



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BUNTINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL HELD VIRTUALLY VIA
ZOOM AT 7.00PM ON THURSDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2020**

Present: Councillors, G. Waite (Chairman), G. Bonner, Mrs P. Furness, J. Ling, S. Bull, B. Lemay, S. Bowman (Deputy Chairman), Mrs T. Bonner, J. Noades and D. Wallace.

Officer Present: J. Jones (Town Clerk) & A. Georgiou (Admin Officer)

Also Present: County Councillor Jones

The Chairman led prayers.

The Chairman reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded.

62. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies from Councillor Mrs Coote and Councillor Basra.

63. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

S. Bull - Norfolk Road Playing Fields

64. TO APPROVE AS A TRUE RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 27TH AUGUST 2020.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That the Minutes are approved as a true record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

65. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman reported that it has been a busy month, although there has been no civic duties. The contractor had marked the plot numbers at the cemetery and planting and ancillary works should be completed within three weeks.

The Chairman reported that he had attended a priority setting meeting with the Police, Councillor Wallace had attended at the end of the meeting as he had been attending a NFU Police meeting. Councillor Bull noted that there are only four grave spaces left in the churchyard.

66. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE POLICE.

The Chairman referred to a report from the Police which had been circulated to Councillors. The report showed that the pattern of anti-social behaviour was unchanged and some criminal damage. There had been a Police event at the top of Church Street which Councillor Wallace had attended.

The recent priority meeting had agreed speeding vehicles and drug dealing as priorities.

Councillor Jones stated that it had been asked not to concentrate on one area as this only moved the problem to another area. Councillor Wallace responded that Headquarters would not accept this as they needed specific areas to be identified.

In response to a question from Councillor Furness, Councillor Waite stated that the drug problem in Buntingford is not as bad as towns with a railway station.

67. TO RECEIVE REPORT OF PAYMENTS MADE SEPTEMBER 2020.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That the reports of payments made August 2020 be accepted. (Copies attached).

In response to a question from Councillor Wallace, the Clerk confirmed that the cost of the damage as a result of the recent burglary was covered by insurance less the policy excess.

68. TO DISCUSS CONCEPT OF AND CONSIDER QUOTATION FOR ELECTRIC ENTRANCE GATES AT THE MANOR HOUSE.

Councillor Waite stated that as a result of the recent break in at the Manor House, we have been looking at security issues. CCTV footage was accessed of the incident and passed to Police. A padlock

has been fitted to the rear gate. The front gates at the Manor House have never been locked. A company in Steeple Morden were contacted to advise and quote for electric entrance gates. Councillor Ling said this has many implications, should a group be formed to look at this. In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Furness, Councillor Waite responded that we have yet to obtain any comparative quotes.

Councillor Wallace expressed concerns regarding ongoing maintenance and restricting the turning circle in the car park. Councillor Lemay stated that electric gates are temperamental and often go wrong, especially as they age.

Councillor Bull stated that the Crown PH are good neighbours, are we going to restrict users of the pub. Councillor Waite stated that tenants often get problems with people parking in their spaces. Councillor Noades asked if Listed Building Consent would be needed.

Councillor Bonner asked if this was a good use of money.

Councillor Ling stated that there are several issues and he was happy to undertake a survey, electric gates are not the only way of solving this problem. One break in may not warrant this work to be done. Councillor Waite stated that we have a duty of care to our tenants and the Coach House residents, he had only looked into this in a technical aspect.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That a small working party consisting of Councillors Waite, Ling, Noades, Wallace and Mrs Furness be formed to look in depth at security measures at the Manor House.

69. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER REPORT FROM THE TOWN CLERK RE. DECISIONS MADE DURING LOCKDOWN PERIOD.

Councillors acknowledged receipt of a report from the Town Clerk (copy attached).

The issue of staff working in the office was discussed in light of recent announcements from the Government encouraging people to work from home again. The Clerk responded that the risk has been assessed and it was thought that by alternating staff attendance in the office, the risk would be low.

