

EAST BRENT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of East Brent Parish Council held at the Village Hall on Monday 5th January 2015 at 7.30pm, when the following business was transacted.

Present

Councillors:- Cllr V. Rawles (Chairperson) Cllr W. Walker, Cllr J. Bowden, Cllr J. Webb, Cllr A. Gilling, Cllr Y. Roscorla, Cllr E. Champion, Cllr S. McGreavy, Cllr N. Lloyd-Jones and Cllr B. Bees, Cllr B. Woodward, together with the Clerk Mr M. Shobbrook.

1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

Apologies were received from Mr Bob Filmer

Cllr A. Gilling declared an interest in relation to all planning matters, in view of his position on the Development Committee at S.D.C.

Miss Galley and Mr Galley were in the public section and the Chairperson decided to bring forward on the Agenda the planning matters listed, so that they could retire from the meeting once their planning application had been discussed. In addition Mr Klaus-Kemp (their neighbour) was in attendance and wished to address the Committee on planning application number 24/14/00036. Initially neither Miss Galley nor Mr Galley wished to speak on their application and so the Chairperson invited Mr Klaus-Kemp to address the Committee.

He told the Committee that he was concerned about four particular issues. These were:-

1. On the application forms the applicant had indicated that none of the trees at the site would be affected by the application. If permission is granted, then all nine leylandii trees would be affected together with an ash tree.

2. Work was carried out last summer on a hedge at the property and provisions of the Countryside Act were ignored, with nesting birds being disturbed. No work should be carried out on these trees between February and August and the legislation must be observed.

3. Wickham Lane is narrow, there are very few passing places for vehicles. Currently, 21 cars regularly use the lane in its last stage, serving 10 properties. SDC has been asked to adopt the highway, but this has been rejected. The verges are overgrown with brambles during the summer period and injury and danger to pedestrians could occur, when they avoid traffic using the lane. The lane floods during periods of rainfall and if further foundations for the property are laid, then the ability for surface water to drain away naturally, will be lost.

4. The proposed building will be in front of the building line and it will be out of keeping with the existing houses. It should at the very least be moved back in line to conform.

Mr Galley asked the Chairperson for permission to respond to Mr Klaus-Kemp's comments and she agreed. Mr Galley said that Mr Klaus-Kemp has complained for years about the trees on the site and the work carried out last summer was done by a specialist firm who were aware of the provisions of the Countryside Act. He denied that the lane was badly affected by flooding and he denied that there was a problem with brambles and other vegetation growing along the hedges. He added that Mr Klaus-Kemp had placed a tree in a pot on his drive which had caused an obstruction in the lane. He has personally paid for the renewal of the tarmac along the lane when he could have claimed contributions from the other residents who use the lane., but he had decided not to charge them for this work.

Miss Galley (the applicant) then asked the Chairperson if she could address the Committee. She was permitted to do so and she said that she was not aware that the proposed building was in front of the building line. She said she would fully conform with any conditions which might be imposed by SDC regarding the trees and the building line. She also said that she did not accept that the lane floods frequently.

The Chairperson intervened and said that the topics were straying off the planning aspects which the Parish Council was duty bound to review. She therefore brought the meeting to order and declared it open at 7.40pm.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting on Monday 1st December 2014.

The Minutes of this meeting were signed by the Chairperson as being a true and accurate reflection of the business carried out by this Parish Council on that date.

She invited Cllr McGreavy to address the Committee as planning co-ordinator for the Parish Council. At this point Cllr Gilling left the room in view of his official position as a member of the development committee for SDC.

