



Chair: Cllr Toby Acton
Locum Clerk: Susan DeLuca | Ware Farm, The Street, High Roding, CM6 1NT |
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Minutes
High Ongar Parish Council Meeting
held on
Wednesday 14th October 2023 - at 7.30pm
at High Ongar Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Toby Acton (Chairman), Cllr Claudio Gallicchio, Cllr John Catlin, Cllr John Tory, Cllr Simon Bosworth, Cllr Steven Smith, Cllr Chris Funnell and Cllr Gordon Arthur*

Susan Deluca (Locum Clerk)
Bonnie Jones (Clerks Assistant)
3 members of the public including Cllr Ray Balcombe (District Councillor)* and Cllr Jaymey McIvor (County Councillor) *

**For part of meeting*

1. **Apologies for Absence**
None
2. **Other Absences**
None
3. **Declarations of Interest**
None
4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
It was unanimously resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 27th September 2023 were a true record and were signed accordingly.
5. **Public Participation Session**
A member of the public raised the issue of continuous speeding throughout the village, which has been an ongoing problem for some time. Councillors confirmed they were aware of the issue, and it was a topic that had been raised at previous meetings. Various speeding and traffic calming measures were discussed, however all councillors agreed to raise the issue with District Councillor Ray Balcombe who will possibly be able to discuss the matter with the Local Highways Panel. The Clerk advised she had received an email from a resident who had expressed his concerns regarding the spending of S106 money. The Clerk confirmed she would investigate this matter further whilst looking through the archived village hall documentation.
6. **Chair's Report**
The Chairman gave a verbal report which included the following matters:
 - The Chairman advised he was continuing to liaise with the Clerk and Website operator in regard to Councillor email addresses.
 - A laptop has been bought for the Clerk and will be collected next week.
 - The Chairman is currently in discussion with the Clerk about the amount of funds in the bank account. They are looking into other bank accounts that offer an increased rate.
7. **Vice Chair's Report**
None.

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8. District / County Councillor reports

Cllr Jaymey Mclvor gave a verbal report on the following matters:

- Cllr Mclvor is interested in hearing first hand experiences within the care sector including GP appointments, care plans, etc. He was recently appointed as Essex County Council – Deputy cabinet member for Adult Health and Social Care and is keen to make a difference within Rural communities.
- Any small or large Highways issues, please continue to send them to Cllr Mclvor.
- Cllr Mclvor confirmed he currently has access to a Locality fund. If High Ongar feel any small groups within the community could benefit from up to £300, please do contact him.
- Ride London has now been confirmed for the next 3 years. The route is yet to be confirmed. £17,000 invested from this event has gone directly to Ongar Residents.
- Free food for you, which is a food bank, is available every Thursday in Ongar. If any residents would benefit from this a referral is encouraged.
- Cllr Mclvor is currently working on the Ongar Rural Network. He is looking for people from all 18 parishes to meet 4 times a year, to discuss local and wider issues, in the hope to gain access to high profile people who can make a change.

The Chairman questioned if Cllr Mclvor felt High Ongar would qualify for the 20 is plenty scheme. Cllr Mclvor agreed that the street would benefit from a lower speed limit. The Clerk confirmed she would make an application for the 20 is plenty scheme.

Cllr Ray Balcombe gave a verbal report on the following matter:

- Cllr Balcombe advised ECC are proposing they retain the online booking system at all Essex Recycling Centres and is completing a consultation to this effect, which runs from 9th October – 19th November. He encouraged the Council and all individuals to respond to the consultation with their views.

Cllr Arthur advised that fly tipping has increased since the introduction of the booking system, including an incident that occurred this month in High Ongar, outside the old LECA site, which was subsequently reported to EFDC.

9. Clerk's Report

The Clerk gave a verbal report including the following matters:

- The Clerk confirmed she had now uploaded both sets of accounts onto the Charity Commission website.
- The Clerk and Clerks assistant have filed and organised all Village Hall paperwork from 1998-2021. These are now ready to be returned to the Village Hall Committee.
- The Clerks and Clerks assistant have not yet looked thorough the Village Hall communication and correspondence files, however this will be completed before the next meeting.
- Receipt of exempt status has been received from the External Auditor for 2022/2023
- The Clerk contacted Cllr Nigel Bedford and James Stubbs to advise them of the suggested unlawful works that are currently being carried out in the Sanuk restaurant. Both raised the issue with the enforcement team, who are now are keeping a close eye on the matter.

10. Councillor Reports

Cllr Tory confirmed the old notice board on the A414 has now been removed.

Cllr Funnell advised he believed Mill Grove had now been adopted by Epping Forest District Council.

The Clerk advised she was not aware of this but will look into it and report at the next meeting.

