



# THAXTED PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF THAXTED PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 8 pm 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), V Knight, J Spencer, A Howells, R Williams, R Barrington, D Morgan, A Wattebot, C Michael, I Spencer.

**Also Present:** Dena Ludford (Clerk & RFO)

Richard Haynes & Peter Neal from the Neighbourhood plan group

3 members of the Public

### 19/20.733 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

District Cllr Mike Taylor

District Cllr Martin Foley

Cllr A Frater

### 19/20.734 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Colin Michael declares a pecuniary interest in item 739.i and will take no place in the resolution.

Cllr v knight declares a Non Pecuniary interest in item 19/20.746

### 19/20.735 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

Two member of the public speak in connection to planning item iv & v. some questions relate to the Local Plan and its validity and some relate to what can be objected to as part of the planning application process. The Chairman explains in summary what the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan's are. Richard goes on to explain the 2005 Local plan is still current, Policy S7 was one of the saved policies which holds weight, the problem is that one very small element is not given enough weight and the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) which was published in 2019 and that will override any local plan policy.

### 19/20.736 REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE PARISH OF THAXTED

See report attached

### 19/20.737 REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE PARISH OF THAXTED

### 19/20.738 MINUTES

RESOLVED To APPROVE and DIGITALLY sign as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 3rd December 2020

### 19/20.739 PLANNING

*During the planning section of any full council meeting, a member/member's 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/20/3148/HHF  
PROPOSAL: Erection of single storey rear extension  
LOCATION: 68 Wedow Road Thaxted

**RESOLVED to SUPPORT**

- ii. UTT/20/3081/HHF  
PROPOSAL: Cartlodge annexe extension  
LOCATION: Jareth Cutlers Green

**RESOLVED to UNANIMOUSLY OBJECT:** The Parish Council now requests a full review of the planning history undertaken to date and **no support** can be given until there has been a full enforcement investigation. It is our belief that this application has been incorrectly made and should in fact be 'retrospective' as the annex has been in situ for at least 5 years. There is clear evidence for this to be overdevelopment to be considered overdevelopment.

This council wishes to call on our district councillor's to raise an independent investigation in connection to the Uttlesford planning department in connection to this particular dwelling and numerous applications connected to it.

- iii. UTT/20/3208/OP  
PROPOSAL: Outline application, with all matters reserved except for access, for up to 3 no. dwellings  
LOCATION: Freemans Farm Bardfield Road

**RESOLVED to OBJECT**

The development is wholly out of character with the surrounding area and is therefore contrary to S7. The removal of 30m. of hedge to provide sightlines will only increase the impression of a suburban cul-de-sac as it opens up views of tarmac, pavements and the new houses themselves. The architect insists that the development would be sustainable but it is at least a mile from the centre of Thaxted so no one is going to walk, couple that with the complete absence of any existing footpath which is clearly identified under POLICY TX IFS3 – Footpaths:. Cars will be the automatic choice. It therefore fails the NPPF presumption. The Neighbourhood Plan in referring to Bardfield End Green says 'Development... on anything other than a very small scale would... not only be unsustainable but would also potentially change (its) rural character'. Policy TX LSC4 indicates that development should be limited to extensions, replacement dwellings, infill or the conversion of existing commercial buildings. On that basis the proposed development would be contrary to NP policy as well as Local Plan policy and would also fail the sustainability test under the NPPF.

- iv. UTT/20/3257/HHF  
PROPOSAL: Erection of a single storey rear extension and internal alterations revised scheme to that approved under UTT/20/1040/HHF  
LOCATION: 5 Bardfield End Villas Bardfield Road

**RESOLVED to SUPPORT**

- v. UTT/20/3099/HHF  
PROPOSAL: Proposed single storey extension and conversion of garage. Demolition of existing garage and erection of car port / garage. Improvements to access and parking.  
LOCATION: Easters Orange Street

**RESOLVED to SUPPORT**

vi. UTT/20/3228/FUL

PROPOSAL: Change of use and conversion of offices to 2 no. dwellings. Part demolition of Unit 1 to form new access driveway into site and parking area. Rebuilding of gable end to Unit 1 and replacement of metal roof cladding with slate to both units 1 and 2

LOCATION: Hammerhill Studios Stanbrook Road

**RESOLVED to OBJECT:**

The situation is not as stated in the application and two firms are in fact trading from this environment, this is therefore a false statement. We would encourage Uttlesford to visit the site for full clarity in connection to this false application. This Council believes that any subsequent change of use would result in a loss of employment space within the town which is limited and much needed, as defined in the Neighbourhood plan under POLICY TX TLE4 – Redundant Farm Buildings: The appropriate conversion of redundant farm buildings to alternative employment uses will be supported.

vii. UTT/20/3425/FUL

PROPOSAL: Construction of 1no. single storey dwelling.

