



Chair: Cllr Toby Acton
Clerk: Bonnie Jones | Ware Farm, The Street, High Roding, CM6 1NT |
clerk@highongar-pc.gov.uk | www.highongar-pc.gov.uk

Meeting of High Ongar Parish Council

WEDNESDAY 8th January 2025 – at 7:30pm
at the High Ongar Village Hall

Minutes

Present: Cllr Bosworth, Cllr Gallichio, Cllr Catlin, Cllr Funnell and Cllr Burton

Bonnie Jones (Clerk)
District Councillor Mary Dadd*
1 Member of the public

**For part of the meeting*

2024/25.123 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllr Acton, Cllr Arthur and District Cllr Ray Balcombe.

2024/25.124 Other Absences

None

2024/25.125 Declarations of Interest

None

2024/25.126 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Cllr Funnell advised that the minutes did not show that Councillors had discussed they wanted to look into the possibility of lifting the covenant on the Village Hall. The Clerk confirmed she would make the above changes. Subject to this change, the minutes were agreed.

2024/25.127 Public Participation Session

The member of the public present advised that a lorry had been placed outside the Church since Sunday. She highlighted the fact that this lorry was overflowing with large amounts of rubbish as well as being placed there during times when funerals take place. The Clerk confirmed she would look into this matter.

Following on from this, Cllr Gallichio raised concerns surrounding the ongoing parking and traffic issues outside of the School. Cllr Dadd suggested taking pictures of number plates and sending the complaints through to NEPP as this will highlight High Ongar as an area of concern. The Clerk will also contact PCSO Warren Shepherd for his advice.

2024/25.128 Reports and Members Reports

a) Chairman's Report – The Chairman was not in attendance however had provided the following written report:

I trust that all councillors have had a relaxing Christmas break.

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In December, I was asked to cut the ribbon to open the Christmas Celebrations at our parish church and later I attended the switching on of our village lights with my family. As always the lights looked spectacular at it is always a delight to arrive home to The Street over the Christmas period and see them.

I would like to offer my sincere condolences to Councillor Gordon Arthur on the sad loss of his wife Jen. She was a lovely lady, very well know and respected in the village. I am sure all other councillors will join me in expressing our heartfelt sorrow and our best wishes for Gordon and his family.

As we look forward to the year ahead I thank all councillors for their efforts over the past year and look forward to continuing to work with you in 2025.

b) Vice Chairman's Report - None

c) District & County Councillors Reports – District Councillor Mary Dadd provided a detailed report which included the following matters:

- More rural areas may be increasingly vulnerable to development. She is looking for both Council members and parishioners to work alongside her to help safeguard some of these areas.
- Village Green status
- Play area funding
- Devolution
- The proposed Persimmon site has been granted planning approved. There will be permanent part time signal traffic lights, gateway features, pedestrian crossing and the 30mph limit will be extended
- EFDC Planning process amendments

Following on from this Cllr Gallichio raised concerns surrounding the narrow pavement as you walk from High Ongar along the main road to Ongar town. He advised that overgrowth from the hedges onto the pavement is increasing the danger. Cllr Mary Dadd strongly suggested ensuring that these areas of overgrowth are reported to Highways. However, if this Council would like the pathway made wider then that would be a matter for the Local Highway Panel.

d) Parish Councillors -

- Ward Councillor Report – Paslow Common - None

- Ward Councillor Report - High Ongar – Cllr Funnell advised there had been a number of fly tipping cases in the usual areas. The Clerk confirmed she would continue to discuss this matter the District Councillor Ray Balcombe.

- Ward Councillor Report- Norton Mandeville – Cllr Bosworth advised that the hedge along Willingale Road was severely overgrown. Cllr Bosworth knows the farmer who owns this land so he confirmed he would ask him to cut it back.

e) Highways Report - None

f) High Ongar Village Hall – Cllr Funnell advised that there had been a number of upgrades made to the Village Hall over the last few months. He is concerned about the amount of money that the Hall is currently paying out. Cllr Gallichio suggested that hosting various events for raising money for the village hall could be something to look into. Councillors

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agreed to discuss some ideas over the coming months. The Clerk will also look at grant opportunities that the Village Hall can apply for.

g) Police Reports – None

2024/25.129 Clerk's Report

The Clerk provided a verbal report including the following matters:

