

**Wheathampstead Parish Council  
Parish Council Meeting  
27 August 2015, 19.55h**

|         |             |  |                      |
|---------|-------------|--|----------------------|
| Present | Councillors | D Johnston<br>G Clark<br>A Dante<br>D Davies<br>S Haynes<br>D Johnston<br>T Reason<br>P Woodhams | Chairman             |
|         |             | J Warren   | Clerk to the Council |
|         |             | Press  | 0                    |
|         |             | Public   | 2                    |

**4257 -15 Apologies and introductions**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors A Brewster (SADC meeting), A Dante, E Habib and J Shardlow (personal reasons).

**4258-15 Specific Declarations of Interest & Dispensations**

Councillor G Clark declared an interest in Minute 4260-15 and 4263-15 because of her membership of St Albans District Council Plans North Committee. As a district councillor she would look at the matter afresh should any plans be discussed at Plans North. Councillor P Wilby declared a personal interest in Minute 4263-15 as personal friend of the applicants.

**4259-15 Public Speaking**

Mr Peter Partington, chairman of Wheathampstead Business Group, WEB, gave an impassioned speech on the need for business retention within Wheathampstead.

At their most recent business meeting serious concerns were raised regarding commercial premises becoming residential.

Attention was drawn to two current High Street businesses looking for new local accommodation, to date to no avail. Nonpareil `s lease would not be renewed because of change of premises ownership; Lamburn and Turner had outgrown their office space. Many local people remembered bigger employers including Murphy Chemicals, Polaroid and Helmets going from the Village.

Loss of businesses WEB believed would lead to Wheathampstead becoming a dormitory settlement. Local businesses, he said, used the baker, Post Office, garage, pubs, computer repairer, hairdressers, off license, chip shop etc Monday to Friday. Without

this patronage businesses could not survive.

The recent issue of WoW identified 203 businesses in Wheathampstead. Many of these supported a healthy High Street. WEB itself supported local events including Lights Up, Village weekend and National Small Business Saturday 2015 as part of its 'Buy it Locally' initiative.

On behalf of WEB Mr Partington asked that the Parish Council take every opportunity to increase the supply of business premises in Wheathampstead

#### **4260-15 Presentation regarding land behind 3 Station Road**

Mike Margereson of Jarvis Homes sought to address concerns raised at Minutes 4234-15 and 4235-15 regarding planning application 5/2015/1787. Following on from a site meeting with Councillors Johnston and Brewster and the Deputy Clerk design modifications were being considered. A mock up showing a view of the development from Station Road was circulated and compared to a photograph of the present site. The design had been amended to make the building more cottagey and more in keeping with homes in King Edward Place, including use of building materials – slates and timber cladding, chimneys and two, rather than a central, window. The revised design also showed additional parking spaces allocating two per flat in addition to those for use by butcher's and carpet shops.

Councillors agreed that these were improvements on the previous design and thanked Mr Margereson for advising them.

#### **4261-15 Minutes of Council**

Councillor Reason proposed, seconded by Councillor Dante and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meetings held on 30 July 2015 be approved.

**Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meetings held on 30 July 2015 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

#### **4262-15 Minutes of Committee Meetings**

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that the following draft Committee minutes and working group notes were received and adopted:

**Resolved To receipt and adopt the draft minutes and notes of**

**Wheathampstead  
Community  
Safety Forum**

**29 June**

**Crinkle Crankle Garden 3 Aug  
WG  
Bury Green Garden WG 4 Aug  
Community Involvement 6 Aug  
Committee  
Planning Committee 24 Aug**

**4263-15 Planning Matters –The Barn, Wheathampstead Place  
5/2015/1966 & 5/2015/1982**

The following plans were discussed and a recommendation of **REFUSAL** made to St Albans District Council

|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| 5/2015/1966 | The Barn,<br>Wheathampstead<br>Place, Station Road | Change of use from class B1<br>(business) to Class C3<br>(dwellings) to create two,<br>two bedroom flats,<br>associated internal works<br>and landscaping at the Barn,<br>Wheathampstead Place |
| 5/2005/1982 | The Barn,<br>Wheathampstead<br>Place, Station Road | Listed Building consent –<br>internal works associated<br>with change of use from<br>business to dwellings to<br>create two, two bedroom<br>flats  |

**Concerns were raised regarding the loss of business premises this change of use would create. Two local High Street businesses were known to be looking for premises close by.**

**Recommendation to SADC of REFUSAL , proposed by Councillor Reason, seconded by Councillor Davies, and agreed on the grounds that :**

