



THAXTED PARISH COUNCIL

Community Information Centre
7, Town Street, Thaxted,
Dunmow, Essex, CM6 2LD
Tel: 01371 831952.
email: clerk@thaxted.co.uk.
web: www.thaxted.co.uk

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF THAXTED PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2020 following on from the preceding MEETING VIA Zoom

In accordance with the Coronavirus Act 2020, c. 7, Part 1, Local authority meetings, Section 78 – Members are permitted to be present and attend a meeting without being present in the Council Chamber or together in the same place - extract from this Act reads: “The provision which may be made by virtue of subsection (1)(d) includes in particular provision for persons to attend, speak at, vote in, or otherwise participate in, local authority meetings without all of the persons, or without any of the persons, being together in the same place.”

Present:

Councillors: T Frostick (Chairman), A Frater (Vice Chairman), J Spencer, A Howells, I Stewart, R Williams, R Barrington, A Wattebott, V Knight

Also Present: Dena Ludford (Clerk & RFO)

District Cllr's Martin Foley & Mike Taylor

Richard Haynes NP Delivery Group

3 members of the Public (left after item 19/20.644)

19/20.656 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

County Councillor Simon Walsh

District Councillors Mike Taylor & Martin Foley

19/20.657 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr A Wattebott declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest on item 5 within Planning.

19/20.658 COUNCILLOR VACANCY

- a. To **NOTE** the disqualification of Cllr Brazier as a Councillor for non-attendance at meetings for the prescribed period.
- b. Cllr Andrew Frater reads email received from the U.D.C. Standards Monitoring Officer in response to investigation undertaken by and on behalf of U.D.C. In summary:

An independent investigator was appointed following a complaint received. A copy of the report from the independent investigator was provided to U.D.C. TPC Vice – Chairman and Clerk.

Whilst a breach of TPC's Code of Conduct (para 6 (g) and (h) of the code) was concluded in the report, the Standards Monitoring Officer and independent person (investigator) are agreed that since the individual is no longer a Parish Councillor, he is no longer subject to the code and therefore further action is deemed not to be in the public interest.

The Parish Council record the matter as closed as far as Parish Council business is concerned.

- c. To discuss the process of the retrieval of council assets as held by past councillors
It is **RESOLVED** that the council writes a formal letter with a date no longer than 14 days for retrieval of all assets. The clerk has been asked to seek further legal advice by way of retrieval of assets following on from this time period. It is also **RESOLVED** that following the legal advice the clerk may proceed as directed if necessary.
- d. To **NOTE** the official notice of call for election following occurrence of a vacancy has passed
- e. To **NOTE** a vacancy for co-option to the Council is now an option.

19/20.659 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

To receive public representations from residents of Thaxted for matters relating to the agenda for a period not exceeding ten minutes.

19/20.660 REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE PARISH OF THAXTED No Report received

19/20.661 REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE PARISH OF THAXTED See reports for August and September attached

19/20.662 MINUTES

RESOLVED To APPROVE and DIGITALLY sign as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 02nd July 2020

19/20.663 COMMITTEE MINUTES

To NOTE the minutes of the planning & Highways committee held on the 6th August 2020

19/20.664 THAXTED RANGERS FOOTBALL LICENCE RENEWAL AND PITCH RENOVATIONS.

To receive a verbal update in connection to the pavilion reopening

The club secretary provides the council with a detailed plan of their opening criteria in view of the covid-19 measures. Recent pitch improvements have been well received and the ground is due to be aerated once soft.

The club asks if CCTV has been considered, the Clerk and Chairman respond that they are happy for this to be installed this could not be within the ownership of the Parish Council. Cllr Frater asks if the club has been able to benefit from a Locality grant? The club secretary responds that they have not been aware of this and wonders how this might be accessed, the clerk will contact the county councillor for application process on behalf of the club and correspond accordingly.

PLANNING

During the planning section of any full council meeting, a member/members of the Neighbourhood Plan delivery group, (if present) will be invited to join the council table for participation, one vote may be cast in accordance to the Committee's terms of reference.

To better support the response of planning applications through the Parish Council during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Clerk shall inform all members of applications received, invitation to comment will be presented through email, where all responses will be collated, The Clerk, together with the Chairman of the Planning Committee will formulate the majority response to the District Council Planning Portal. In the event of any new dwelling application, a decision to hold a remote zoom meeting will be made at the discretion of the Chairman of the Council.

I. UTT/20/1887/FUL

PROPOSAL: Section 73A Retrospective application for internal works creating annexe. Proposed change of use of annexe to form independent dwelling

LOCATION: Potters Cottage Bardfield Road

RESOLVED to OBJECT

The council consider this to be overdevelopment and in addition the visibility splay is dangerous and should be re considered.