Cllr McGreavy told the Committee that he and Cllrs Champion and Woodward, had visited the site. He outlined the nature of the application and went through the aspects which the Parish Council needed to validly consider tonight. He and Cllr Champion told the Committee that there would be sufficient space

to park at least two vehicles on the site. Consent would be needed from the local Drainage Board before the rhyne could be culverted and work would have to be done to specifications. Cllr Champion said that work had been carried out to improve the drainage of the rhyne a few years ago and he was not aware that there was a major flooding issue now. He asked Cllr Woodward (who lives in Wickham Lane) if she was aware of any major problem. She replied that there was surface water around during periods of rainfall. Cllr Walker said that he and Mr Matthew Ward had walked around problem areas of the Village last year, to assess flooding areas and work had been scheduled to clear the rhyne. All the Councillors were concerned that the building line would be breached by the application as it stood. As they could only vote upon the actual application before them, they agreed that they would have to reject it. Other than this, there were no grounds under which they would oppose the application. Cllr McGreavy therefore proposed that the Council should oppose the application. This was seconded by Cllr Champion and a unanimous vote in favour of the resolution was then carried. The Clerk was directed to advise SDC that the Parish Council would have approved the application, if the proposed building was in line with the existing properties.

The Chairperson then referred to planning application number 24/14/00023/SP relating to South House, Lake Road, East Brent, by Mr D. Harvey. As this application had previously been advertised for debate in the last Agenda of the Committee for December 2014, it was able to be dealt with this evening. The application had then suddenly been withdrawn by the applicant to enable further reports to be prepared. These have now been lodged with SDC.

Cllr McGreavy said that he and Cllr Champion had visited the site. It was an application for a two bed roomed holiday letting in a barn conversion.

Cllr Champion then declared a minor interest in the application by being involved in the adjoining land, but this was not sufficient to necessitate him from either withdrawing from the meeting or not being able to advise upon it.

The present barn on the site was in need of repair and improvements as it was in a poor state. Cllr Bowden said that he was in favour of supporting the renovation of such barns as they would otherwise fall into an even worse state or condition. Cllr McGreavy said that having reviewed the planning criteria which the Parish Council should consider, he could find no reason why this application should not receive the full support of the Committee. The only recommendation which the Parish Council would make to SDC is that opaque glass should be placed in the west facing lounge window, to avoid any overlooking of neighbouring properties. Cllr McGreavy then proposed approval of this application and this was seconded by Cllr Walker. A unanimous vote in favour of the matter was then passed and the Clerk was directed to make the additional recommendation to SDC.

Cllr Champion withdrew from the meeting at 8.00pm having another commitment to attend to.

Cllr Gilling returned into the Hall.

3. Matters Arising:-

Minute 30/12 : Pavements adjacent to the building site at The Laurels, Old Bristol Road, East Brent - Cllr Walker updated the Committee saying that there had been no progress reported to him by Stuart Houlet of SDC, regarding the enforcement measures being taken by SDC for breach of the planning consent at the site. A further review will follow later in the year.

Minute 04/13 : Parish Magazine - Cllr Webb told the Committee that the financial state of the Magazine was stable and revenue for adverts being placed, were continuing to increase. She and Cllr Walker and the others on the team were now working on the next edition on the new Magazine. She was grateful to everyone who had made positive comments about the new Magazine and for the written contributions for inclusion within it. Cllr Bees raised problems which had occurred regarding the distribution of the Magazine and Cllr Walker said that these were inherited problems which have now been addressed. A new distribution system has been put in place. Cllr Bees also asked if copies of the Magazine were available to be sold to visitors to the area. Cllrs Webb and Walker said that copies of the Magazine were available from three locations in the village and donations of 50p were being asked for each copy. The question of having to charge advertisers VAT for adverts placed in the Magazine was also raised. Cllr Walker said that he had been advised by a representative from SALC that the Parish Council did not need to concern itself with this. This has also been endorsed by District Cllr Bob Filmer who runs the Brent Knoll Magazine. As both were ancillary to the two Parish Councils, they were exempt from VAT provisions. Cllr Walker agreed to check the situation again to avoid any problems occurring during the next financial year.

Minute 24/12 : Defibrillator Equipment - Cllr Webb told the meeting that she had finally received the long awaited cheque from S.C.C. (via District Cllr John Denbee) of £1,500.00 towards the Defibrillator fund. She was still working towards completing the arrangements for the official opening of the Defibrillator unit at the Doctor's surgery and hopefully this will happen shortly. She is arranging for Mr Steve Newton to complete work on the unit, then it will be officially

opened by the Doctors. Cllr Bowden confirmed that he had completed the darkening of the posts supporting the Defibrillator unit, as requested by the Doctors. Cllr McGreavy will attend to the final sealing of the box containing the unit on Sunday 11th January and he will also create drainage holes in the bottom of the box to allow any rainwater to drain out naturally and he will connect the power supply. Cllr Webb said that the access code for both units at Rooksbridge and at the Surgery are the same and she disclosed it to the Councillors. She will chase the V.E.T.S. scheme to ensure training in the usage of the units.

