

**HIGH ONGAR
PARISH COUNCIL**

Meeting: MEETING OF PARISH COUNCIL **Date:** 27th September 2023 **Time:** 7.30PM

Venue: HIGH ONGAR VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT:

Councillors (5) Cllr Toby Acton (TA) (Chairman), Cllr Chris Funnell (CF), Cllr Simon Bosworth, Cllr John Tory (JT), Cllr Steve Smith (SS), Cllr Gordon Arthur. Cllr John Catlin (JC), Cllr Claudio Gallichio (CG).

Officers in Attendance (2)

Susan De Luca - Locum Clerk
Bonnie Jones – Clerks Assistant

Members of the Public (9)

Members of the Press (0)

1117 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1)

Apologies received from Parish Councillor: Cllr Arthur being unable to attend for personal reasons.

1118 OTHER ABSENCES

Apologies received from District Councillor, Cllr Ray Balcombe.

1119 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS

Cllr Catlin and Cllr Gallichio were co-opted as Councillors for High Ongar Parish Council by way of unanimous vote. Both Councillors signed their declaration of acceptance of office.

1121 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

1119 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public advised there were substantial works being carried out at the Sanuk restaurant, which they believed did not have relevant planning permissions to go ahead. The Clerk advised she had reported these issues to enforcement and had received a reference number. The Clerk confirmed she would send this number to the resident in order for them to also track the progress.

A second member of the public made aware that they were unhappy that there was no notice board in Mill Lane. Especially as it was their understanding that since one had previously been removed several years ago. He stated that many elderly residents were unable to access

the internet and in turn were not able to see any village updates. The Clerk advised that Councillors had previously made the decision that a replacement notice board was not necessary at the current time, but would be considered again during the budget meeting in December/January. A heated discussion ensued between a number of residents and Councillors. However the previous decision by council was confirmed that a replacement notice board would be considered at the December/January meeting when the 2024/2025 budget is agreed.

1122. REPORT OF THE CLERK

The Clerk has been dealing with various administrative matters and filing for the Village Hall. She felt it would be better to deal with the land ownership and Charity commission matters directly with the High Ongar Village Hall item is discussed on the agenda.

1123 CHAIRMAN REPORT

The Chairman advised he had been liaising with the Clerk and IT company as we have moved to a .gov domain, which means there will be a change of email. The Chairman confirmed that all Councillors will continue to receive any email sent to the old email addresses for 3 months. Cllr Tory advised he was having some trouble logging into his new email account. The Chairman advised he would try to resolve the issue after the meeting. The Chairman noted he had attended the LCLC meeting. He also confirmed that himself, Cllr Funnell, Cllr Smith, Cllr Tory and Cllr Bosworth are now all signatories on the account, and the previous Clerk and previous Councillors had been removed from the account. The Chairman extended his thanks to the Locum Clerk for the huge amount of work she had undertaken over the last few months.

1124 VICE CHAIRMANS REPORT

None

1125 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

a) Parish Councillors -

- Ward Councillor Report – Paslow Common – Cllr Tory noted he and Cllr Bosworth will be removing the defunct bench and fitting the new bench which had been received in its place.
- Ward Councillor Report - High Ongar-Cllr Smith was pleased to report that there was no fly tipping this month.
- Ward Councillor Report- Norton Mandeville – No Matters to Report.

c) Highways Report – No Matters to Report.

1126 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk provided Members with the current statement of accounts and list of payments, which were NOTED and AGREED. The Clerk gave a brief explanation of account to new Councillors. The Clerk also provided a list of new invoices that will be received after the meeting. It was PROPOSED Cllr Acton and SECONDED Cllr Funnell and unanimously resolved to approve the payments tabled at the meeting.

1127 COUNCIL ASSETS

It was noted that the Locum Clerk was currently working on the list of known Assets. It did seem that the two Bus Stops by the Crown Garage along the Chelmsford Road referred to in the previous minutes do not belong to the Parish Council but are the responsibility of Essex

County Council. Instead of arranging for a refurbishment to be carried out, the Clerk arranged for these to be cleaned. She had also arranged for the Noticeboard adjacent to the bus stop opposite the Crown Garage along the Chelmsford Road to be removed. The Clerk advised that it was her understanding that this had been carried out, however will check and report back to Councillors on the progress.

The Clerk confirmed she had looked into the strip of land close to Paslow Common Farm. The land was purchased by a German consortium. This was over 40 years ago. The land is now contract farmed by Gaymers. There were concrete boundary posts however it is expected that over the years they have been dislodged by the farm machinery. A check had been run at the Land Registry and the Clerk confirmed this area of land is un-registered. Councillors agreed that they wished to investigate this matter further. The Clerk agreed to look into the costings of pursuing a claim for the ownership of the land. An update on this will be provided at a future meeting.

