

**Wheathampstead Parish Council  
Parish Council Meeting  
26 June 2014, 19.30h**

Present	Councillors	D Johnston A Brewster I Begg G Clark N Clements D Davies T Reason P Wilby	Chairman
		J Warren L Harrison	Clerk to the Council Deputy Clerk
		Press	0
		Public	7

**3646-14 Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors J Shardlow and P Woodhams (personal reasons).

**3647-14 Public Speaking**

Andy Whiting, followed by Edric Williams, spoke on behalf of the 5 families whose children at the end of the secondary school entry appeal process had places at schools against their wishes. All children currently attended Beech Hyde Primary School. The process, rules and policies were queried. They acknowledged the support given by County Councillor Maxine Crawley and asked that the Parish Council, be aware of the situation, further support them by writing to the families concerned and appoint a named person they could talk with and work with Maxine Crawley.

Jean Gatehouse spoke on behalf of the residents of the Meads estate, some 120 dwellings affected by the traffic to and from the Wheathampstead House School. (Minute 3659-14 plan 5/2014/1439). Currently a substantial number (in excess of 70 counted on a recent morning) of vehicles daily used Waddling Lane, dropping, queuing across and blocking the T junction with Palmerston Drive, and interrupting traffic flow. Concern was raised for access and egress from residents' homes and safety in particular for children walking along Waddling Lane and Codicote Road in relation to junction and traffic flow changes.

**3648-14 Specific Declarations of Interest & Dispensations**

Councillor Clark, being District Councillor member of the Plans North Committee of the District Council Planning Authority and also a member of the Licensing Committee, declared an interest in Minute 3659-14. The way she votes at Parish Council will not necessarily be the way she votes at District Council.

Councillor Clark declared a personal interest in Minute 3649-14 being a governor of St Helen's School

### **3649-14 Secondary School – allocation of pupil places**

Councillor Begg proposed, seconded by Councillor Brewster, that, given the urgency of the request at Minute 3647-14 to support the families in seeking school places acceptable to them, this matter be discussed. Councillor unanimously agreed the matter be debated.

Councillor Begg proposed, seconded by Councillor Wilby, and it was agreed that the Clerk:

1. Work with and support Councillor Crawley
2. Write to Cllr Chris Hayward, portfolio holder for Enterprise, Education and Skills
3. Write to the five families
4. Write to School/PTA asking for their support
5. Aim to provide a named councillor whom the families could talk to.

**Resolved**

- 1 To debate the school place allocation issue and situation of 5 local families without a 'preferred' secondary school place.**
- 2 Work with and support Councillor Crawley**
- 3 Write to Cllr Chris Hayward, portfolio holder for Enterprise, Education and Skills**
- 4 Write to the five families**
- 5 Write to School/PTA asking for their support**
- 6 Aim to provide a named councillor whom the families could talk to.**

### **3650-14 Exclusion of Press and Public**

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed to exclude the press and public, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960).

**Resolved**                    **To exclude press and public**

### **3651-14 Parish Council Asset**

The request to transfer and extend the remaining lease was discussed. Councillor Wilby proposed, seconded by Councillor Begg, and it was agreed that in principal they were in favour of extension/renewal of the existing lease and its transfer. This was subject to full and proper disclosure and professional advice. The cost of the latter to be at the expense of the leasee (ie no cost to Wheathampstead Parish Council).

**Resolved**                    **In principal Wheathampstead Parish Council was in favour of**

**extension/renewal of the lease and its transfer. This was subject to full and proper disclosure and professional advice. The cost of the latter to be at the expense of the leasee (ie no cost to Wheathampstead Parish Council).**

#### **3652-14 Readmission of Press and Public**

Councillor Begg proposed, seconded by Councillor Wilby, that the press and public be readmitted.

**Resolved To readmit press and public.**

#### **3653-14 Report from County Councillor Maxine Crawley**

Councillor Crawley had sent a written report which was circulated. She stated that

1. Unfortunately there were 5 children in Wheathampstead with no ranked secondary school at the end of the appeal process. She had been working with the families and had sent a strong email to County Hall highlighting several concerns with the process which she believed contravened the appeals code and asked for fresh appeals for each family. In 2015 the new Sandringham admission code giving 25 places to Wheathampstead children comes into force
2. There were two important County consultations which Wheathampstead Parish Council may wish to consider and respond to. One was about household waste depots and the other one is about children's centres. (Minute 3649-14 refers)
3. A joint press release had been sent out by County Council and the Free School Trust to say that the potential new secondary school in Harpenden would open by September 2017. There had previously been suggestions by the Free School Trust that it could be 2016, but in reality the work could not be completed in just 2 years. The sites were still being investigated .
4. Highways issues were discussed on at the Highways meeting on 30 May. Since then, there had been an issue with the utilities due to carry out work likely to disrupt businesses. She had taken this up with Network Services to see if they could liaise with the utility company to mitigate the harm, including opening the East Lane barrier.
5. In the May reshuffle she was given a new role at County as Deputy portfolio holder for Children's Services but was also still sitting on the Enterprise, Education and Skills Committee.

**Resolved To note the report**

#### **3654-14 Minutes of Council**

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2014 be approved.

**Resolved:**           **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2014 to be a true and fair account and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

### **3655-14 Minutes of Committee Meetings**

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed that the following draft committee minutes were received and adopted:

Maintenance Committee	19 May2014
Planning Committee	20 May, 18 June 2014

**Resolved:**           **To receipt and adopt the draft Minutes of**

Maintenance Committee	19 May2014
Planning Committee	20 May, 18 June 2014

### **3656-14 Internal Audit Report 2013-14 and approval of response**

The Internal Auditor's report for the financial year 2013-14 had been previously circulated. The report had been compiled to include year- end work so received in May. No major concerns were raised.

Councillor Begg proposed, seconded by Councillor Clements, and it was agreed that the responses as below to the recommendations be approved.

<i>Recommended action</i>	<i>Rat- ing</i>	<i>Explanatory Notes</i>	<i>Response</i>
Revise the Council's Financial Regulations to reflect changes to legislations – notably the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.	Low	Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 received Royal Assent on 30 January 2014. Changes to external audit arrangements and transparency of reporting, publicity and recording / reporting of public meetings are included in the Act and should be considered by the Council. Financial Regulations and Standing Orders should be amended accordingly.	WPC annually reviews its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Amendments to reflect recent legislation changes will be made within the current financial year.

Review the level of reserves based on longer term financial planning.	Low	Current reserves are almost twice the annual precept and are equivalent to a full year of expenditure for 2013/14. Depending on future spending plans for significant projects, the council should consider whether it needs to continue to precept at the same level, or whether precept could be reduced to bring reserves down to around 6-9 months of annual spend.	A number of projects are due or overdue for completion, notably the Marford Artificial Turf Pitch and play area improvements. Ear marked reserves and provisions will clearly identify specific projects.
The recording of bookings should be improved to ensure clarity for all staff taking bookings. Furthermore, a straightforward charging policy should be established, including transparency regarding any discounts that are to be applied to particular groups to ensure consistency and fairness. The charging policy should be approved by Council.	Medium	The current arrangements for recording time and expenses are adequate, but do not provide a clear audit trail that is easy to follow. The charging policy is not fit for purpose, and discounts have been applied in the past, without reference as to why.	Observations regarding bookings are acknowledged and accepted. WPC is in the process of researching and identifying a suitable fit for purpose booking system which it is hoped will incorporate both bookings for the Memorial Hall and the new ATP facility.

**Resolved**

**To approve the response to the recommendations of the Internal Auditor.**

### **3657-14 Annual Return 2013-14 & Governance Statement**

The draft annual return with governance statement and accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014 had been previously circulated.

This was discussed and unanimously approved including line by line confirmation of the governance statement. Proposed by Councillor Reason, seconded by Councillor Brewster (accounts), and Councillor Reason seconded by Councillor Begg (governance statement).

**Resolved**            **That the Chairman and Clerk sign the Annual Return sections 1 and 2 as presented on behalf of Council.**

#### **3658-14 Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2014-5**

Councillor Begg proposed, seconded by Councillor Brewster, and it was agreed, that GreenbiRo Ltd be reappointed as Internal Auditor for 2014-5.

**Resolved**            **To appoint GreenbiRo Ltd as Internal Auditor for 2014-15**

#### **3659-14 Planning Matters**

*Councillor Clark, being Chairman of the Planning Committee, took the Chair for this item.*

The following plan was considered and a recommendation of **no objection** made to St Albans District Council. Proposed by Councillor Brewster, seconded by Councillor Begg and agreed

5/2014/1439	Wheathampstead House & 1 - 4 Lodge Cottages Codicote Road St Albans Hertfordshire AL4 8DJ	Change of use of Lodge Cottages To Music Department and one residential unit with construction of single storey extension following demolition of existing single storey projection and garages; revised parking and access road layouts; extension to existing
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*Councillor Johnston resumed the Chair.*

#### **3660-14 Complaint**

Further to Minute 3562-14 and 3627-14, the chairman reported that investigations were ongoing.

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

#### **3661-14 Accounts for Payment and Finance Reports**

The list of accounts paid to June had been circulated and noted.

**Resolved**            **To note the reports**

**3662-14 Consultations, training and meetings**

Councillor Brewster thanked and congratulated the team on the completion of the Heritage Trail Phase II and launch event on 22 June. Representatives of the Heritage Lottery Fund had attended and suggested that the Crinkle Crankle Garden project may be eligible for a grant.

Councillor Johnston reported that he with the Clerk had attended the Priority Setting Forum on 29 May, crime statistics for the area were discussed. There had been an increase in anti-social behaviour and burglaries in the village. The priority for Wheathampstead was to be burglary Wheathampstead Community Safety Forum fed into this meeting and this new group, to which interested groups were to be invited, was scheduled for 9 July.

A number of councillors had attended the District Council's Parish Conference. This had been a useful networking event, further options to participate in planning training existed on 9 July and the County Council officer had delivered a clear presentation on school places. The session on dementia training was well received and it was hoped could be delivered for a wider audience at the Memorial Hall.

Details of various consultations had been circulated, responses to be approved at the July meeting. Councillors were nominated to lead on draft responses

County Council's parish charter - Councillor Johnston (it was noted that unlike the SADC charter with parishes and HCC, June 2012, this excluded district councils)

Children's centres - Councillor Wilby

Green ring - Clerk

Household waste recycling - Councillor Clark

London Luton Airport - Councillor Shardlow

**Resolved****To note the report****The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 22.25h.****Dated this            day of            2014****Chairman**