The situation would be reviewed should the current circumstances worsen with regard to the spread of COVID-19.

70. TO CONSIDER COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR THE 20's PLENTY CAMPAIGN.

The Chairman explained that the Council had been approached to indicate its support for the 20's plenty campaign. He had also received an additional letter from the group asking for support and a grant and also asking about weight limits on Baldock Road and the High Street.

Councillor Wallace stated that speed is an emotive issue and has been amplified at this time following the quieter roads during the lockdown period.

HCC's Speed Management Strategy indicates that 20mph is not suitable in all locations although there are some areas that would benefit, for example, the High Street. How does this fit in with the Phoenix Project.

Councillor Ling responded that when we originally looked at shared space it was not so much speed as how people use the space, a 20mph limit is not such a good idea it needs to be appropriate to the road.

Councillor Jones stated that he had worked on a similar campaign but it had not been supported by the Police because of enforcement issues. Now with the Speed Management Strategy if you have a good case, HCC will look at it. It's up to the Town Council if they decide to support this current campaign, the group had come to Councillor Jones for funding but he is unable to fund lobby groups and it's a national campaign.

Councillor Lemay supported the idea and felt it would help with air pollution. Councillor Bull stated the he wouldn't like to see it for roads leading into the town.

Following a proposal, second and a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That the decision on whether the Town Council supports the 20's Plenty Campaign is deferred to the next Full Council following a full discussion at the meeting of the Resources Committee.

71. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

Councillor Bull reported that the Buttermilk Farm application had been refused.

Councillor Jones reported that there are challenges with the budget after COVID spending, £1m has to be found this year and there could be implications for residents. The District Council is investing £32m in leisure facilities, Hartham Common, Grange Paddocks and Ward Freman Pool. The latter has been held up because of ownership issues and Councillors Jones stated that he is concerned the project could be shelved but he would fight to ensure the project goes ahead.

With regard to the County Council, there are similar budget issues with £14m savings having to be found in this financial year, it is unclear how much Government funding will be. There is a lot of talk on unitary authorities, the White Paper was due in September but it may have been delayed.

It will be interesting to see the consultation responses to the Southern Roundabout consultation, Highways have applied for a grant for the London Road cycleway scheme.

The A507 weight limit proposal has been out for consultation, the response from the first tranche which included the Police and the Road Haulage Association was negative, Highways are now looking at whether or not to continue with the consultation, this will go back to the Cabinet Panel.

72. TO INVITE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE MEETING.

No public present.

Councillor Bull referred to litter on the footpath behind Skipps Meadow leading to the A10. Councillor Wallace agreed to inspect the area.

Meeting closed 8.40pm.

Next scheduled meeting of the Full Council - Thursday 29th October 2020 at 7pm - venue or link to be confirmed.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Accounts paid:	Sep-20	Full Council Meeting:	24th September 2020			
2	Committee	Budget	Payee	Details	Amount	Budget total	Budget Bal. Notes
3	Expenditure						
4	Expenditure						
5	Resources	Communications	BT	Comms	64.39	750.00	368.84
6	Amenities	Trees	Complete Garden Services	Trees SWCC	320.00		
7	Amenities	Trees	Complete Garden Services	Trees SWCC	340.00	5000.00	2983.00
8	Amenities	Garden Maintenance	Complete Garden Services	Gazebo clean & repairs	170.00	15000.00	7946.63
9	Amenities	Churchyard	Complete Garden Services	c/y maint	306.00		
10	Amenities	Churchyard	Maydencroft	c/y maint	450.00	9000.00	4914.00
11	Amenities	Playground maintenance	Complete Garden Services	Playgrounds repairs	60.00		
12	Amenities	Playground maintenance	EHDC	RoSPA inspections	184.32	2000.00	1355.68
13	Resources	MH Maintenance	Complete Garden Services	Board window	128.00		
14	Resources	MH Maintenance	Complete Garden Services	Back gate secure	120.00	10500.00	9435.49
15	Resources	Salaries	A Jones	LP Holiday cover	171.00	115500.00	67125.80
16	Council	NHB	AT Bone	Stage 8 cemetery	10037.79		NHB
17	Resources	Cleaning	Barclaycard	Cleaning	19.97		
18	Resources	Cleaning	Barclaycard	Cleaning	17.49	900.00	683.58
19	Resources	Stationery	Barclaycard	Team Viewer subs	363.66		
20	Resources	Stationery	Barclaycard	Stationery	30.57	1000.00	545.55
21	Amenities	Dog/Litter	Barclaycard	Dispenser bags	244.90		
22	Amenities	Dog/Litter	Barclaycard	Bin bags	39.31	3000.00	1853.73
23	Resources	Electricity	British Gas	Electricity MH	228.89	4500.00	2907.66
24							
25							
26							
27							
28	INCOME						
29	JWS	Rent	240.00			HMRC	VAT refund 9433.14
30	Nutrition Cons	Rent	265.00			Kashec	Rent 351.00
31	AK Comms	Rent	339.00			Wedding	Deposit 100.00
32	Regency House	Rent	275.00			JMAS	rent 240.00
33	Kashec	Bal rent	59.00			Brainstorm	Rent 221.00
34	Judkins	Rent	346.00				
35							

Update to Council for the period August to September

This is a report to Council aimed at updating Councillors on events and decisions made since the report made to Council on 30th July 2020.

Manor House.

Decisions

Three of the Tenants on reduced rentals will resume 100% payments from 1st October. It is unclear if the remaining Tenant will resume rental payments or give notice on their offices.

Following the break in on 25th August. Our insurers have appointed a contractor to repair/replace the damaged window, it is currently boarded up. The tenant is responsible for the contents of the office.

A secure padlock has been fitted to the back gate and Council are considering the logistics & cost of electric entrance gates.

We have now had three weddings at The Manor House since lockdown.

CCTV

CCTV now up and running and appropriate signage displayed around the town. Councillor Waite in the process of instructing the Police on how to operate the system.

Community Centre

Alex is currently managing the Centre in Jackie's absence. Hirings have resumed albeit limited with strict COVID measures in place.

Office

Alex and I are working 2 days a week each from the office and the remaining time from home. In line with the Manor House Risk Assessment, this reduces the risk to staff. Visitor numbers to the Manor House have been minimal.

Planning

There has been several minor planning applications during the period all of which have been looked at by the Clerk and the Chairman of the Planning Committee. Details below.

Date	Application number	Details	BTC Comments
14/7/20	3/20/1308/HH	70, Vicarage Road - part single/part two storey rear extension. First floor front extension to include garage conversion and alterations to fenestration. Amendments to original for render finish.	No new objections.
5/8/20	3/20/1354/LBC	50, High Street - alterations to fenestration	No obs
11/8/20	3/20/1311/HH	Owles Farm - two storey side extension	No obs
21/8/20	3/20/1594/HH	23, Skipps Meadow - Garage conversion	No obs
25/8/20	3/20/1490/FUL	Howe Green Service Station - demolition of existing sales building and construction of new single storey sales building. 3 new jet wash bays	No obs
25/8/20	PL/0167/20	Millfield School - Installation of new classroom building	No obs
1/9/20	3/20/1545/HH	Westdene, Baldock Rd - Proposed first floor extension	No obs

Planning Decisions

Application number	Details	Decision
3/20/0940/FUL	Fairview, Wyddial Road	Granted
3/20/1072/HH	Aspen House St Francis Close	Granted
3/20/1085/FUL	57, High Street	Refused
3/20/1071/HH	Aspen House	Granted
3/20/0766/ADV	Layston Grove	Granted
3/20/1138/HH	22, Skipps Meadow	Granted
3/20/1225/ADV	27, High Street	Part refused/part granted
3/20/1258/FUL	34, High Street	Granted
3/20/1259/LBC	34, High Street	Granted
3/20/1288/HH	13, Paddock Road	Granted
3/20/1308/HH	70, Vicarage Road	Granted