11. Council Assets

At the previous meeting the un-registered piece of land (Gamers) was discussed. The Clerk advised if Councillors wished to investigate and register the piece of land it would cost £2000 per parcel of land. A detailed discussion occurred, where councillors raised concerns of possible implications if the land is not registered. Councillors agreed to firstly look at the Essex Records Office for any further

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information. The Clerk advised she would need a postcode for the land in order to locate any information. Cllr Tory confirmed he would get the postcode and confirm with the Clerk.

12. High Ongar Village Hall

The Clerk confirmed the current ownership of the Hall is still being investigated and may take some time to deduce a conclusion. She did however note that "Martin's Law" will be coming into effect in 2025 and may directly affect village halls. Cllr Funnell made the Council aware of future updates and repairs on the Village Hall. Cllr Gallicchio advised of the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall improvements grant and questioned whether this would be something to look into to help make improvements to the hall. The Clerk confirmed she would look into this.

13. Princess Diana Garden

The Clerk confirmed as per discussion at the last meeting, she had spoken to her contact at EFDC, and they believed that some years ago this area had been maintained by EFDC. However, EFDC no longer have it in their work schedule. Councillors confirmed it is currently being maintained, however they are unsure by who. Councillors agreed to keep observing the garden, and if it became untidy then the issue would be revisited.

14. Website & IT

The Chairman covered a lot of the IT matters in his report. However, did question if previous agendas were being removed from the website. The Clerks assistant requested to be given access to the website in order to update it. The Chairman confirmed he would look into getting this done. He also advised that the Council are still currently experiencing issues with forwarding emails from the old email addresses and are currently trying to resolve the issue.

15. Rolling programme from Audit

The Clerk confirmed the Standing Orders had been circulated at the last meeting for Councillors to read through. Cllr Tory advised he found missing information within the Standing orders that needed to be completed. Councillors looked through the missing information and agreed changes to the following items: 6D, 7A, 9B, 9D, 15B and 27B. Subject to the agreed changes, all Councillors unanimously agreed to the adoption of the Standing Orders. Cllr Arthur advised whilst Auditing the High Ongar Parish Council payments, he found it increasingly time consuming finding the confirmation of agreed payments, as they are not noted within the minutes. The Clerk confirmed she will now note all confirmed future payments within the minutes. The Chairman also noted that all items flagged in the Audit have now been actioned.

16. Rural England Prosperity Fund (Managed by EFDC)

The Clerk confirmed she had contacted Quentin Buller and Duncan Haslam with regard to future grant funding. At this time, she has only received an email advising both are currently away and will respond once they have returned. The Clerk made aware that both District and County Councillors were present and could provide some further information as to if Grant funding would be appropriate for a shared storage between the school and the Parish Council, further storage for the Village Hall and an outside communal area at the Village Hall. Cllr Mclvor confirmed he had a Locality Grant fund available which could be appropriate funding towards a Village Hall outside communal area. He also confirmed that grants are available off the back of Ride London, and the shared storage between the school and the Parish Council could benefit from one of these grants. The Clerks confirmed she would look into all possible grants available and make an application where appropriate.

17. Planning applications for consideration

The Clerk presented an additional planning application, which members perused and advised they had no comment.

The Clerk confirmed she had attended the meeting discussing the proposed 162 homes being built behind the BP garage in Ongar. The hours of operation for the building works would be Monday-

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Saturday 8am-6pm with some agreed works on Sundays. This planning application is still to be agreed by the District Council; however the Clerk will continue to check for any updates.

18. Finance

18.1. Councillors noted the current account balance as of 30th September was £59,560.07, and a bank reconciliation was tabled at the meeting.

18.2. All Councillors unanimously agreed to approve the following payments:

Payee	Description	Method	£ (inc VAT)
MD Landscapes Ltd	Grass Cutting	Online	£134.40
MD Landscapes Ltd	Missed July Invoice	Online	£268.80
Heath Computers	Government domain and website hosting	Online	£780.00
Heath Computers	X7 Microsoft Subscriptions	Online	£45.70
NPower	Street Lighting	DD	£58.68

Cllr Tory raised concerns on the amount of money being spent on IT. The Clerk confirmed due to the un-forecasted cost of IT in the previous budget, the earmark reserves will be amended to accommodate the extra costs.

19. Matters for next meeting

Cllr Bosworth is currently in the process of purchasing a spare set of defibrillator pads. Cllr McIvor questioned if a defibrillator training event would be beneficial for surrounding areas. The Clerk confirmed that she would contact Clerks in surrounding areas to see if they would be interested in attending. The Chairman confirmed the future employment of the Clerks assistant will be discussed at the November meeting.

20. Date of Next Meeting

To note the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 15th November. The Clerk has given her apologies, however the Clerks assistant confirmed she is available to Clerk the meeting. Cllr Arthur gave apologies which was received and accepted.

Meeting Close – 21:33pm.

Date:

Signature: