

SAMPFORDS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting held on Thursday 17 September 2015 in the Village Hall .

PRESENT:

Mr Chris Robinson
Mrs Kay Adye
Mr Graham Keen

Mrs Jane Lawrence
Mr George Smith
Mr William Burton

Ms Kath Thompson
Mr Gordon Deuce
Mrs Sarah Parker (Clerk)
Clare Watkins (footpath rep)

1 Public Forum.

As there were 8 members of the public present the Chairman and Councillors introduced themselves.

Martin Boughtwood was most concerned that he understood that the Parish Council had decided against the rural Housing scheme for the village. He felt that a lot of work had gone into the scheme which showed the need for housing for local residents and that to shelve it would go against the wishes of the village. It was pointed out to him that the scheme had not been abandoned but postponed, because of the lack of a Local Plan for Uttlesford and the danger that should the PC agree to support an Affordable Housing scheme in the village at the present time, this could lead to an open market development much larger than the one proposed. Residents adjacent to the proposed site expressed their concern about the access from Sparepenny Lane and particularly the Monks Corner turn off. Chris explained that a representative from Hastoe Housing would be attending the meeting to give us an update.

Martin explained that the students who were sponsored by the PC to go to Nepal in the Summer had only recently returned and went straight back into school. They will come along to the next meeting to give a report on their experiences.

2 Apologies for absence. Rhiann Chappell and Simon Walsh..

3 Minutes. The minutes of the meeting on 25th June, which had been circulated, were approved proposed by George Smith and seconded by Kaye Adye.

4 Declarations of Interest on items on the Agenda. Jane:- WI and Village Hall, George:- Cricket Club. Chris:- Village Hall. And under Affordable Housing he is a landowner of one of the original proposed sites.

5 Matters Arising

5.1 Defibrillator. It had been agreed with the Parochial Church Council that the defibrillator for Little Sampford can be sited on the wall of the lavatory block in the churchyard. The PC agreed to pay the £150 installation costs. Chris would find out from Rhiann what is involved in the regular monitoring of the device and then ask Roberta Hayward, the Churchwarden at St Mary's, if she would be prepared to do the regular checks on the device

5.2 Broadband Kay had spoken to Paul Davies from Hempstead PC who had arranged a presentation from County Broadband which they found helpful. The broadband speed in Hempstead is very bad and they have done a needs survey which showed a lot of interest in a scheme to upgrade their speeds. It was noted that, when the PC asked on Sampford Signal whether there were those who were interested in upgrading the BB in the village, there was not a great deal of interest. This is probably because the speed in the centre of the village is reasonable but the outskirts are bad. When CB came to present to the PC several years ago the PC understood they might have to pay a considerable sum of money towards the installation, whereas the Buzzcom scheme was free. Sarah would ask the CB representative to give us a further presentation at the next meeting.

5.3 Speeding in Parsonage Farm Lane. The PC were to ask Simon Howell when he arrived whether contact had been made with the UDC refuse lorries that speed up and down the lane. One resident however noted that there are other culprits from the top of the lane.

5.4 School Parking. Wendy Peacock had agreed at the last meeting to raise a petition from parents to present to the PC to confirm their support for a request for railings outside the school to prevent cars parking by the wall. Chris had not heard anything from Wendy.

5.5 Salt Bins. Graham would ensure the bins are full for the winter. The PC holds good stocks of grit/salt. William and Chris had removed the sandbag store from River Green House.

5.6 Nepalese Trip. Ollie and/or Alfie would be invited to the next meeting to report on their trip.

6 Correspondence

A letter of thanks had been received for the PC's grant to Essex Air Ambulance together with a request for continued support from the PC

7 Reports from County and District Councillors.

Simon Walsh sent a brief report concerning the ongoing roadwork repairs which will also include disruption as Affinity Water have embarked on a major programme of water main replacements in the area.

The PC was asked to comment on the plan to close the bridge in Finchingfield for a number of months next summer. The diversion route would be narrow and winding and the PC wish to subscribe to a campaign to provide a temporary bridge.

ECC have made changes to the local bus routes which will affect the Sampfords. The new timetable can be viewed in public libraries or on line at <http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-roads/Getting-Around/Bus/Bus-review.aspx> Sarah has the hard copy of the review consultation.

8 Community Grant Scheme. Sarah had filled in the various application forms for the grant from UDC. The original application was for gravelling of the area which would require planning permission. The quote was for £4,500. However an alternative surface was explored which would include removal of a large tree stump and then removal of top soil, laying a Teram membrane, then a layer of sand and then the ECO Paving followed by restoration of top soil and grass seed. This would be more in keeping with the surroundings. The quote was for £6,600. UDC have kindly agreed a grant of £2,250. The PC agreed that a grant of up to £2,500 would be available for the scheme, the remainder coming from a bequest from a resident. The PC would ask for a PCC resolution that the parking area can be for village use.

9 Highway Rangers. Nothing had been heard from HR. Sarah would contact Simon Walsh who is responsible for EEC Highways.

10 Footpath Booklet. Mr Turner had produced three of the footpath maps which he had amended. He will work on the remaining paths. He was thanked for his work.

11 Play Area Shed. The shed in the play area had been demolished. Sarah would ask Will Parker for a quote to replace the post and rail fencing on the boundary with the Baptist Church where the shed was removed.

12 Reports from Parish Councillors on their areas of responsibility.

12.1 Play Area: (KA, KT, GS) The Play area is in good order and Kath fills in the safety book on a weekly basis. Chris thanked her and Graham for their help with the maintenance.

