

# Hartest Parish Council

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## Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Institute on Wednesday 5 March 2014 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs Chris Browning (Chair), Jo Pask, David Loxton, Graham Manning, Nick Price, David Turner and Scilla Turner

In Attendance: Co Cllr R Kemp, Dist Cllr J Long, Ms L Bacon and Mr I Tippett (BDC), Mr K Graham, Mr P Frost and Mrs P Lamb (Parish Clerk)

### ACTION

13/150 Apologies for absence: None

13/151 Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on the 6 February were considered. Cllr Loxton drew attention to the incomplete minute (13/144 (c)). It was agreed that this would be rectified and the minutes re-presented for approval at the next meeting Clerk

13/152 Matters Arising: None

13/153 Dispensation Requests/Declarations of Interest: None

13/154 Public Forum:

Ditch on the Green: Mr K Graham advised that he had sent a Freedom of Information request to the PC, dated 22 January, re this ditch but is still awaiting an answer. The Parish Clerk advised that his letter had been circulated to Members, but apologised for the delay in replying due to holiday absence.

Mr Graham felt that the PC "had been fed half truths" in respect of this ditch. At Mr Graham's request, Mr P Frost introduced himself and presented copies of a plan showing the route of the drainage (as he recalls it) from the Green before pre late '50s/early 60s, when water was drained from the ditch to the river. According to Mr Frost, the upper section of the drainage from the ditch to the upper culvert was piped and the lower section was a ditch. Mr Frost thinks that the pipe has probably been damaged. Cllr D Turner advised that, whilst endeavouring to find a solution to the dampness suffered by Mr Graham in his cottage, he had obtained a quotation from Miles Drainage to lay a land drain at a depth of 600mm the full length of Parsons' Walk in the sum of £3,750.

Mr Graham believes that the PC has not maintained the drainage of the ditch and he does not accept the verbal opinion from Mr David Pizzey, BDC Tree Officer, that excavating a trench to the depth advised by Miles Drainage would threaten the roots of the historic trees in the grounds of The Crown and the Old Rectory.

Concurrently, Co Cllr Kemp is also endeavouring to investigate the matter on Mr Graham's behalf. Following discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Kemp would continue to pursue his investigations.

Banhams Yard: Mr Ian Tippett presented a schedule in this connection outlining the situation re the s106 and an affordable dwelling on this development, the options now remaining and answers to the PC's questions in respect of this matter. Cllr Browning summarised the situation as follows: This development, which was in association with BDC re the affordable dwelling, had seen a series of developers involved. Members of the village were forming a Community Land Trust to buy, manage and let the affordable house, but this had come to nothing due to circumstances beyond the PC's control, and for which Christine Thurlow had apologised.

Mr Tippett ran through the main issues. The original s106 agreement

required one dwelling to be earmarked as an affordable dwelling. Then, subsequently, and unbeknown to the PC or the CLT members, a variation to the s106 had been enacted, which basically "permitted" the developer to procrastinate with a view to being able to sell the affordable house on the open market. Currently, this property is believed to be for sale – on a shared ownership basis. Mr Tippett advised that it is still possible at this stage (2) to form a CLT, or to accept a commuted sum of £82.6k and work jointly with BDC, or a neighbouring PC, to deliver a joint affordable housing scheme. In this regard, Mr Tippett recommended that the current housing need be assessed by conducting a Housing Needs Survey. (It was noted that a new Core Strategy had been adopted by Full Council on 25 February this year, which affords greater flexibility than the preceding document.) He added that HMG is keen to "kickstart" the economy through housebuilding and that, if a developer encountered problems (as in this case), a deed of variation could be effected. Mr Tippett confirmed that there had been a wealth of communication between BDC, the Parish Council and the proposed CLT. Mr Tippett also confirmed that, when BDC talked to a private developer, some information could not be shared. When asked if the "clock could be turned back", Mr Tippett confirmed that that would be possible if the developer were agreeable, but that the commuted sum could only be used for affordable housing and should have some relationship to where the commuted sum was supposed to provide an affordable dwelling. There is no time limit in this regard. It was suggested that an Affordable Housing Team be created (including a representative from BDC).

Cllr Browning thanked everyone for their input and invited questions from both the public, and Members. Cllr Browning added that the previous CLT had asked that no variation to the s106 be made, so could any succeeding group get its voice heard? What was driving it? It had been believed that officers were listening. It was noted that any tension in this connection meant that BDC had to speak to the developer, etc. It is very much a "case by case" scenario. There was a dilemma in this situation. BDC would have preferred to keep the house where it is and so the variation was done to facilitate that. Cllr Browning stated that it also "took off the shackles and allowed the developer to watch its market value increase". Cllr Browning added that discussions had been held around that time, but nothing happened. Ultimately, that dwelling became too expensive for a Housing Association to take on with the huge service charge levied by the developer. Furthermore, it is still too expensive at the current shared ownership stage. Cllr Kemp asked if the £82.6k should not bear some relation to the market price?

Ian Tippett advised that the commuted sum is not related to the price being sought and added that time has moved on, and a more robust formulation is required. The District Valuer would have been asked to come up with a price for the house, and the value of the site would not necessarily have had anything to add to it. Mr Tippett added that, if a housing needs survey were conducted with Community Action Suffolk (formerly Suffolk Acre) they would distribute surveys to all households and look at all aspects of need. Responses would be treated in the utmost confidence with completed questionnaires being received in sealed envelopes at CAS. BDC/MSDC would make a contribution and would look to the PC to help with the printing and postage costs (£'00s). Cllr Long said that he felt communication was at fault and that communication between BDC and HPC is of vital importance to safeguard against any problems this time. Mr Tippett had been in touch with registered providers, who confirmed that the property cost and service charge were too high. Cllr Price asked if a survey could extend beyond the village. Mr Tippett confirmed this. It could cover, e.g. people who had had to leave the village etc, etc. Cllr Pask suggested that there could be housing on Workhouse Hill but believed that the main drainage/sewerage system would not be able to cope. Mr Tippett

advised that such issues would be considered following site identification. Asked if a one-off payment of £82.6k might be possible, Mr Tippett recommended the PC having options and then deciding. He added that if affordable housing were to be considered, timescales would also need to be considered; neither BDC nor SCC has experience, so it would probably be better to work with a registered provider. The possibility of building a council house (or in the large grounds of an existing council house property) such opportunities are currently being explored by BDC.

Cllr Browning thanked the BDC Officers, but stated that the PC remains disappointed at the course of events and hopes that it can work with BDC re the commuted sum.

- 13/155 Police Report: This report covers the period from 6.2. to 2.3.2014. During this time there 0 crimes had been recorded within the parish (compared to 3 for the same period last year).
- 13/156 County Councillor's Report: Attached. Cllr Kemp reminded Members that a new application for the £750 previously allocated re the drainage works on the Green would have to be re-submitted (for completion by 22 March) in view of the request now for cemetery restoration works.
- 13/157 District Councillor's Report: Cllr Long reported that, at the Full Council meeting held on the 25 February, it was agreed that there would be no council tax increase this year. It was noted that council house rents are to be increased. (Just over 60% of BDC tenants are in receipt of benefits.) All councillors had to have their votes recorded re how they voted in respect of the 2014/15 budget and Council Tax. The Core Strategy for the period to 2031 was approved (although it was noted that a lot of work remains to be done in this regard).
- 13/158 Finance & Administration
- (a) Parish Council Co-option: Cllr Browning welcomed Mr Graham Manning and Mr Nick Price and thanked them for their applications in this regard, which had been sent to all Members. It was agreed that both gentlemen be co-opted and, following the signing of Declarations of Office forms, both new Members were invited to join the meeting.
  - (b) Receipts: £95.00 re the recent burial of Mrs D R Truin.
  - (c) Payments: The following items were approved for payment:  
 Miss J Pask: Copying charge – Cemetery Plan: £11.60  
 'Contact': Full page advertisement re vacancies: £30.00  
 Parish Clerk's Salary: Jan-March: £667.40+mileage £69.00+ parking £1.70=£738.10  
 Post Office Ltd: PAYE Jan-March: £155.60  
 Mr O Cornish: Grounds Maintenance: £877.50
  - (d) Cllr Pask advised that there was one figure omitted from the finance spreadsheet issued. It was agreed this would be inserted and issued to Members.
  - (e) New Bank Mandate & Simple Servicing Authority: The PC's Bank Business Manager had confirmed that these items are now in place.
  - (f) Grant Application – A letter had been sent to Boxted and Hartest Institute on 23 January advising that the Parish Council is willing to provide a grant of £500 towards one of the projects cited in their previous letter providing that this is match funded through the Institute's own fundraising. Cllr Pask thanked the Parish Council on behalf of the Institute and confirmed that a formal response would follow.
  - (g) Possible Use of £750 Locality Funding: This locality money had previously been offered in respect of the proposed drainage works on the Green. Now that it is no longer possible to