II. UTT/20/1885/LB

PROPOSAL: Retention of internal alterations dividing building

LOCATION: Potters Cottage Bardfield Road

III. UTT/20/1652/FUL & UTT/20/1653/LB

PROPOSAL: Proposed conversion of stable and garage block to 1 no. Dwelling (amendments to previously approved application UTT/19/1407/FUL)

LOCATION: The Borough Bolford Street

RESOLVED to SUPPORT

IV. UTT/20/1936/HHF

PROPOSAL: Proposed replacement single storey rear extension

LOCATION: Peggy's Cottage Park Street

RESOLVED to SUPPORT

However, with the comment that we much prefer the pitch tiled roof over the flat roof contained within this proposal.

V. UTT/20/1380/FUL

PROPOSAL: The erection of 2 no. dwellings and cart lodge

LOCATION: Colt Bungalow Stanbrook Road

RESOLVED to make NO COMMENT

VI. UTT/20/1966/OP

PROPOSAL: Outline application, with matters of landscaping reserved, for the demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of 2 no. dwellings

LOCATION: Lavengo Copthall Lane

RESOLVED to OBJECT

The council believe this to be over-development, cramming two units onto the site of one bungalow. It is opposite a protected green space and will create additional traffic in a lane which is unable to support this. This is overbearing to the neighbouring property.

VII. UTT/20/2045/FUL

PROPOSAL: Erection of detached two-bedroom cottage following demolition of former chicken shed.

LOCATION: Woodhams Farmhouse Cutlers Green

RESOLVED to OBJECT

Totally unsustainable outside development limits and country to policy S7.

VIII. UTT/20/1665/FUL

PROPOSAL: New access for hearse to burial ground

LOCATION: Windmill Church Yard Fishmarket Street

RESOLVED to OBJECT

The consent cannot be implemented as the gate is not within the ownership of the applicant.

IX. UTT/20/1381/FUL

PROPOSAL: Proposed demolition of existing light industrial unit and replacement with 2 no. semidetached houses and associated works

LOCATION: Coal Yard Stanbrook Road

RESOLVED to make NO COMMENT

X. UTT/20/2066/HHF

PROPOSAL: Demolish existing garage to create a driveway.

LOCATION: Easters Orange Street

RESOLVED to make NO COMMENT

XI. UTT/20/2164/HHF

PROPOSAL: Proposed installation of photovoltaic solar panels on roof

LOCATION: The Cart Lodge Walden Road

RESOLVED to make NO COMMENT

19/20.665 SCHOOL PROPOSAL - GREAT DUNMOW

To consider Thaxted Parish Councils response in connection to CC/UTT/90/20 application.

The parish council wish to offer their support to this application given that the provisions will undoubtedly affect the parishioners of Thaxted.

19/20.666 HOUSING WHITE PAPER

To review and consider what action or representation to make in connection to the latest Housing White Paper released by the Government, the matter was discussed in detail and it was **RESOLVED** for a draft letter to be created by Richard Haynes in collaboration with the Clerk, this would then be circulated for approval by the full council.

19/20.667 UTTLESFORD COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

- a. To **NOTE** the withdrawal of the draft local plan
- b. To discuss what preparations and involvement Thaxted Parish Council wish to make to any future consultations on any new local plan.

The matter was discussed for some length. The housing supply that Uttlesford current have sits at 2.68 Cllr Knight states, financially we are in unprecedented time of debt, we should focus on the neighbourhood plan and familiarise ourselves with the sites previously proposed and review any and all sites under review for future. Cllr Spencer, how much can we depend on our neighbourhood plan? Richard responds as it stands, not too much as the NPPF says that if an authority doesn't have a 3 year land supply then the NP policies are not binding, what we have is a very good basis for saying there are disadvantages to development and we have all the evidence to support this via the Liz Lake report, the NP is considered as evidence based and therefore could channel the planning balance in our favour. There is much to consider and much uncertainty, there will be a call for sites as there was before, the landowners will put forward their sites and we would have an opportunity to comment.

Cllr Barrington, development was still very much tied to sustainability and Thaxted is not in an easy position to object to new home development.

Cllr Frostick, hypothetically if an application came to UDC for 50 houses where would we stand, Richards response it that is does all come down to this planning balance issue, it's a question of benefits against disadvantages, it would depend on the area, there was no site put forward which would sustain 50 homes and given that we are 7 miles away from the nearest A road this also adds to our argument, the sustainability argument remains strong. The white paper does have a couple of good points, namely the developer will be dictated to some extent as to the size of the settlement, as there are larger settlements i.e. Dunmow or Saffron Walden which would likely be the more obvious choice for new development unless the creation of a new garden village is considered in full detail.

