ix) It was reported that a section of the Village Green adjacent to The Coach House had in the past been damaged by passing cattle and that this should be borne in mind in respect of the Best Kept Village Competition.
- (x) Residents of Throcking Lane are continuing to press Hertfordshire Highways for a ruling on the long contested farm field entrance. A very large combine harvester was recently seen trying to enter the entrance, albeit that it was obviously too large for this to be achieved. It was suggested that photographs were taken to demonstrate the need for enlargement of the entrance.
- (xi) It was reported that the kissing gate around the top of playing field needs repair.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm and was followed by an open session.

Dates of next meeting: Monday 9th November 2009