- HGV signs along Mill Lane have been made clear and visible to vehicles.
- Councilors confirmed they would like to hold another Play in the Park event this summer. The Clerk will liaise with both Play in the Park and the Village Hall to discuss availability.
- Upon inspection of the Skilled Tech invoices, this Council was being charge for 9 Business Basic Microsoft emails. We currently only have 6 active Councilors who are using their email addresses. Skilled Tech had advised that unfortunately the Microsoft 365 subscriptions are yearly and can only be changed at the time of renewal. The Clerks has instructed Skilled Tech to remove the unused emails when the subscription is due for renewal.
- Fly Posting at the entrance to High Ongar has been reported to EFDC. The Clerk also confirmed she would escalate this matter and send a letter to businesses who have erected illegal signage.
- The Clerk is currently in the process of getting Cllr Arthur access to Unity Bank so he can view the bank statements.

2024/25.130 Millfield Parking Restrictions

On 17th December the Parish Clerk was contacted by a local resident of Millfield regarding a consultation being conducted by EFDC on the proposed installation of jockey rails and parking improvements in Millfield. The Consultation asked residents for feedback on the below two possibilities:

1. Installation of Jockey Rails along the grass verges to prevent off street parking, thus protecting the verges from further damage and ensuring they remain accessible to all residents.
2. The possible introduction of a new parking permit scheme (via NEPP) which would impose fines on vehicles that park incorrectly or cross land without permission.

The deadline for residents to respond to this consultation was 6th December 2024.

Councillors noted that the Parish Council was not advised of, or made aware of this consultation, however EFDC Councillor Mary Dadd is now involved with both EFDC and local residents and has asked EFDC to hold off on making any decision until she has spoken with her colleagues, the Parish Council and local residents. Councillors agreed they did not wish to make any comments on the matter at this time.

2024/25.131 Street Lighting Inspections

The Parish Council owns 19 streetlights in the Parish. As these are assets of the Parish Council there is an obligation to ensure both their structural and electoral integrity. This is normally completed by various inspections that take place between 1-5 years. The Clerk has been unable to establish the last time these checks were completed, and as such has

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contacted the only company whom she is aware of who complete this testing. Councillors viewed the quote and agreed to move forward with inspection at the cost of £500.

2024/25.132 2025/2026 Budget and Precept

Councillors considered in detail the Budget and Precept for 2025/2026.

Cllr Bosworth requested that the Council consider budgeting for ongoing maintenance of the defibrillators. The Clerk advised that there is currently £1210 in the defibrillator EMR which should be sufficient funds for any maintenance that is required in 2025/2026. Council agreed to use the funds in the EMR for 2025/2026 and to consider budgeting for ongoing defibrillator maintenance in the 2026/2027 budget.

It was agreed to set the precept for 2025/2026 at £13,843. This represents a 0% increase in the Parish Council element of the Council tax, meaning a Band D property would be paying £21.60 a year – a £0 increase on the current year. Unanimously agreed.

2024/25.133 2025/2026 Internal Auditor

Unfortunately, Val Evans had advised that she will no longer be continuing as an Independent Local Council Internal Auditor with immediate effect. The Clerk has contacted Heelis & Lodge who are an independent internal auditing service, who confirmed that they are available to complete this Council's Internal audit at a cost of £170. This quote was agreed by Council and Heelis & Lodge duly appointed this Council's internal auditor.

2024/25.134 Skilled Tech Ltd Price Increase

Skilled Tech Ltd have advised that they will be increasing the majority of their services by 5% from 1st January 2025. The Clerk confirmed that for this Council the 5% increase applies only to the Monthly Maintenance and monitoring costs, and that the invoices have therefore increased by 60p. Councillors confirmed that they were happy to continue using Skilled Tech Ltd services.

2024/25.135 RCCE Membership

The Clerk confirmed that a yearly RCCE membership for this Council is £70.80 inc VAT. Councillors felt that there would be great benefit to becoming members of the RCCE and agreed to move forwards with joining as members for the price detailed.

2024/25.136 Paslow Common hedge cut

The Clerk has been contacted by a resident to ask if this Council will consider cutting back the vegetation growing from Paslow Common onto the highway (adjacent to the old allotment site). As this Parish Council owns Paslow common Councillors were asked to consider this matter. The Clerk had contacted D.R Metson & Partners to provide a quote, and Cllr Bosworth had spoken to them directly. The quote received was for £100 to cut back the hedge and remove any cuttings. This quote was agreed by all members.

2024/25.137 Planning applications for consideration

There were no planning applications to consider.

2024/25.138 Planning Applications responded to by way of delegated powers

Reference	Address	Description	Comments
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EPF/2330/24	Sparks Farm, Nine Ashes Road, Nine Ashes , CM4 0JZ	Demolition, conversion and extension of existing buildings into a single residential (Class C3) self build dwellinghouse with new ancillary outbuildings comprising new garage and gym, with associated access, gardens, parking, landscaping and infrastructure.	No Comments
EPF/2365/24	11, Millfield, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9RJ	Demolition of the existing conservatory and infill and erection of a single storey rear extension.	No comments.
EPF/2503/24	11 Paslow Hall Cottages, King Street, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NP	Proposed two storey side extension, Internal layout alterations.	No comments
EPF/2459/24	Land northeast of Fingrith Hall Lane, Fingrith Hall Lane, Norton Heath, Ingatestone, CM4 0JP	Prior approval for a proposed access road.	No comments.
EPF/2141/24	Bottom Yard, Leys Business Centre, , Chelmsford Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NW	Construction of two commercial B2 B8 flexible use buildings	No comments.
EPF/2498/24	Green Pastures, 227 Nine Ashes Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0JZ	Demolition of existing detached garage, conservatory and rear hipped roof and construction of side extension and rear box dormer window to provide additional loft accommodation.	No comments

2024/25.139 Planning Updates

Councillors noted the below planning updates:

Reference	Address	Description	Update
EPF/2263/24	2 Prospect Villas, Norton Heath Road Old A414, High Ongar, Ingatestone, CM4 0LQ	Lawful Development Certificate: Proposed. https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0hTv000003QBJ3	Certificate of Lawful Developments. The Parish Council are not able to comment on this application.
ESS/54/24/EPF (ECC Application)	Norton Field Farm, Norton Lane, High Ongar, Ongar, Essex, CM4 0LN	LAWFUL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE - Use of land for the import and storage of construction and demolition waste comprising hardcore	Granted – ECC found that the site has been within this use in

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		and concrete up to a maximum of 3,000 tonnes per annum. Together with the processing and crushing of imported materials and the additional storage of up to 3,000 tonnes (at any one time) of this material/product for export. Stockpiles across the site of no more than 3 metres in height	excess of the requisite 10-year period between 2009-2024.
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2024/25.40 Finance

140.1 Councillors noted the bank balance as of 31st December 2024 was £50,864.22.

140.2 A bank reconciliation was tabled at the meeting. This was unanimously agreed and signed accordingly by the meeting Chairman.

140.3 The below payments were agreed. Councillors agreed to transfer the funds from Lloyds Bank to Unity Trust Bank prior to making the below payments:

Payee	Description	Method	£ (inc VAT)
Bonnie Jones	December Salary	PAID	£499.30
NPower	Street Light Electricity – November	DD PAID	£79.42
Skilled Tech	RMMSupport per Device, Microsoft 365 Business Basic and Microsoft 365 Business Standard (INV-1189)	Online	£86.53
Skilled Tech	RMMSupport per Device, Microsoft 365 Business Basic and Microsoft 365 Business Standard (INV-1242)	Online	£87.13
TBS Hygiene Ltd	Dog waste collection – November (INV6153)	Online	£36.60
TBS Hygiene Ltd	Dog waste collection – December (INV6293)	Online	£29.28
Sharrons Events Catering Company	Christmas Lunch – Catering	Online	£598.80
Bonnie Jones	Reimburse – Stationary	Online	£15.00
High Ongar Village Hall	Hall hire – November & December	Online	£72.00
Simon Bosworth	Reimbursement of Defibrillator Pads	Online	£132.23

2024/25.141 Outstanding Matters

Cllr Gallichio advised that a resident showed an interest in becoming a Councillor. The Clerk explained the procedure of co-opting a new councillor.

He also asked for the Council to consider a celebration for VE taking place in May. The Clerk confirmed she would look into possible funding opportunities and place it on the February Agenda for Councillors to further discuss.

2024/25.142 Date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th February. Cllr Bosworth gave his apologies.

2024/25.143 Exclusion of the public and the press

Land at Nine Ashes Road



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It was agreed that the Clerk would look at sourcing further material at the Essex Records Office and that Cllr Bosworth would discuss the matter with a previous Councillor and report back at the next meeting.

Meeting end: 21:34