

GESTINGTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 14th. July 2022 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs D. Smith (Chairman), C. Craig (Vice-Chairman), P. Bagby, S. Bolter, P. Collett, A. Cooper, Mr. Leslie Crumpton-Taylor (Internal Auditor), ECC Cllr P. Schwier, BDC Cllr W. Scattergood and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were also 1 member of the public present.

060/2022 Chairman welcome The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

061/2022 Apologies for Absence were received from ECC Cllr P. Schwier and Cllr G. Carey

062/2022 Declaration of Interest

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Pecuniary or non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda Cllr A. Cooper declared an interest in item 070/2022 (Cricket Club)

063/2022 To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Gestingthorpe Parish Council

To receive and agree the minutes of the GPC Annual meeting held on 12th. May 2022. **All Agreed**

To receive and agree the minutes of the GPC meeting held on 12th. May 2022. **All Agreed**

064/2022 Chairman's report and any update since last meeting

What a splendid backdrop St Mary's Church, the Village Hall and Playing Field were for the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The beacon on Church Green compliments the Village sign and with the backdrop of St Marys Church gives the focal point for future celebrations and events. What is so pleasing is that it was funded by public subscription, it was made by our village blacksmith, Richard Nice, and was lit by his brother, Peter. I think we were all somewhat taken aback at the number of residents, I am told over two hundred, who attended the lighting and stayed afterwards to socialise.

The Coffee Morning in the Village Hall was extremely well attended and it again gave us all the opportunity to chat and socialise with our neighbours.

Thanks to Nic Smith for organising "Keep fit through the decades". Everyone taking part, and those like me who watched, enjoyed themselves.

Unfortunately, the weather was not on our side for the Village BBQ, although those who were there all had a good time and it was reminiscent of Village Fetes with children's games and races.

Very many thanks to all involved and whilst not wishing to single anyone out, I must on behalf of all of us thank Claire Craig for all her hard work in making all our Platinum Jubilee Celebrations so memorable.

At the Coffee Morning, Jean Norbury, a long-standing village resident and who together with her late husband were actively involved in the village for many years, said that she was finding it difficult to maintain her garden. This prompted Andy Craig to suggest that the Capt. Oates Volunteer Group organise a working party to tidy up her garden. This is now underway and thanks to Andy for organising and to Jean's neighbours who have rallied round.

The Platinum Jubilee Celebrations and the recent gardening works have invigorated our community spirit and I do hope that we can build on this for the greater good of all.

065/2022 Public Participation Session

No questions from the public

066/2022 Essex County Councillor report – ECC Cllr Peter Schwier

Cllr P. Schwier had supplied reports during the month on

- Household Support Fund - Grant Allocation
- Rollout of library literacy areas gains momentum
- Essex Climate Action - launches series of Climate action Packs
- ECC residents encouraged to have Covid19 vaccine +booster jabs-summer holidays-Travel
- New initiatives to better connect communities in rural Braintree
- PARC - Gt Notley Country Park Essex Public Health
- Community 360 - ECC Local Linked Support
- Public warned about potential dangers of missing drain covers
- Essex Activate helps across Essex
- ECC Support for residents during cost-of-living crisis
- E Scooter trials took place in Braintree but it was not successful. Further trials are still taking place at

Minutes of the Parish Council Full Council meeting held on Thursday 14th. July 2022

Braintree Town Centre

- LED street light replacements are still progressing well
- ECC Council tax collection is on track in last quarter
- ECC spending £750,000 on tourism post Covid
- Essex Coastal path has been completed but could take up to 5 days to walk it

Cllr S. Bolter asked Cllr P. Schwier about when the bus timetable for the area will be revised to make it more user friendly. Passenger numbers are not back to pre-Covid levels, we need to encourage people onto the buses and an earliest departure timetable would help.

Clerk to contact P. Schwier for a zoom meeting on bus services in the area

Cllr A. Cooper asked Cllr P. Schwier to have this SID in Sudbury Road replaced as it is an asset of ECC.

ECC trying to bring in 20mph around school.

Signposts on footpaths and PROW need to be repaired and/or replaced.

ECC Cllr P. Schwier left the meeting

067/2022 District Councillor report – BDC Cllr Wendy Scattergood

Cllr W. Scattergood informed the meeting that

Congratulated the village on the Jubilee event and was particularly impressive

Has any Councillor received a complaint about the single verge cutting in Gestingthorpe? The answer was no.

BDC Local Plan has been approved by Inspectors. Going to Full Council on 25.07.22

Is BDC Planning department full staffed? Answer Yes - 2 vacancies of Enforcement Officers still remain

068/2022 Planning Applications

22/01290/HH & 22/01291/LBC - Odewells Farm Great Maplestead Road Gestingthorpe CO9 3AB

Installation of 350mm high ground-mounted solar panel array in existing walled garden.

RESOLVED: Support this application

22/01709/HH - Tucklands North End Road Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3BW

Single storey side extension

RESOLVED: No objection, subject to landscaping and tree planting to soften the impact of the scheme.

The PC note the previous application granted for the property (21/03077/FUL), which has not been

sited on the drawings for the wider context of the scheme, which should be taken into consideration regarding the general impact of the proposals.

069/2022 Decision/s made by BDC on planning applications

Councillors noted the planning decisions made by BDC affecting Gestingthorpe

22/00356/FUL - The Pheasant PH Audley End Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AU

Addition of sheltered outdoor-seating area adjoining existing pub building. **Application REFUSED**

22/00610/HH - 1 Audley End Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AU

Erection of two-storey side extension **Application GRANTED**

22/00732/FUL - Land North Of Osier Way Sible Hedingham Essex

Erection of a two-storey medical centre with allocated parking. **Application GRANTED**

22/00932/HH & 22/00834/LBC - The Thatched Cottage Church Street Gestingthorpe CO9 3AZ

Installation of solar panels to garage roof. **Application GRANTED**

22/00193/FUL & 22/00194/LBC - Parkgate Farm Delvyns Lane Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AE

Application GRANTED

Outstanding planning applications

22/00722/HH - 23 Oates Cottages Sudbury Road Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3BG

Retention of garden shed **Status Decision pending**

22/00972/HH - Moat House Moat Street Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AT

Removal of existing caravan and replacement with grooms quarters. **Status Decision pending**

22/00971/HH - Moat House Moat Street Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AT

Proposed stable block within the tennis court boundary and replacement of the existing barns and cartlodge doors. **Status Decision pending**

22/00969/LBC - Moat House Moat Street Gestingthorpe Essex CO9 3AT

Removal of existing modern timber doors on Barn 1, Barn 2 and cartlodge and replacement with traditional timber doors. Proposed stable block located on the existing tennis court. Removal of the existing caravan and replacement with grooms quarters. **Status Decision pending**

22/01147/FUL - Land Adjacent Butlers Wood and Waldergrave Wood West of A131 (In The Parishes Of Bulmer And Twinstead) Sudbury Road Bulmer Essex

A new 400/132 kilovolt (kV) Grid Supply Point (GSP) substation including two super grid transformers, associated buildings, equipment and switchgear, a single circuit cable sealing end compound, a new permanent vehicular access to the public highway, associated landscaping (including boundary fencing, an area for Biodiversity Net Gain, and landscape mounding) and drainage. **Status Decision pending**

070/2022 Representative reports

- Highways – Cllr P. Collett. His report read:

SID Audley End - The unit still needs some adjustment as it only operates if a vehicle is travelling above 40 mph. The highways officer dealing with this matter has now left ECC and I have been unable to establish a new contact. I have therefore referred the matter to Cllr Peter Schwier and requested his assistance in resolving this issue. We are currently awaiting a response.

SID Sudbury Road - The PC has made an application to ECC for a new sign. Cllr Peter Schwier has been contacted in an effort to secure funding for the new installation. Cllr Schwier has acknowledged that the sign is a ECC asset and confirmed that he has referred the matter to the appropriate department. We are currently awaiting a further response.

Transport (Special Projects) - Unfortunately the first onsite training scheduled for the 4th July had to be cancelled due to illness. A new date of 25th July 2022 has now been set.

- a) ECC Salt Bag Scheme for Winter 2022/23 – Councillors to decide if any salt is required and delivery address – Not required but to remain on the list

- Transport (Special Projects) – Cllr S. Bolter. His report read:

The F135 bus service

The buses I have used recently were running to timetable. The problem is the timetable is too difficult to interpret. It is **Passenger** numbers have not recovered to pre-Covid levels.

For my three recent journeys on the bus, it has been well within the expected time ranges given in the Earliest Departure Timetable on the Parish website, but someone using a phone app would have been in danger of missing the bus to Sudbury.

One trip was on one the busiest journeys of the week, the 15:30 from Sudbury to Halstead on a Thursday. It was still crowded when it got on at Pot Kiln Chase. The air was hot and stuffy. No one was wearing a mask. With rise in cases of the recent Covid variants on in the area, I decided put my mask on. I was the only person that got off or on in Gestingthorpe. Most, perhaps all, of the rest of the passengers seemed to be going all the way from Sudbury to Halstead.

These observations highlight the dangers that face the service and things that need to be done to try and save it.

Unless the use of the bus to or from to stops in Gestingthorpe increased the service is likely to be withdrawn altogether, or downgraded to one for which advance booking is essential.

To increase bus use, one essential is to improve the service information and produce a readily understood time table that is available in print and on the apps people use to plan journeys.

The other is to make people feel safe on the bus. Masks should still be encouraged There is no excuse for not having ample ventilation in summer weather.

I have written to Peter Schwier, as our County Councillor and as the County Climate Tsar. I have pointed out that bus use has fallen not only because of Covid but also because of the disruption caused by the months of closures in Sudbury Road. I have suggested a campaign to restore bus usage.

I have put the case for an earliest departure timetable and better information to the media.

I have noted the environmental benefits if the bus is used as an alternative for some journeys by those with use of a car.

I wrote "I suggest that Essex officers, local reps and Arrow Taxis get together to check the old 'latest departure' timetable and republish it as part of a campaign to cut car use and revive patronage of the bus." "In conclusion. Please can we have earliest departure timetables. Please could ECC lead a local effort to restore confidence the F135 bus service."

For a copy of the "earliest departure timetable go to

<https://gestingthorpepc.co.uk/public-transport#ca55c5a9-703e-444a-a248-236a97e69fc6>

Councillors please contact me to if you want me to send you a copy of the full email to Cllr Schwier, which includes notes on the problems with the official Essex County Council time table and its information DaRT 3 information sheet, (equivalent to 4 or 5 pages of text)

- Playing Field – Cllr A. Cooper. His report read:

I had a pleasant walk around the Playing Field yesterday. The grass has been very neatly cut, up to and around, the new bollards and also under the trees adjoining Church Street. In places cuttings remain which will presumably soon shrivel up in the heat.

A type of Bracket fungus—which has been previously noted—continues to be visible at the base of one chestnut tree.

The slope of the main entrance in from the road is now covered with a thin layer of road plannings and looks very neat.

At some point some of the woodwork on the pavilion may need a wood preservative.

The matting on the practice net—which last year had a hole in it—has now been replaced with a new strip of matting, which looks very impressive.

Along the eastern and some of the northern edge of the field, the low tree branches make it impossible for grass cutting to take place. These small un-mown areas are not a problem at the moment, but may become so, if not mown for four or five years.

The stake on Lauren's tree had been broken, but I replaced it this morning.

- Cricket Club requesting GPC to pay £150 towards installing an exterior power point on the pavilion at the front corner nearest the nets to use a bowling machine and a strimmer

The cricket club has withdrawn its request for GPC to pay for the outside electrical socket. If the cricket club installs this outside socket then an isolating switch inside the pavilion is placed and an electrical safety certificate is provided after the installation

- Recreation Ground – Cllr P. Collett

- a) Pavilion report

An inspection of the pavilion has been carried out and no issues have arisen

- b) Play Equipment report

An inspection has taken place with no issues

- c) Trees report

An issue of a tree on the recreation ground was raised and Cllr D. Smith to liaise with the landowner

- d) 2022 ROSPA Playing Field report

The ROSPA inspection took place in May. It was noted that one “rocker” was slightly loose in the ground and this has subsequently been rectified by Playscape Ltd. Other minor items remain to be addressed.

- Football Club use of recreation ground between October and April – Jordan Knott explained to Councillors that football matches are on a Sunday morning – 11 home games plus cup matches per season. The pavilion use is required. The pavilion must be kept clean and tidy after each match.