1128 HIGH ONGAR VILLAGE HALL

Councillors were advised that the locum clerk researched the following:

- The funding from the S106 agreement was given to the Parish Council who in turn passed this on to High Ongar Village Hall to go towards the building costs of the new hall.
- The Parish Council is the Custodian Trustee of the High Ongar Village Hall, which means that if the hall failed for whatever reason, the Property & Land would be under the 'control' of the Parish Council as Custodian Trustee as it holds the 'land in trust' for the Charity, however it would not be able to materialise its assets, as it is simply a 'holding body' for the asset.
- The foundation document and governing document will need to be updated and re-vamped.
- Had a meeting with the remaining Trustees.
- Have updated details of new Administrator, removed details of previous trustees, added new trustees.
- Still having difficulty logging the two sets of accounts and the TAR, however the Charity Commission have sent the Locum Clerk an email admitting that the fault is a problem with their computer software, and they are trying to fix the problem – the Locum Clerk has spent 3 sessions on the phone with them 1 x 47 minutes: 1 hour and 22 mins & 1 x 17 minutes.

The Clerk advised that her investigation into the ownership of the village hall is continuing and she will provide Councillors with an update once available. The Clerk also stated that she still had 4 boxes of paperwork to look through in relation with this matter. She confirmed this would take no longer than 20 hours. Councillors agreed that the Clerk should bill High Ongar Parish Council for her hours.

1130 PRINCESS DIANA GARDEN

At the last meeting Members were unsure as to who maintained this area or as to who it was registered to. This area of land is clearly being maintained, in part, by someone. Cllr Funnell advised he was under the impression that Epping Forest District Council maintained the garden. The Clerk confirmed she would contact EFDC to find out if it is them. The Chairman stated he felt the maintenance of the garden had declined in recent years. It was agreed to confirm who maintains the garden first before possible grant funding is considered.

1132 WEBSITE & IT

This matter was covered in the Chairmans report.

The Clerk did advise that the previous Clerk had signed up the Village Hall for a website, to which there were outstanding invoices owed. Cllr Funnell, who is also the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee stated he was not aware of any website. The Clerk handed over this matter to the Village Hall Committee to further investigate.

1112 ROLLING PROGRAMME FROM AUDIT

Members were advised of the relevant actions that have been taken as per the schedule tabled at the meeting. It is felt that as the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are not the latest NALC ones, the Clerk distributed copies of the revised ones to all Councillors. All Councillors agreed to the adoption of the latest Standing Order. The two newly co-opted councillors advised they would read them after the meeting and confirm via email.

1112 REQUEST FORM THE SCHOOL REGARDING STORAGE

At the July Meeting Members discussed the lack of storage for both the School and for the Parish Council. The Clerk has researched this and as this council currently does not hold the General Power of Competence due to the lack of elected Members. However the Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council may be able to look at the possibility of joint storage under the Rural prosperity Fund. Cllr Gallichio who is governor at the school advised that they would be look at a storage option to store sports equipment and fundraising equipment etc. The Clerk confirmed that she would contact the relevant people who deal with the Rural Prosperity Fund to see if this would be a viable project that could be supported by funding.

1112 RURAL ENGLAD PROSPERITY FUND (MANAGED BY EFDC)

As previously discussed, the Clerk has been made aware of a new Grant Scheme available to qualifying district parishes that is being funded by the Government's new Rural England Prosperity Fund. There will be a presentation at the Local Liaison Branch Meeting which the Locum Clerk will attend. The Chairman questioned if the Village Hall could possible benefit from this new funding project. Cllr Funnell advised they would be looking at using any future funding for repairs and upgrades on the exterior of the building. The Clerk again confirmed she would discuss both of these projects with EFDC and will provide an update once available.

1133 PLANNING

Members discussed and made comment on the following matters:

No	Application Number	Location	Proposal
1	EPF/1869/23	Barberry Cottages, 2, 163 Nine Ashes Road CM4 0JY	Two storey side, and part rear, extension
The Parish Council has NO COMMENTS to make on this Application			
2	EPF/1871/23	212, Fields End, Nine Ashes Road, High Ongar, Ongar, CM4 0JY	Proposed side extension
The Parish Council has NO COMMENTS to make on this Application			

1133 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Catlin discussed the continued problem with speeding throughout the Village. All Councillors agreed that they felt speeding through the village would see a vast improvement if the 30mph limit was changed to 20mph. The Clerk confirmed that Councils could now nominate roads to be apart of the 20 is plenty campaign. Councillor's agreed to put this as an October agenda item for Councillors to discuss further.

The Chairman raised the issue of possible suspicious activity taking place at the rear of Cllr Catlin's premises, Councillors agreed that if they see anything suspicious that they will take a note of the vehicles details.

1133 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 18th October 2023.

Meeting Closed 21:50