**Wheathampstead Parish Council is keen to support employment opportunities and wealth generation within its parish. The presence of businesses close to the High Street, as these premises, bring weekday business to shops and businesses allowing them to survive and thrive. The Parish Council does not wish to see the Village turn into a dormitory settlement devoid of shops and businesses.**

**Change of use is contrary to St Albans District Council Local Plan policy 19- overall employment and 20 (development in employment areas)**

**Policy 19(i) covers level of employment , 19(iv) expansion of local firms. There is evidence from the Wheathampstead Business Group of a desire for a variety of local firms to expand to premises close to the High Street and Village centre.**

**Policy 19(ii), linked to Policy 20 (development of employment) also refers. The area should be retained as class B1 as previously agreed. The Parish Council believes**

**there are no changes since the Planning Inspector refused the applicant's earlier appeal in March 2013. The economic reason to retain this business unit remains, if not possibly strengthened with almost all High Street units business occupied.**

**It was noted that when planning was approved in 2012-13 the conversion of the house to C3 was a compromise and conditional on the Barn being kept as B1.**

**No change of use from Business B1 to C3 (residential) should be granted.**

**The building forms a cluster of business units, albeit adjacent to a small relatively new area of housing. It is acknowledged that this factor supported partial change of use to part dwelling plus business (offices). The applicant purchased a business unit and should work with the community to support local employment opportunities. Encroachment of further business units to dwellings is seen to jeopardise the commercial viability and sustainability of the village and the community, which could in time suck the life blood from the village.**

**The Parish Council is keen to encourage expansion of the diversity of employment /business units within its heart. It does not support any change of use application.**

#### **4264-15 Approval of plans to upgrade the Sam Collins Room in the Memorial Hall**

As part of the development of the former Social Club to Heron Close houses Jarvis Homes agreed to give £20,000 towards the refurbishment of the Memorial Hall.

Estimated costings itemising the work potentially needed had been circulated including the replacement of house lights (stage lights were replaced last year), curtains, curtain mechanisms and the stage surface. The walls and ceiling may be plastered to cover the now unfashionable exposed brick and the hall decorated. Council had expressed an intention to modernise the audio visual system making the facility suitable for showing wide screen films and giving professional presentations. This would include acoustic baffles to reduce reverberation, a high powered projector with long throw lens, an electrically operated high reflectivity wide screen and a new audio system. It was anticipated that these new facilities would attract new hirers including some commercial lets.

It was reported that a major problem in managing the project would be to reduce the loss in revenue while the hall was out of service. Although much of the work could be done around hirers, the plastering and decorating would require the facility to be

closed/ in part not used.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the project proceed up to a budget of £40,000 excluding plastering the walls, including CCTV and contingent on £20,000 from Jarvis Homes.

**Resolved**                    **That the project proceed up to a budget of £40,000 excluding plastering the walls, including CCTV and contingent on £20,000 from Jarvis Homes.**

**4265-15 Grant Application – History Society & Heritage Trail Website**

The History Society had requested £450 to modify their web pages to enable pages to grow beyond the current 8,000 character limit. Growth should be unrestricted and transparent to the users, and allow for a minimum of 80,000 characters per page.

The History Society had a section in the Wheathampstead Heritage website –part of the work completed by the Heritage Trail working group and creating a single source for historical information. The site had already had pages added for the High Street Story and High Street Map under the tab “History Society”. Since April, it had become apparent that there was a limit to the amount of material that could be included in a page and that this limit was smaller than was needed The Society was not made aware of this limit when the pages were commissioned or when they were delivered. The Heritage Trail project team had also found this limit to be inconvenient.

The limit was caused by a requirement of the Heritage Trail section of the web site to behave as a database. This allowed easy cross-referencing and cataloguing when items were placed in the virtual museum.

It was noted that for a further £150 payment to Baobab a similar issue with the Heritage Trail website could be rectified.

Councillor Clark proposed, seconded by Councillor Reason, and it was agreed, that £450 be granted to modify the History Society’s website allowing unrestricted growth and transparent and good access to information.

Councillor Halford proposed, seconded by Councillor Woodhams, and it was agreed that Baobab be paid a further £150 to upgrade the Heritage Trail website for unlimited growth.

**Resolved: 1 That £450 be granted to modify the History Society’s website allowing unrestricted growth and transparent and good access to information.**

- 2 That Baobab be paid a further £150 to upgrade the Heritage Trail website for unlimited growth.**

#### **4266-15 Grants Policy**

It had been recommended that WPC adopt a discretionary grants policy, a requirement should it wish to participate in the Local Council Award Scheme. The Deputy Clerk, as part of her CiLCA training, had produced a draft policy, which was discussed. A number of amendments were suggested.