Cllr Barrington feels that we should defend Thaxted within the realms of our NP until such time that we cannot. The Chairman summarises that Richard will be speaking with our District Cllr's and keep the Clerk and Council well informed as the matters unfold and progress.

19/20.668 ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL HONOURS AWARDS

To Review the Honours awards brochure and consider nominations

Cllr Andrew Frater Proposed to nominate: Helen Payne, Lauren Barham & Karen Spencer this was seconded by Cllr Victoria Knight. The clerk will draft detailed nomination statements and circulate them to the council prior to submission.

19/20.669 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT CONSULTATION (LCTS)

To review and consider our representation in connection to the most recent LCT Consultation Resolved to send our comments as outlined twice previously, they read as follows:

"Having previously written to council member voicing our concerns, Thaxted Parish Council would like to reiterate its position.

Thaxted Parish Council asks you to note its objection to the proposal to remove the subsidy grant from the parish council, which is not in keeping with the general principle of the grant scheme given by Central Government to principle authorities. A copy of a letter from Kris Hopkins MP, Minister for Local Government dated February 2015 can be found in the link as below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parish-funding-for-local-council-tax-supportscheme>.

You will note from the letter the specific request from Kris Hopkins MP for the grant to be passed to town and parish councils, he further notes in his letter to Leaders of Billing Authorities that "it is essential they (town and parish councils) receive all the funds due to them in order to carry out their activities"

The National Association for Local Councils (NALC) also notes the following on its website:

"In 2013/14 and 2014/15 the Department for Communities and Local Government have paid Billing Authorities a combined total for each financial year of £3.3 billion to officially refer on to parish councils in their areas to minimise the reduction of parish precept revenue following the diminution of average council tax bases in Parish areas over the last two years. Accordingly, in 2014/15 most Billing Authorities nationally passed on the Localisation of Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) mitigation grant to parishes in their areas, but 15 did not. We lobbied the Government very hard to ensure that it put pressure on Billing Authorities to pass across to all parishes in their areas the maximum amount of LCTSS parish mitigation grant in 2015/16."

Should UDC choose not to honour the intent from DCLG, it is not only in clear breach of the guidance and request from DCLG but is also acting outside of the essence and intention of the whole Local Council Tax Support Scheme process of how grants received from Central Government should be forwarded to town and parish councils.

It is further noted within UDC Minutes of 3rd May 2016 that “The Assistant Director Corporate Services said that the 2015 consultation survey had revealed that 93.3% of responses had supported the protection of the Parish Council grant. However, they would not necessarily have been aware of the financial implications of this arrangement”

It is exceptionally clear and demonstrated from the results of the 2015 consultation that the public is content with the LCTS subsidy continuing to be forwarded to Town and Parish Councils for its intended purpose.

The loss of any funding will have a detrimental effect on Thaxted Parish Council continuing to provide and improve services to the residents and at a time when the Council is still settling its finances after taking on several services that have been devolved from Uttlesford District Council to us such as the Public Toilets and car Park.

The Parish Council therefore wishes to register its fierce objection to the withdrawal of this much needed grant to both town and parish councils. Please therefore consider this letter a formal response to the LCTS consultation process. “

19/20.670 THAXTED TOWN STATUS

- a. To **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the merits of Thaxted becoming known as a **TOWN** Council rather than a **PARISH** Council.

After much debate, the status of Town v Parish were noted. To summarise, Legally, there is no difference between a tier of local government being called a Town or a Parish, this does not affect its status in any way as a constituted body. Its widely accepted that Thaxted is in fact a TOWN, the status in name alone would raise its Kudos within vicinity of Uttlesford and set it aside from the smaller villages and hamlets.

From this debate two proposals were made:

Proposal 1) Cllr Frater Proposed to change the name to Thaxted Town, Cllr Frostick seconded this proposal

Proposal 2) Cllr Knight proposed to remain a Parish, Cllr Williams seconded this proposal.

RESOLVED to **ACCEPT** Proposal 2 with a carried vote of 6/3

- b. To **APPROVE** the reassignment of the role of Chairman to the role of Mayor
NO VOTE

19/20.671 CUSTODIAN NAME CHANGE

RESOLVED to rename the position ‘Guildhall Custodian’ to ‘**Parish Custodian**’

19/20.672 FINANCE

- a) To Note the Quarter 1 full Finance report of all income and expenditure

- b) To review online payment for Approval

RESOLVED To **DIGITALLY SIGN** and **APPROVE** the online payments as detailed for approval.