Clerk

Clerk

JP

- proceed with those works, a formal request is to be made for a similar sum in respect of cemetery restoration works. Clerk
- (h) Possible adoption of November 2013 Standing Orders. It was agreed that information in this regard be circulated and the matter carried over to the next meeting.
- 13/159 Planning
- (a) Decisions received: None
- (b) Withdrawn applications: None
- (c) New planning applications: None
- (d) New planning applications received since the date of this notice: B/14/01532: Windrush, Somerton Road: Proposed replacement dwelling. Following consideration of the plans, it was agreed to hold a site meeting on Saturday 8 March, after which Members' decision would be advised to BDC. (Post meeting Members agreed to support the application provided that:  
1. Existing trees and hedges are retained/maintained as a Planning condition and 2. The foul drainage should be installed in such a way as to protect Rogers Lane from effluent. All/Clerk
- (e) Tree Preservation Order/Tree Conservation Area Application: None
- (f) Appeals: None
- (g) Other Planning Matters  
Neighbourhood Plan: Cllr S Turner advised that this application requires amendment to reflect Hartest as the sole applicant (i.e. excluding Boxted, as had been originally agreed) on the advice of BDC. Cllr Turner is to check through the documentation and advise. It is recognised that this should all residents should be involved in the process (including the children). ST  
Social Housing – Banham's Yard: See Min 13/154 above.
- (h) Giffords Hall Vineyard: An email had been received from Paul Gant advising that this concern had again requested tourist signs. The email, which had been circulated to all Members, confirmed that the application met Highways' strict criteria and the sign on the Green would be attached to the existing finger post and of the same design. Cllr D Turner said that he had spoken to the owner, who did not "anticipate vast amounts of traffic"; there would be no coach parties. Cllr Pask expressed concern that, perhaps, such an application, should be subject to planning permission (as per The Crown PH 'A' board). It was agreed that the Clerk would seek confirmation of Highways' criteria in this regard. Clerk
- 13/160 Green, Cemetery and Churchyard
- (a) Cemetery  
Environmental Management: Nothing to report.  
Layout of Cemetery Extension: Ongoing  
Memorial Trees: Cllr S Turner advised that she and Cllr Pask have agreed the types of trees, and the style of labelling. It was noted that the number of such trees is limited. The Parish Clerk is awaiting details of the deceased regarding a recent enquiry. JP/ST  
Large Cypress near Entrance to Cemetery: Following the recent enquiry in this regard from Hillbank House, a response is awaited from David Pizzey at BDC. Clerk
- (b) The Green  
Cllr Pask is to speak to Michael Feather re these. Clerk  
Ditch on the Green: Cllr D Turner asked Members if they had any evidence of ownership or boundaries. It was agreed to discuss this at the next meeting. DT/Clerk
- 13/161 Highways and Footpaths
- (a) Traffic Management  
Hartest Hill and Bridge: Agreed works awaited.
- (b) Footpaths/Highways

School Grass Verge: Members advised that this is still slippery and muddy. The Parish Clerk is to expedite with SCC replacement of this grass verge with a Tarmacadam surface. Clerk

Cllr S Turner asked that school parking (and pavement) be discussed at next week's meeting. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Chair of the School Governors requesting the possibility of the PC working with them and the PTA re parking and how perhaps assistance could be provided in getting children from the Institute to the School. Clerk

'Walking Bus': Cllr Pask reported that she had met someone on Brockley Road last week who was considering the possibility of a walking bus to escort children from Brockley to Hartest School. The dangers of the road were explained. It was understood that traffic volumes were to be monitored. Clerk

Pilgrims Lane: Cllr Pask advised that the whole length of this is potholed. A request for repair will be submitted. Clerk

Hartest Hill Footpath by The Warrens: The Clerk reported that Highways have been asked to again repair this path, the surface of which has 'bulged'. Clerk

- 13/162 Correspondence: None
- 13/163 Matters of report only: None
- 13/164 Matters for consideration at the next meeting: As above
- 13/165 The meeting closed at 10 p.m.

Date of next Meeting:  
 Wednesday 26 March at 7 p.m. in the Institute

**Approved at the Parish Council Meeting held on 26 March 2014**