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that an amended draft policy be brought to a later Council for consideration.

**Resolved That an amended draft policy be brought to a later Council for consideration.**

#### **4267-15 Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference**

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be approved and adopted.

**Resolved To approve and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.**

#### **4268-15 Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group recommendations**

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 17 August be approved and adopted, namely:

- Wendy Griffith be asked to deliver a social media awareness/ training course identifying the benefits and shortfalls of various forms of social media which all councillors should endeavour to attend.
- Methods of community engagement and communication to be subsequently identified and agreed
- Material for input to the Plan to be gathered by all for collation and assessment
- Key individuals within the community to be identified for approaching to support the steering group and input to the Neighbourhood Plan
- That an administrator rather than facilitator be appointed

**Resolved:**

- 1 Wendy Griffith be asked to deliver a social media awareness/ training course identifying the benefits and shortfalls of various forms of social media which all councillors should endeavour to attend.**
- 2 Methods of community engagement and communication to be subsequently identified and agreed.**

- 3 Material for input to the Plan to be gathered by all for collation and assessment.**
- 4 Key individuals within the community to be identified for approaching to support the steering group and input to the Neighbourhood Plan.**
- 5 That an administrator rather than facilitator be appointed.**

#### **4269-15 Use of Social Media Training**

Further to Minute 4268-15 it was acknowledged that a variety of engagement methods would be necessary to generate and encourage public participation and awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Reason proposed, seconded by Councillor Halford, and it was agreed, that up to £350 from the Neighbourhood Plan budget be allocated for initial awareness and training on social engagement.

**Resolved**                      **That up to £350 from the Neighbourhood Plan budget be allocated for initial awareness and training on social engagement.**

#### **4270-15 New roads and street works training**

Following a conversation with the police regarding street closures for events WPC had been advised that council officers could undertake the basic training (a minimum of 2 officers to assure availability). Volunteers may then assist. The trained officer would determine where traffic controls went and be responsible to decide on signage etc. WPC would need to buy signs (many re-useable) and hire in traffic lights if needed. Level 2 NRSW is all that was needed, There may be the opportunity to share resources with other local councils and take the idea to SADALC.

Councillor Haynes proposed, seconded by Councillor Clark, and it was agreed, that the Clerk and Deputy Clerk consider Level 2 NRSW training, budget up to £400.

**Resolved**                      **Clerk and Deputy Clerk consider Level 2 NRSW training, budget up to £400.**

#### **4271-15 Butterfield Road play area and open space**

It was reported that the play area at Butterfield Road was now open, Persimmon remained responsible for it until outstanding matters were concluded and signed off. Discussions continued regarding services provision and location.

**Resolved**                      **To note the report.**

**4272-15 Accounts for Payment and Finance Reports**

The circulated reports were reviewed and noted.

**Resolved To note the reports.**

**4273-15 Consultations, training and meetings**

Councillor Clark was thanked for the draft supportive response to SADC's Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) for Strategic and Detailed Local Plans. The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the Clerk return WPC's response as discussed.

It was noted that Councillors Davies and Shardlow were reviewing the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan, Initial Consultation Document, August 2015. WPC's response to be agreed at the September Council.

It was agreed that no response be given to the Gambling Act 2005 review of The Statement of Licensing Principles.

The Chairman reported on a meeting on 29 July with Graham Payne of Hammersmatch, with Councillor Woodhams and the Clerk; and on 5 August also with Mark Hickson from T&B contractors at the former Helmets site. It was agreed that :

- Hammersmatch would make arrangements to have the crinkle-crankle wall and doorways put back into a state of good repair. The necessary works were agreed on site
- Hammersmatch would remove the security gates and fencing plus the remaining rubbish and trees from the "yellow" land.

The Chairman, with Cllr Brewster and Deputy Clerk had met Mike Peters and Peter Rudge from Jarvis Homes on site on 21 August to discuss the potential development to the rear of 3 Station Road. (See also Minute 4260-15).

The Chairman had given a presentation to Wheathampstead Business Group (WEB) regarding the Parish Council's roles and responsibilities and how it and the District Council worked with WEB and businesses through the district. St Albans District Council aimed to deliver economic growth through the Green Triangle, professional services, the Visitor Economy Strategy and the Dragon's Apprentice (aimed at young people). He also encouraged their participation in the Neighbourhood Plan.



**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 22.05h.**

**Dated this            day of            2015**

**Chairman**