Cllr D. Smith proposed a match fee of £25 per game for the first 5 games. Cllr C. Craig seconded. **All Agreed.** Review after that. A fixture list to be provided to the Clerk by Jordan Knott. Jordan Knott then left the meeting

- Footpath – Cllr P. Bagby.

Leslie Crumpton-Taylor informed the meeting that of the two copies of the Definitive Footpath Map in Gestingthorpe one has now been passed to Cllr Bagby. It was discussed that when the Maps were originally issued twenty years ago, I took a pro-active role but in the last two years I have become re-active [age & initiative]. The Parish needed someone to take the active role again.

I am happy to remain in the Parish Magazine as Footpath Contact and to follow up any reports received but it should be noted that these requests have diminished sometimes to zero between some Council Meetings. I put this down to Villagers getting the feeling that there is no point in reporting problems. Nothing appears to get done. Signposts continue to be missing or fallen [Indeed I have one on my bit of Footpath 8] even though reported to County Highways. Two bits of Path remain overgrown or missing (pointed out to Cllr Bagby when the Map was handed over).

Cllr Bagby & I discussed the process of checking problems and reporting them to the Parish Clerk who then forwards them by the correct method to County Highways where they seem to disappear into the “Section of *we don't have any staff*”. I mentioned my view that the countryside was not like a Town Park and that people should expect to be wearing stout shoes and some lower-leg covering but they in turn should expect not to need a machete or be soaked above the knees.

Since the previous Parish Council Meeting there have been no phone calls to me or questions raised concerning Footpaths.

Cllr P. Bagby informed the meeting that Leslie has given her one copy of the definitive map and retained the other. He also advised her of the two known issues per his report. Also, that it would be good to proactively walk the parish footpaths to identify issues and problems as they occur rather than wait for them to be reported.

Lindsay Smith and I have started a regular early Monday morning walk when time permits and will report problems as identified. Our walks so far have been on the footpaths leading to/from Delvyns Lane which are reasonably clear and walkable.

With the Council's agreement I would like to put a post on the PC and Village Facebook page advising of the process to report footpath issues also to update via Facebook if/when problems have been reported to make villagers aware.

- Village Hall – Cllr P. Bagby. Her report read:

The AGM was held on 9 June which I was unable to attend due to Covid. At the meeting, all officers were re-elected to same positions.

At the following committee meeting most of the discussion was about the work on the roof and subsequent impact on VH finances. Despite having a reasonable contingency sum in the budget, there is a considerable cost overrun due to unforeseen structural work and the need to buy more Spanish slate tiles than expected. We expect the shortfall to be around £6000 and have been actively looking for loans and donations to cover this amount. The committee agreed that the repayment of loans would be prioritised over any other improvement works until all loans are repaid.

We expect the work on the roof to be completed and scaffolding removed within the next two weeks. Once this is done, we hope to hold a 'Roof Raising' fundraiser and re-commence work on both front and back gardens.

071/2022 Queens Jubilee – update from Cllr C. Craig

A very successful Jubilee event took place with over 200 residents attending.

Over weekend numerous donations were made and a £1000 was left to split it between the village hall and the church. The vicar of the church has stated that she is happy for the £100 donation and £900 is donated to the village hall roof fund. Cllr D. Smith thanked Cllr C. Craig for organising a tremendous event

072/2022 Finance

- a) To receive the Bank reconciliations as at 30th. June 2022

Councillors noted the Bank reconciliations as at 30th. June 2022

- b) To receive the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2022/23

Councillors noted the comparison of Actual to Budget for 2022/23

c) To approve the payment of Accounts for June and July 2022 and to agree a transfer of funds to meet the Parish Councils financial requirements. The RFO has transferred £830 from EMR account to Current account to cover the cost from R. J. Alston

Cllr C. Craig proposed and Cllr D. Smith seconded to authorise the June and July 2022 payments.

All Agreed

Date of next meetings is to be held in the Village Hall on Thursday 08.09.22 and 10.11.22

073/2022 Items for Next Agenda

074/2022 Closure of the Meeting

To close the Meeting having considered and determined all items of business.

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 9.30pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

D. Smith

29th. September 2022

D. Smith – Chairman GPC