LOCATION: Monk Street Stables Monk Street

**RESOLVED to OBJECT**

This is contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan as is the materials in consideration namely the black weatherboard. It is neither an extension/replacement nor a conversion nor is it infill, it therefore fails to satisfy Policy TX LSC4.

viii. UTT/20/1867/FUL

PROPOSAL: Proposed 2 no. dwellings

LOCATION: Land To The South Of Bardfield End Green

**RESOLVED to UNANIMOUSLY OBJECT**

This council feel that there is a strong argument for consideration that two dwellings represent a change in character and would therefore again be contrary to both S7 and TX LSC4( Development in Outlying Settlements) This scheme also fails on Sustainability as this is a mile from the town. This is clearly referred to in POLICY TX IFS3 – Footpaths and in the complete absence of any footpath within this location. We also note that the pre-ap provides opinions in the conclusion which have never before been seen, including the planning officer inferring that this is ‘not part of the Neighbourhood plan’, this is factually incorrect and the various outline settlements including Bardfield end green are considered and can be clearly identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as stated under policy TX LSC4 (‘page 42. 5.6 OUTLYING SETTLEMENTS 5.6.2 These are entirely rural communities, in general with no significant public facilities. Development within them on anything other than a very small scale would therefore not only be unsustainable but would also potentially change their rural character.’ POLICY TX LSC4 - Development in Outlying Settlements) and therefore we unanimously object to this being considered as part of the application process.

ix. UTT/20/3317/HHF

PROPOSAL: Erection of two storey rear extension and single storey side extension. Proposed demolition of existing garage and erection of replacement two bay garage with home office above

LOCATION: High View Bardfield End Green

**RESOLVED to SUPPORT**

**19/20.740** To determine the reason why Uttlesford District council have a quantity of undetermined and outstanding planning applications for Thaxted.

**RESOLVED** that the planning department as a matter of urgency are sent the document outlining all outstanding undetermined planning applications for their urgent response back to the Parish Council , both district councillors in copy.

**19/20.741 LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION**

To **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the councils draft response to Theme 3 ‘Climate Change’ this is available to view and comment between the following dates: Start date: 09/12/20 21:00 - End date: 21/04/21 17:00 via the following link: <https://uttlesford-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/35898>.

Richard will put together a short summary in connection to the response which in turn will be placed on Thaxted on line.

#### **19/20.742 CREATION OF A NEW WORKING GROUP**

a) **RESOLVED** To **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the setup of a working group to deal with all related matters in connection to the local plan consultation process.

Richard Haynes suggests that this would be good to prepare for what might be coming even if its just looking at the themes. Cllr V Knight is willing to be part of this, Cllr A Wattebot is also happy to help, the Clerk suggests that our Vice chairman might be interested in joining this. And Richard Haynes is also happy to assist.

b) to **APPOINT** the Chairman, (Postponed until the group has fully formed.)

#### **19/20.743 SOLAR FARM**

a) **RESOLVED** To **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the draft message to the residents of Thaxted from The Parish Council in connection to the upcoming solar farm consultation.

b) to receive verbal feedback from individual councillors in connection to their specific project remit.

Cllr knight responds by way of explaining the latest in connection to the meeting held with them including the clerk and Cllr spencer concurs that this has still yet to happen. A site meeting with the closest residents has taken place, Cllr knight was emailed today with what was supposed to hold a new plan however no plan was attached 278 acres to 180 and were planning on reducing this further once the survey has been completed, the land down at Debden green has now been exclude, which is why they probably didn't consult with Debden green in the first place. Cllr Howells was asked to look at footpaths and has identified the path closest to the Richmond in the woods would be affected. The other item I was asked to look at is recycling and there appears to be no long-term effects from any of the equipment used as all is recyclable. Cllr Stewart also added that the chemicals used to keep the glass panels clear do leak in to the ground and the water table below.

Richard Haynes also adds that there is a lot of uncertainty about how the soil will be after some time, the soil holds carbon and there is some work going on in connection to this as we are unaware how much carbon will be released and how harmful this will be to the environment.

Cllr Michael comments that it has been 'assumed' that the grade of the soil will remain as it was before the solar panels were installed, there is no proof to suggest that this is the case and the current soil at cuttlers green is grade two, in truth after 40 years its highly likely that the soil will be dramatically degraded.