Minute 08/13 : Playing Field off Pill Road, Rooksbridge - Cllr Lloyd-Jones arrived at the meeting at 8.03pm and said that the only news he had regarding this matter was that Phil Yorke of the Housing Association was apparently leaving the organisation and he was trying to find out the name of his successor in order to retain the continuity of development progress. He had been told that the Highways Department were in the process of assessing the adoption of the roadway leading to the site and once the adoption was complete then they would look to lower the curb at the entrance to the playing field. He reminded the Committee of his list of outstanding jobs/arrangements needed to complete the playing field (contained in his memo dated 31/7/14). All these items, with the exception of the creation of the legal agreement, were still outstanding. He asked the Councillors to look at that memo and decide which items they were prepared to undertake. He also asked that a notice about the running of the playing field is placed in the Magazine asking for local residents to volunteer to assist in its management. He recommended that the matter should be placed upon the Agenda for the next Committee meeting as the purchase of the goal post, its delivery and storage until its installation, needed to be commenced. Also, the purchase of the two benches needs to be undertaken. Cllr Gilling asked about the location of the notice board which is to be placed at the site. A debate about this followed, with aspects such as the suitable design, (possibly without the use of glass for safety reasons); the actual type of notices to be displayed upon it, all being raised. Cllr Lloyd-Jones said that a contract for the cutting of the grass needs to be established and the goal post erected at a suitable time. Cllr Bowden offered to provide the transport facilities needed to convey the goal post from its storage position, to the playing field and to provide the use of his electric cement mixer and generator at that time. Cllr Gilling raised the fact that some fly-tipping had occurred recently when some Harris fencing had been left on the land and also a chair. The Chairperson said that she was aware of this and she was fairly sure that she knew who had done it. She had seen the playing field being used for football on one occasion when she was passing the site. She stopped and spoke to the people there, telling them that the playing field was not yet available for use. It appeared that the chair had been used to gain access into the field over the existing fencing. These items will be removed from the site and regular viewings will be undertaken to ensure this does not happen again.

Minute 12/14 : Updating of the Playing Field adjoining Brent Road - Cllr Lloyd-Jones said that work on this area was still progressing, as SDC staff would be returning soon to remove the tree stump and concrete next to it from a previous bench installation. Dave Aggett of SDC has said that he has the 2 new benches (one being funded by the PC) and these will be in place soon. The cutting back of the brambles on the inside of the playing field boundary has been completed. The outside will be attended to soon. The goal post area is becoming well worn by football boots, which proves it is a most successful project.

Minute 16/14 : The Appointment of a new Clerk to the Parish Council -The Chairperson advised the Committee that an advert placed during December had resulted in several applications being received for the post. It was not the best of time to be recruiting, but calibre of the applicants who have come forward seemed to be very encouraging. The sub-committee consisting of Cllrs Webb, Lloyd-Jones, Bowden, Walker and the Chairperson will conduct the first interviews on Monday 12th January at 6.30pm in the Village Hall. If this does not result in the appointment of a successor to the present Clerk, then a further advert might be placed. Cllr Woodward agreed to provide refreshments for the Committee and the applicants and to act as receptionist for the meeting. A further report will be made to the full Committee during the February meeting. Cllr Webb said that her investigations to find out if Bridgwater College was providing a suitable training course for Parish Clerks, had revealed that no such facilities existed. Cllr Bowden had also asked Mr Bruce Poole if he knew of such local training courses and he had said that he did not know of any.

4. Financial Matters :

The Chairperson read out the list of proposed payments recorded on the Agenda and payment of all these items was proposed by Cllr Webb and seconded by Cllr Walker. These were then passed unanimously by the Committee. Cheques for these payments were then signed by the Chairperson and Cllr Gilling.