19/20.673 CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE CLERK: *The Clerk provides a verbal report on the following items:*

- a) Covid-19 post lockdown measures in connection to the following areas:

Open spaces:

Guildhall:

Public Buildings:

Allotments:

Volunteering for Thaxted Parish Council:

CLT:

External Audit:

Risk Assessments:

Deployment of staff:

Scouts Hut current premises:

Other Considerations: To **CONSIDER & APPROVE** mounting an addition vehicular mirror on the post to the entrance of Margaret Street Car Park to safely enable traffic exiting the driveway opposite.

RESOLVED to **APPROVE** the removal and replacement of existing mirror and the erection of two smaller opposite facing mirrors.

RESOLVED To **APPROVE** the Clerk to pursue a gated entrance to the allotment area to safely accommodate vehicular access with a view to deter criminal activity, in addition to this, to close off the entrance to the adjoining field having sought the necessary approval from the land owner.

19/20.674 COMMITTEE UPDATES

To receive a verbal report from the following committee's:

1. Windmill Committee management Trust
2. BSH management committee
3. Assets & Guildhall including Market
4. Finance Report
5. Personnel (excluding any Private and confidential matters) and Library working group.
6. Open Spaces (to include CHG)
7. Planning & Highways
8. Neighbourhood Plan
9. Crime Prevention

1) **Windmill** is in receipt of the grant and are working towards renovations, the lease document has now been finally completed and a recent change of governance as trustees has also been changed.

2) **BSH** management committee have not met this year,

3) **Guildhall**

Now that lock down has eased the Guildhall has been permitted to reopen.

The Custodian has completed a comprehensive Risk Assessment and has put in place all necessary precautions to allow socially distanced access.

The Sunday openings have started slowly but an exhibition has now been arranged for early September and weekly therapy sessions have been booked.

During lock down the Custodian set up an internet group to bring the contents of the Guildhall to those who were no longer able to visit, which proved very popular.

The Market

The new Market Officer took over in March when new contracts were issued.

It was decided that as a food market it could continue to operate as a socially distanced facility to supplement local food outlets during lock down.

The existing 4 stalls have now grown to 7 with the addition of a wild game stall, an Indian food and spice stall and an Olive stall.

Since the market officer resurrected the Market Facebook page and established a connection with the Thaxted online group, between 1,000 and 3,000 followers are reached each week.

Car Parks and Town Assets

The 4 free car parks in town have been used constantly and continue to provide an important facility for residents and visitors.

They, along with all other town assets are regularly checked and monitored by the officer employed by the Parish Council.

Abandoned or overstaying vehicles are issued with warning notices and where necessary reported to the District Council Compliance Department.

Other issues around street furniture etc. are reported to Essex Highways, the Ranger service or to the Parish Clerk for action.

Margaret Street Toilets are under repair and will reopen in the next few weeks.

4) Cllr Williams reports that everything is in good order and the Clerk keeps a very tidy records which I have sight of regularly.

5) We have continued development and pay appraisals and continued with performance management. The library working group proposal is to close this as no meetings have taken place for some time.

6) Mosscofts an abundance of wildflowers and a flail cut has been recently done, CHG has re-opened and finally I would like to thank our contractors who've taken common sense decision having worked on their own during these unprecedented times.

7) The 40 MPH limit has now been installed in Bolford Street; we still do not have this along the Samford road.

8) The two principal areas are Highways and conservations issues, the real problem is that UDC don't have a conservation officer and this is on the agenda to be discussed with our District councillors next week, there is a suggestion that UDC commission place services. Highways do not feel as responsive.

9) nothing to report.

19/20.675 CHAIRMAN'S and VICE CHAIRMANS UPDATE

To receive a verbal report from the chairman and or Vice Chairman on council activities including attendances and code of conduct. Covered in items contained with the agenda including reports as detailed above.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

Future scheduled meetings will be Thursday 1st October and will remain via the Digital Zoom platform.

To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Administration to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the Public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government act 1972.

19/20.676 OPEN SPACES AMENITY AREA

To receive a verbal report from the clerk & Cllr Williams & the Clerk in connection to the continued meeting with a landowner for a portion of land for public use acquisition. To **CONSIDER** and **AGREE** in principle a way forward with all parties. The Council have sight of a proposal and wish to encourage the landowner to continue to engage with the council by way of our Developers Policy, The Clerk will continue to liaise with all parties.

19/20.677 CHAIRMANS CORRESPONDENCE

To discuss the recent correspondence from the Chairman. The detail needed was not able to be discussed this evening, a further meeting will be called to capture all comments.