Cllr Williams reports on the wildlife aspect and research has indicated that the chemical breakdown of the panels is also significant and also seeks the councils approval to research this element also, the council is in agreement with this request.

#### **19/20.744 CONSULTATION ON UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY.**

The Chairman wishes to inform the council that the Chairman & Clerks did in fact make a response to this consultation and there are still some unanswered questions specifically in relation to the Parish Councils future involvement in pre-application meetings which will need some further clarification.

#### **19/20.745 SAFETY AMBASSADOR**

Cllr Frostick explains how this initiative came to be, the item came to the clerk at 4pm on Thursday afternoon on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, the day of the last Parish Council meeting. Both the Clerk and I took the decision to act quickly and thought it would be a good way of testing the water to see what really happens in Thaxted, largely to abate some of the Facebook comments in connection to crime. The clerk and I made a decision to add an hour at the end of the service the ambassadors were to provide which was for the added security measure.

Yes it was rather rushed however the Clerk has delegate powers to act quickly which is exactly the reason why we have provided such powers, these are unprecedented times, unfortunately the security detail put a post on Facebook which we did not sanction or authorise which was subsequently taken down, the Clerk has provided you all as Parish Councillors access to the reports Alliance have submitted, they are confidential and some of the details contained within may well end up as part of an ongoing investigation and possibly a court case, so I am not going to discuss them in any detail and it is expected that you will also adhere to this.

Cllr Spencer comments that Anybody who has read their reports cannot question how valuable this project was and I'd like to thank the Chairman and Dena for putting this together at such short notice.

Cllr R Barrington adds that he took from the last meeting that the project was to prioritise the urgent need to keep covid-19 at bay, and after the minutes were amended I feel this perfectly reflects the reason for the decision and as a result we were able to tag on some additional security measures, if we go forward with this

it would be beneficial to get some facts and figures. Just for the avoidance of any misunderstanding, we've taken this opportunity, we've learned from it, and we are now able to consider any financial outlay for future determining activities. The Chairman agrees entirely with Cllr Barrington and as such this detail should sit within the Prevention of Crime working group.

Cllr Williams adds that he reflected after the fact and doesn't step away from the fact that I supported the resolution at the time but upon reflection and 24 hours felt that it was the wrong decision, he's had feedback and feels that many of the population were not happy. Cllr Williams went on to say that he patrols the streets of Thaxted between the hours of 20:00 – 22:00 and the youth of Thaxted are always well behaved.

The Clerk explains the speed of which the decision was made and that the clerk hold powers to act in accordance to crime prevention measures, the clerk also explains that from the Facebook post which generated much noise she only received One complaint, there was a statement released by the Clerk to clarify the parameters and from this no further information was requested. Aside from the fact that the initial draft minutes were not as robust as those resolved today.

Cllr A Howells was uncomfortable with how quickly the decision was made, however, upon reflection adds that the company behaved very well and professionally, I might add that whilst Cllr Williams may not be seeing vandalism I certainly do and can report a number of incidents and they happen well after the 22:00 curfew so you've unlikely to see this.

Cllr Frostick reports that he is aware of 15 untaxed and un MOT'd vehicles in this town active after 23:00 Driving around.

Cllr Michaels feels that we acted accordingly with the needs of the residents, the presence was needed, and feels that it had a positive result, its agreed that the marketing could have been better, but this is something we've learned from.

Cllr knight points out the Facebook information was poorly communicated by the company and this was shortly taken down, there is evidence-based work here and this is critical in our future planning in terms of local crime and the towns needs. Cllr Knight also comments on the more positive and supportive Facebook posts which also came as a result of this initiative.

#### **19/20.746 OPEN SPACES**

**RESOLVED** To **AGREE** that the Clerk and Chairman of the Open Spaces committee will review existing contractors for ongoing grounds maintenance work and approve the forthcoming schedules and contractors.

#### **19/20.747 LAND ENCROACHMENT AT THE CRICKET GREEN**

Cllr Knight is meeting with Cllr Morgan and this item should be considered on the next agenda.

#### **19/20.748 FINANCE**

a) To **NOTE** and **APPROVE** the Councils Gross income, expenditure and EMR balances.

b) **TO REVIEW ONLINE PAYMENT FOR APPROVAL**

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

#### **19/20.749 HEALTH & SAFETY AND HR**

**RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** continuing with the current schedule of service with no changes to service levels or price for the year 2021.

#### **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

Future scheduled meeting will be Thursday **4<sup>th</sup> February 2021** and will remain via the Digital Zoom platform.

Parish Clerk  
Dena Ludford  
02 January 2021