5. Correspondence : None, other than has already been circulated to Councillors.

6. Matters of Report :

Cllr Bowden told the Committee that Mr Geoff Adams would be unable to open the Cemetery gates between the 10th to the 14th January 2015 and that Cllr Bees has agreed to carry out this task in his absence. He told the Committee that he had arranged for the removal of the Christmas Tree on Sunday 4th January 2015, as he had his employees available at the time to do it. The Chairperson thanked Cllr Bowden for all his work, as well as Cllrs Bees and Walker, in erecting it previously. Cllr Bowden raised the damage to the entrance of the field adjoining the Cemetery. It is thought that the tenants of the grass keep had attempted to remove the remaining bails and in so doing they had caused damage to the ground and the fence. It appears that they had used an inadequately powered tractor to do this and it might have got stuck needing to be pulled out. He has been in contact with GTH in Highbridge (the Auctioneers used by the PC) and Mr Robert Stone is making contact with the tenants to resolve the issue. It was agreed that the legal ownership of the remaining bails in the field now rests with the PC and if necessary these will be sold to re-coupe the cost of repairs to the fence and entranceway. It was also agreed that the PC will not incur any legal costs in taking action against the tenants and if necessary, the proceeds of the initial auction of the grass (£750.00) will be used to carry out the repairs. The Clerk will liaise with Mr Stone to ensure progress in the matter. Finally, Cllr Bowden raised the awarding of contracts for the grass cutting around the Village for the next three years. He had put this out to tender and received three detailed replies from prospective contractors. He distributed copies of the costings to each member of the Committee and then went through the figures in detail. He told the Committee that the Clerk had been supplied with copies of the insurance policies of each contractor, for public liability etc. An in depth debate followed and Cllr Lloyd-Jones proposed that the awarding of the contracts to cut the Cemetery: the grass cutting around the War Memorial, Methodist Chapel T/Box: the cutting of the playing field bank, Knoll Inn to Stowlands and opposite the Methodist Church, should be made to PCG Contracting Services. In addition, the awarding of the contract to cut the verge of the A370 should be awarded to Messrs Champion and Jones. This proposal was seconded by Cllr McGreavy and a unanimous vote in favour then followed. The Clerk was directed to draw up the contracts and to contact the successful applicants. In addition, the unsuccessful applicants will be thanked for tendering and invited to do so again in the future. Cllr Gilling said that the contractors should confirm that they have the appropriate certificates to be able to undertake spraying (VA1 and VA2 certificates). Cllr Bowden gave his apologies for being absent at the next Committee meeting; he will be away on holiday.

Cllr Roscorla told the Committee that she will not be able to attend the next meeting and that she will also be on holiday. She offered her apologies in advance. She kindly agreed to post the Agenda for the next Committee meeting on the Rooksbridge notice board as Mr Keith Bellingham would be unable to do this during February 2015.

Cllr Walker said that the page holders which Cllr Lloyd-Jones had kindly supplied to the PC had proved to be very successful. He proposed that two more (possibly four more) should be bought to display papers on the PC's notice board. This was agreed by all.

He also said that he would undertake the updating of the Councillor's details on the notice board. Finally, he raised the vandalism caused by spreading the plastic bags of dog mess placed in the dog bin at Stowlands, around the ground. It was thought that this had been done by children or youths. A notice will be placed in the Magazine asking for vigilance about this, in the hope it will deter a repetition of this occurrence.

Cllr McGreavy said that he has seen car drivers driving the wrong way along Brent Road (it being a one way road) and this could lead to a serious accident occurring. The Chairperson endorsed this and said that she would like to see an expansion of the one way system next to the Knoll Inn. It was equally dangerous. She agreed to contact the Highways Dept. about these matters. In addition, a note reminding residents of the correct route to take along these roads will be included in the Village Magazine.

Finally, she asked that the making up of the Planters adjoining the Village signs should be added to the next Agenda. Cllr Gilling said that he had a redundant concrete water trough which he will give to the PC for its usage in the Village, for planting flowers. Cllr Bowden offered to provide facilities for this to be collected and installed in a suitable location.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

The next meeting of East Brent Parish Council will be held on Monday 2nd February 2015 at 7.30pm, in East Brent Village Hall