Youth. Nothing to report

12.2 Planning (MP WB)

Planning Applications for Salix Farm, Crystalbrook, Yew Tree Cottage were reviewed and no comments were made

Alterations to two footpaths had been agreed. These both to correct anomalies in direction.

12.3 Grass-cutting & Trees (GK) Sue Collins, expressed thanks from the PCC for the help the PC are giving towards the grasscutting in the churchyard. Around the village Chris Butcher is doing a good job as usual.

Sarah had not had a response from Ben Smeedon regarding the possible die-back of the ash tree at Monks Corner. Kath noted that it had not worsened during the last months.

12.4 Publicity. (JL) Jane has put a Parish Council report in the latest edition of Ambo for which she was thanked.

- 12.5 Website.** (*GS & RC*) The website needs regular updating. Sarah would ask on Sampford Signal for information to be sent to Rhiann for inclusion.
- 12.6 Neighbourhood Watch** (*RC*) Reports come through onto SS
- 12.7 Liaison with village organisations.**(*RC*) Nothing to report.
- 12.8 Transport.** (*GK*) Information on bus route consultation as above in item 7.
Village Assets. Nothing to report.
- 12.9 Village Hall.** (*CR & JL*) Chris had heard from Jill Palmer that the PC will not need to subsidise the village hall at present. The committee had made £180 on the Garage Sale in the village. Jane thanked the Village Hall members who helped set up a recent WI meeting.
- 12.10 Sport.** (*GS*) George reported on the end of the cricket season which had been successful. A new generation of players is now needed.
The Cricket Club have allowed the Tennis Club to use the pavilion for their club events.
- 12.11 Highways and Footpaths.** Sarah had written to two landowners regarding their overgrown footpaths. One had responded that he would cut them at the time of the harvest. Highways Rangers had also attended to some of them.
William reported that several stiles are to be replaced with kissing gates, as stiles are now deemed inappropriate. The cost of these to be met by landowners. Chris to speak to the Welchmans regarding their stile along the river near The Old Rectory.

12.12 Affordable Housing.

District Councillor Simon Howell introduced himself and apologised for his late arrival.

He first congratulated the PC on their successful application for a Community Grant for the car parking area at St Michael's Church.

He then summed up his concerns regarding proceeding with Affordable Housing (AH) in Sampford at this time. He pointed out that Sampfords PC had decided to postpone the scheme and not to cancel it. He stressed that he is not against AH and has been behind a similar scheme in Radwinter. The Local Plan was rejected by the Planning Inspector and a new plan now has to be submitted. A call for prospective sites was made 4 or 5 years ago and several from The Sampfords were put forward. There was an application for 9 dwellings in Sparepeny Lane South and Parsonage Farm Lane in 2013 which was rejected mainly for reasons of unsustainability.

New sites have now been called for, for the local plan, and these would be known in October/November. Simon, and also the deputy head of Planning at Uttlesford, feel that it would be entirely inappropriate for Sampford to be pursuing a 'rural exception programme' (for AH) at this time. For the first time the Planners have actively identified villages, including Great Sampford, as being suitable locations for significant development, a proportion of which will be allocated as affordable and social housing. The village, along with a number of others in the area has been classed as a 'class A' village which could result in an allocation for around 50 houses. Simon feels that new larger conurbations with appropriate infrastructure would be a much more suitable way to overcome the need for 4 to 6,000 new houses rather than building in villages where new housing has been rejected due to unsustainability. He urged the PC to wait until sites are known before taking AH further. The new local plan should be in place in 2017.

Ulrike Maccariello, Development Manager at Hastoe Housing, noted that there were several new Councillors since she last attended a Council meeting. She explained the process for AH on rural exception sites. These are sites which would not otherwise be given planning permission. A local needs survey in 2004 had resulted in a 27% response from householders for the need for 6 flats/houses. Several sites were considered and only one was identified as suitable but the landowner would not provide the land unless one market price house was also built. The planners would not give permission for this proposal so the scheme was disbanded. Ulrike reported that now there is a landowner who has agreed to the proposal for 6 affordable houses and one open market home for cross subsidy purposes. She is concerned that if the PC does not

proceed with the scheme the rural exception site may be lost to open market housing for inclusion in the local plan.

Following discussion regarding the need for AH in the village and the problems with access from Monks Corner amongst other concerns, Chris asked if Simon would set up a meeting with Nigel Brown at the Planning department to discuss the various options and consequences of the AH scheme in the light of the search for housing for the Local Plan.

Chris thanked Ulrike and Simon for attending and for their comments.

13 Finance An up to date Receipts and Payments review was circulated to all councillors.

Ratification for following cheques:

100740 for £1,224 to Thaxted Stoves for removal of play area shed

100741 for £84.60 to Mitie Pest Control for Play Area

100742 for £120 to PKF Littlejohn for annual audit fee

100743 for £24.57 to Graham Keen for bolts etc for play area gates

Cheques for signing:

100744 for £100 to Sampford Baptist Church for annual play area rent

100745 for £821.07 to Sarah Parker for 2nd quarter pay

100746 for £25 to Uttlesford Association of Local Councils, annual subscription.

All cheques proposed by Jane and seconded by Kaye.

A direct debit form to Barclays Bank was signed for the clerk's salary.

The renewal fee to Gandi of £4.80 for the website domain was paid from the remains of the petty cash which has now been closed. In future expenses will be added onto the Clerk's annual expense invoice. This at the suggestion of the internal auditor.

14 Further items for discussion only.

Graham did not want to have bars outside the school because they would restrict those wishing to park outside school hours.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE ON
THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Sarah Parker, Clerk. 3-10 15