

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL Minutes

of the Meeting of Sawbridgeworth Town Council held at the Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 7.30 pm on **Monday 31 March 2014**.

Those present

Cllr Angela Alder	
Cllr Eric Buckmaster	Cllr Barry Hodges
Cllr Ruth Buckmaster	Cllr Peter Mitchell
Cllr Tom Reeks	Cllr Will Mortimer (<i>from 20:30</i>)
Cllr Derek Filler	Cllr Andrew Wincott

In attendance:

2 members of the public	Cty Cllr Roger Beeching
Michael Jarvis – H&E Observer	
R Bowran - Town Clerk	Mrs J Kenny – Town Projects Manager

Welcome by the Mayor; HM The Queen's message to the Commonwealth, as delivered on 10 March 2014 at County Hall, was read by Cllr Peter Mitchell.

13/133 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Jane Adams – school work; Cllr Joyce Vincent - unwell and Cllr Pat Coysten – prior engagement.

13/134 PUBLIC FORUM

To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Town Council.

Mr Norman Manion stated that he had asked 37 questions of the council over the last 7 years and none of them had been minuted or answered. He also stated that no minutes had been deposited in the library since June 2010.

Clerk responded that all his questions had been minuted and quoted the occurrences by refereeing to the minute book. Clerk also responded that since Mr Manion's last complaint an officer of the council had been delivering the minutes by hand to the library and placing them in the appropriate folder. [an officer of the council visited the library on 02 April and confirmed that the minutes were present. Library staff appeared unaware of their location and promise to point out the correct location to Mr Manion on his next visit.]

Mr Norman Manion asked what progress had been made to sue Barratt Homes in relation to the removal of ash trees on the Millfields site.

Clerk responded that, as previously reported, the matter had been referred to the EHDC Enforcement Officer for action.

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Mr Norman Manion asked what progress had been made to resolve the In & Out conflict at the junction of Millfields with Saffron Gardens
Clerk responded that, as previously reported, the matter had been referred to Hertfordshire Highways who were addressing the traffic control issues involved.

Mr Norman Manion asked what could be done to prevent cars parking on the footway outside his kitchen window. He suggested erecting No Parking signs similar to the ones at the other end of the estate

Clerk responded that this would appear to be an obstruction and that he would bring it to the attention of the Police.

Mr Norman Manion asked if a speed limit could be imposed on the area.

Cllr Beeching responded that there already was a speed limit of 30 mph in the area.

13/135 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members

13/136 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 24 February 2014. (M10) [*prop Cllr Filler; secd Cllr Hodges*]

13/137 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and Noted: The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on:

- 24 February 2014 (P16)
- 10 March 2014 (P17)

13/138 DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN

The Town Council will be holding a further Open Day in the Council Chamber from 09:30 to 13:00 on 05 April, the next Farmers Market. Planning Officers from EHDC will be in attendance.

There will also be a presentation at the Annual Town Meeting on 14 April and EHDC officers will be present to answer questions.

Cllr E Buckmaster reported that the first open meeting on 01 March was well attended but a bit chaotic. The EHDC brochure did not appear to have been delivered to every home in the town as was intended. It was noted that there had been a spate of anonymous fly-posting in the town urging people to object to the Preferred Options in the District Plan. A demonstration of the on-line comments was given. On Saturday 05 April it should be emphasised that no planning applications have been made as this is an options plan. There will be a further presentation at the Annual Town Meeting on 14 April.

13/139 FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Received and Noted: The minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting held on:

- 10 March 2014 (F05)

Resolved: To confirm the appointment of Mr Len Broadhurst as Internal Auditor to the Council for the financial year 2013-14.
[prop Cllr Hodges; secd Cllr Wincott]

13/140 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

To receive Mayor's appointments and communications

Events attended:

- 08 Mar; Mayor of Hertford's Civic Dinner
- 10 Mar; Raising of the commonwealth flag at Wallfields
- 10 Mar: Spellbrook School Assembly
- 14 Mar; Fawbert & Barnard School Assembly
- 14 Mar; Chairman of Harlow's Civic Dinner
- 16 Mar; Schools Gala at Royal Albert Hall
- 17 Mar; Visit to St Clare's Hospice
- 20 Mar; F&B School Council
- 21 Mar; F&B Sports Relief fund raiser
- 21 Mar; Chairman of East Herts' Civic Dinner
- 25 Mar; Spellbrook School Council in Council Chamber
- 25 Mar; Judged Scouts Cookery competition
- 26 Mar; Leventhorpe senior students meeting
- 26 Mar; Spellbrook School Easter service
- 29 Mar; Mayor of Bishops Stortford Civic Dinner
- 31 Mar; Dragons Den event at Hertford Theatre

It was announced:

- 26 Apr; Civic Dinner at the Memorial Hall

F&B students had commented on litter and dog mess in their wild area. The council will check on the location of the nearest dog bin.

13/141 REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

To receive representatives reports from:

- **County Councillor Roger Beeching** reported:
 - £3.7m extra funding from the government to mend roads after the recent floods. This is about 50% of what is actually needed.
 - Station Road will be closed for a week sometime between 21 April and 21 October for road works
 - Police have been using speed cameras in High Wych Road and Station Road.
 - An electrical appliance recycling scheme has been initiated
 - Information day at Ware Priory on 03 April on the subject of keeping older people secure.
 - 94.8% of first choice admissions in secondary schools has been achieved
 - At Leventhorpe 80 first place choices could not be accommodated.
- **District Councillor Eric Buckmaster** reported:
 - CMS have commenced construction of a new boardwalk in Pishiobury park. Zoe Channon is walking the area. The footpath from Brook Road to Pishiobury park is in a bad

- state, and funding might be possible to rectify this.
- A consultation on the proposed new car park charges in the three main towns will be conducted in May. This proposed the first half hour free but a charge for evening parking.
- The draft District Plan serves to delay any incursion at Gilston Park but has to be included in the plan for the sake of completeness. Stop Harlow North will be doing a leaflet drop on 12 April and help with this is requested. The SHN group have hired a planning consultant to advise on a response to the District Plan consultation.
- **Hertfordshire Police, PS Ricky Bartlett** reported in absentia:
 - Concentration on shoplifting offences in Bishops Stortford. Eight arrests, two imprisoned and 12 others disposed of.
 - Night time road operations with 25 stop/searches. These will continue
 - Traffic Specials have been carrying out speed enforcement in High Wych Road and Station Road. This resulted in 7 warnings one speeding ticket and one vehicle seized
 - Special attention paid to inconsiderate parking, over 30 tickets have been issues in Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth.
 - The mayor read a letter from Ch. Inspector Gerry McDonald, Borough Commander, thanking the Clerk and other staff for their assistance in helping police locate and return a missing elderly person
- **Other Representatives**
 - **Duckling Centre:** Cllr Mitchell reported:
 - Attending a board meeting on 25 February. Future of children's' centres discussed, possibility of clustering and having to cope with 20% funding cut.

20:30 Cllr Mortimer arrived.

- Assured attendees that the future of Sawbobus is safe, many attendees said how vital it was.
- Increasing teenage pregnancies and only one specialist midwife in post
- Cllr Beeching asked to be kept informed as he had potential funning to contribute.
- **Memorial Hall:** Cllr Wincott reported:
 - This was his final report on the refurbishment project
 - Since the project started in 2011 improvements have been made to:
 - Roof, Toilets Heating Internal facilities Electrics Fencing and the Car park Surface.
 - All within budget.
 - In addition the interior has been repainted, the floor refurbished and the trustees have paid for professional surveying supervision.
 - Next projects include revitalising the stage lighting.

- The hall has now got regular bookings and increasingly is host to annual events.
 - The trustees wish to record their appreciation to the town council and on behalf of the town the people of Sawbridgeworth also.
- **Scouts:** Cllr Alder said that the Scouts have now repaid the majority of the enablement loan they had taken out,.

13/142 CLERK'S REPORT

- **Farmers Market** The next market will be on Saturday 05 April 2014. The market held on 01 March attracted only 770 visitors however traders said that business was very good. The market was visited by representatives of EHDC as part of the current review process following a petition from some retailers to move the market from a Saturday. Supplementary complaints from the petitioners about the conduct of the market, the nature of traders and car parking arrangements were found by EHDC to be without substance. The Town Council has been granted a Farmers Market licence for the period May 2014 through to April 2015.
- **Sawbobus** The six monthly review with EHDC has taken place and there are plans to support the expansion of our services. We have a meeting arranged with representatives of EHDC and CVS in April. As a condition of a supplementary grant of £5,000 from EHDC, the bus routes have now been extended to serve High Wych Village Hall and the mobile post office. Funding has been sought from Sheering Parish Council and Essex County Council in respect of the out of parish passengers carried and a grant of £5,000 has been promised for the year 2014-15.

Sawbobus doors have failed yet again and estimates for the repair amount to a further £1,600. The service has been maintained by using the reserve vehicle which as a consequence has not been available for hire.

We have been lending one of our minibuses to BSMT while two of their vehicles used on the Stortbus service are out of action. This is part of a reciprocal arrangement between the two towns designed to save resources.

- **New Web-site** The new Town Council web-site was launched on Monday 24 February. This has been a very successful exercise and we have written a positive testimonial to Rubber Cheese, the local company who created the site for us.
- **Town Sign** There are a number of approaches we can take and we would like Members' views on the approach that officers are currently proposing.

A number of examples were displayed of works that had been executed by Black Forge Art of Kent. Members agreed that officers could proceed to a design stage following the payment of a deposit of £500 against the final cost of the sign, estimated at £5,000.

[prop Cllr Mortimer; secd Cllr R Buckmaster]

- **Rivers Nursery Site Orchard Group** We have been advised, late on 24 March, that the RNSOG will cease to operate with effect from 31 March 2014. We are working with EHDC to ensure that this site of significance and the knowledge and records that have been accumulated do not get dissipated.

Statement by Sawbridgeworth Town Council: Cllr E Buckmaster:

The announcement of the dissolution of the Rivers Nursery and Orchard Group arrived at our in-boxes at 11:15 last Monday evening. The statement was from Kate Yarnold however from the tone and motivation of the letter it is likely that Joseph Fitzgerald was the main author. The first thing we should do is to thank Kate Yarnold for her years of hard work and dedication to the group. The group was actually very successful and involved a wide section of the community. However, as we have seen in other circumstances, it can sometimes prove very difficult to sustain a committee without the certainty of being able to hand over to a successor. It also became clear to me that finance could be an issue which is why we included a sum for direct funding in our budget for the coming year.

The second thing I should like to say is that I'm absolutely sure that resolution proposed by Councillor Beeching and agreed by East Herts Council to open negotiations with the reverting land owner was made with the utmost sincerity and based on conditions of the time. However Thomas Rivers Ltd and Deville estates subsequently produced a brochure indicating the intention to develop the land. Nevertheless the possibility remains that should development be agreed at some point the Orchard itself could be ceded to the town to remain as an asset of the community.

From last Tuesday morning officers and members of this council acted with the common purpose of ensuring that an active interest group remain in place and that as many of the assets as possible be secured. Rather than wait for residents to come to us we sought out key members of the former group. We now believe that we have a critical mass of supporters to form a new association. The group will decide on their own name but an early idea is that of Rivers Heritage Group. The Town Council will provide space on the website to include the substantial digital records that exists and we can also store any physical archives and tools that will be made available to the new group. A meeting has been arranged with the landowner for Wednesday to discuss the continued use of the site and we hope to arrange a launch of the new group here in the very near future. Executive members of East Herts council have been kept informed as has MP Mark Prisk who has offered his support.

As already mentioned some funding is in place and I feel that it is now time for the Town Council to take the lead to adopt the role of facilitator and critical friend to the Orchard Group. In order to cement the relationship I propose that each year the incumbent mayor takes on the additional role of champion to the orchard so that there can be no doubt as to how seriously we value this nationally important asset. Sawbridgeworth Town Council has a great record for showing its commitment to maintaining and improving the town's assets, as can be evidence previously by support for Leventhorpe Pool, the community bus service, the farmers market, the Memorial Hall,

Sawbridgeworth Scouts, and the retailers by way of subsidised parking charges. The public can be assured that that the number one priority for officers and members of this council, in fulfilling their duties, is the support of the community.

Mrs Stephanie Newman commented that the Town Council's involvement was really appreciated – it is the home of the Conference Pear – the Orchard houses some really rare specimen trees.

Cllr Roger Beeching emphasised that this is a nationally important asset and is unique in many ways. Ownership of the land has changed several times over the years and there are legal difficulties with the land being bought back by EHDC.

The three District Councillors will put their weight behind achieving a resolution.

Mrs Joanne Kenny inserted a "Timeline" on events:

- 31 March; constitution of RNSOB suspended
 - 01 April; collect assets (note that cupboards have now been locked by other parties).
 - All committee members have been contacted and spoken to
 - STC is acknowledged as a safe and secure [place for holding the heritage assets
 - STC will act as a facilitator
 - The website and data has been copied and secured
 - A meeting to re-launch will be arranged imminently.
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- **Remembrance Day Champion** At the recent meeting of the WW1 commemoration committee a discussion took place around how this could be integrated with the town's annual Remembrance Day. Although the town council has been getting gradually more involved each year, it is appropriate for the Town Council to formally manage the logistics of this civic event. Members are asked to consider whether any of them would take on the role of "Champion" for this aspect of the town's life. Cllr Hodges expressed interest.

13/143 DEPOSIT & CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

- Bell Street road closure Sunday 06 April 2014

13/144 FINANCIAL REPORT

Noted: The current Financial Report

13/145 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment

Meeting was closed at 21:15

The next meeting of the Town Council will be held at 7.30 pm on Monday 28 April 2014 in the Council Offices at Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth.