

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 16th June 2020 ~ 7.00pm

Via Zoom Video Conference

Present

Cllr. Kathryn Jones (Chair)
Cllr. Pat Edworthy
Cllr. Jane Hawthorne
Cllr. David Pearce

Cllr. Keith Bennett
Cllr. David Findley
Cllr. Stephen Mayhew
Cllr. John Skinner

Cllr. Nick Crocker
Cllr. Guy Foscett
Cllr. Ashley O'Malley

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

Cnty. Cllr. Alexander Nicoll

5 members of the public were present

1. To receive Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. Carol Poulter. These were noted.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items and any applications for dispensation:

Cllr. O'Malley declared a pecuniary interest in item 4. d).

3. Public Session:

a) Reports or comment from any member of the public (notes only):

- The following comments were received with reference to DC/20/1768/FUL:
 - Objections have already been made and although there is no longer an entrance on to Lower Street the 2nd property is very close to the historic brick wall and could damage it
 - The plans have a scale but viewing them on a screen makes it impossible to understand distances, heights and measurement of rooms etc.
 - We have tried to speak to the owner but with no joy, we believe he is now not living in the property and friends of his have moved in and are carrying out some work.
 - The numerous applications are relentless and it feels like it is one battle after another. We are very concerned at the enormous number of trees that have disappeared.
 - The second dwelling, with a pitched roof, is now a problem; before it was a flat roof, which probably would not have been seen. In addition a later design change could see windows placed in the roof which would overlook us. We are also concerned at the ground works that would be going on, on site and the impact it would have on our houses which have very little foundations. There should have been a Ground Survey Report.

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- There are many bats in the area and the loss of further trees will drive them away.
- With the lack of a notice being put up [due to Covid-19 restrictions] many neighbours will not know the application is proceeding
- Q. Do I need to repeat comments I made on the previous application or will these automatically be taken in to account?. A. *Yes, you do need to repeat all relevant comments as this is a new application and previous comments will not be taken in to account*
- If this is permitted it will set a precedent for large gardens to be split to accommodate two or more dwellings; this will be very dangerous for the character of Ufford. The Pre-Application advice indicated that splitting the plot would not be an issue in principle so comments need to show that it will set a precedent and spoil the character of the village.
- To fit the two houses in, the footprint of Plot one will be much closer to the corner of the plot and will overlook the Old Post Office Cottages.
- Late night working over the past few weeks has been very disruptive to neighbours.
- We must remember this is in the Conservation Area and all other properties are of a period design
- *Cllr. Nicoll* – It is very important to comment on the unacceptable plot sizes and the intensification of the development; if permitted this will set a precedent and could open the door for a flood of similar applications.

b) Reports or comment from SCDC and SCC Councillors:

- **Dist. Cllr. Carol Poulter** –Through Cllr. Nicoll, Cllr. Poulter invited UPC to attend the next Community Partnership meeting for the Wickham Market division and advised that an official invitation would be sent to the Clerk.
- **Cnty. Cllr. Alexander Nicoll** – Cllr. Nicoll provided comment on a number of the planning applications to be discussed (see individual comments below) and advised that the planned boundary change to Suffolk County Council divisions would probably be delayed until 2025, but with elections likely to go ahead in 2021. He also reminded Council of his Locality Budget and that he was keen to support any suitable projects in Ufford.

4. To discuss and agree responses to the following Planning Applications:

- a) DC/20/1768/FUL - Demolition of the existing dwelling (The Walk) and sub-division of the site into two plots. Two new dwellings, one being a replacement. - The Walk Lower Road. Councillors made the following comments:
- A draft letter has been produced (and circulated to all Councillors), based on comments for the similar, recently withdrawn application, and comments received by the Clerk

- Key points are:
 - Plot sizes will be too small
 - Building will tower over Lower Street and Old Post Office Cottages
 - Further trees and wildlife habitats will be removed
 - The letter should strongly concentrate on the preservation of the Conservation Area and the present designs will not blend in
 - The proposed designs will show lots of new red bricks and glass
 - **Conclusion: Objection** (Proposed by Cllr. Findley seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and with all Councillors in agreement) - The Clerk was asked to re-draft the letter and send around for comments, with the final letter being sent to ESC on Thu 18th June.
- b) DC/20/1636/OUT Outline Application for up to 27no. Self-Build and Custom dwellings | Land West Of Prow 21 Woods Lane Melton. Councillors made the following comments:
- Although in Melton, additional traffic and residents using already full healthcare facilities will affect Ufford residents, so it is appropriate that we should comment
 - A history of the site has been circulated for info and it was noted that SCC Highways had no issues in principle
 - *Cllr. Nicoll* – SCC Highways should be objecting on a number of points. The Melton PC meeting is tomorrow and I'm sure they will be commenting on the additional traffic that will add to the Woods Lane issues. It would be a good idea for UPC to write directly to Cllr. Andrew Reid (cabinet minister for Highways) to express concern for the lack of support from SCC Highways to large developments, which emerge on to roads already at capacity. It may also be an idea for UPC to write to both SCC and ESC with reference to the 'Climate Change Emergency' that both have declared but adverse to this both seem to be happy to allow further development to continue.
 - Items we should base our letter on would be:
 - Unsustainability of the site
 - Outside the Physical Limits Boundary
 - Not in the Melton Neighbourhood Plan
 - No CIL money will be forthcoming as they are 'Self-Builds'
 - The meadow presently provides a 'wildlife corridor' between houses
 - The area is prone to flooding
 - **Conclusion: Objection** (Proposed by Cllr. Bennett seconded by Cllr. Pearce and with all Councillors in agreement) - The Clerk was asked to draft a letter and send around for comments, with a view to the final letter being sent to ESC by 30th June
- c) DC/20/1901/TCA | 1 x large Holm Oak - Fell to ground level. Reason: previous permission DC/19/3296/TCA to pollard this tree. While completing the work tree surgeon noticed large decayed area at the base of the tree and in the crotch of the multi stems, see attached photos. | Willow Farmhouse, East Lane, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:

- This tree had been viewed by the Tree Warden and his comments sent to all Councillors
 - This was a magnificent Oak and it is a shame the work proposed in the earlier application was not carried out
 - The tree seems to be 'sprouting' and so is still alive
 - It should be 'pollarded' and not felled
 - **Conclusion: Comment made that it should be pollarded and not felled due to regrowth** - (Proposed by Cllr. Foskett seconded by Cllr. Findley and with all Councillors in agreement) - The Clerk was asked to send a letter directly to ESC.
- d) DC/20/1911/TCA - Thinning of Copse to a) Allow good trees to flourish b) Remove trees overhanging or impinging on fence with Hawkeswade c) Reduce area of garden near house which is in shadow from early afternoon d) Remove tall trees negatively affecting neighbours and our TV and radio receptions - Willow Granary, East Lane, Ufford. Councillors made the following comments:
- *Cllr. O'Malley took no part in the debate*
 - A site visit had taken place with the UPC Tree Warden and two Councillors in attendance; a report had then been forwarded by the Tree Warden containing details of a revised schedule of the trees to be thinned.
 - Due to the Council only being able to comment on the plans before them, it was agreed to object to the present plans as these were felt too extensive. But to suggest that if the revised plans were put forward as an amendment to the application, these would be supported.
 - **Conclusion: Objection but with support for revised plans (see above)** - The Clerk was asked to send comments directly to ESC
- e) DC/20/1831/OUT Outline Application with Some Matters Reserved - Residential development of up to 55 dwellings, with access off St Andrews Place | Land Off St Andrews Place And Waterhead Lane St Andrews Place Melton. Councillors made the following comments:
- A history of the site has been circulated for info. There had been obvious dispute between Melton PC and the landowners of the site, as assurances had been given regarding its development (that were noted in the Melton Neighbourhood Plan and assurances also given to the Plan Inspector) but these had not been fulfilled.
 - Items we should base our letter on would be:
 - Unsustainability of the site and Flood issues
 - Impact on local services (doctors, dentists, schools, etc.)
 - Disregard of the development of the entire site in line with the Melton NP
 - Access through St Andrews Place is totally unsuitable and would place additional traffic on the Melton Crossroads
 - *Cllr. Nicoll* – It may have been naive not to have an agreed development plan for the site in writing. SCC Highways have sent a holding objection

- **Conclusion: Objection** (Proposed by Cllr. Hawthorne, seconded by Cllr. Pearce and with all Councillors in agreement) - The Clerk was asked to draft a letter and send around for comments, with a view to the final letter being sent to ESC by 23rd June.

Action: Clerk

5. To acknowledge previous months list of SCDC Planning decisions and to discuss any other planning matters or reports:

The planning decisions taken by ESC in May had been circulated and was available from the Clerk.

6. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 19th May 2020:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 19th May 2020 had been circulated. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. O'Malley, seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne and all Councillors were in agreement that they be signed.

7. Clerk's Update on Previous Minutes and Actions:

a) Bredfield Neighbourhood Plan – Confirmation had been received from the Bredfield NP Chair that part of the plan was technically in Ufford and that the land “*retained the existing vegetation, with a new screen of trees*”. He has also confirmed “*We are not aware of any plans for any other development on the site*”

b) Update on meeting with SCC and ESC regarding traffic created by Bentwaters Park (BP) – The Clerk confirmed that Cllr. Nicoll had been in contact with the BP site manager and that initial talks had proved positive around monitoring traffic levels and controlling future development. However, a face-to-face meeting with the local Parish Councils, ESC and SCC had not as yet been organised.; the Clerk will chase up.

c) Update on Speed watch Group creation – The Clerk reported that very little interest had been shown in setting up a group with only 2 volunteers. She suggested asking for volunteers one further time, later in the year (after the Covid-19 crisis), before any decisions were made.

Action: Clerk

8. To discuss Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Consultation on Main Modifications and draft letter:

A draft letter had been produced in response to this latest consultation and had been sent to all. Councillors were concerned about the change in emphasis of the wording in SCLP 3.3: Settlement Boundaries and the removal of SCLP 11.9: Area to be Protected from Development. The Clerk was asked to re-send the letter to all for final review, before sending it off on 30th June.

Action: Clerk

9. Highways/Footpaths:

a) To discuss options for purchase of a SID (six quotations provided by Clerk) and decide on required model – Cllr. Foskett had found a further company who produced these devices and whose products were much cheaper. It was agreed that the Clerk should analyse the models on offer and add this to the comparison document, ensuring the model which meets all requirements was costed.

b) To acknowledge latest report from Footpaths Volunteer Working Party – An interim report had been circulated to all and a full report would be published in July. Cllr. Findley reported that the 'Footpaths' Leaflet had been reprinted and these were being picked up from various locations around the village. He did however have concerns about trespass which has taken place on the meadow next to Path 12 (near Hawkeswade Bridge). The landowner had been informed and signage was being considered.

Cllr. Bennett suggested that good use of funds from Cllr. Nicoll might be to fund the footpath signs giving details of the path number, direction and distance. Cllrs. Findley and Bennett agreed to investigate and produce recommendations.

c) To discuss placing a Dog Bin at the junction of School Lane and The Avenue - The Clerk explained that there could not be a bin at the entrance to the Woodlands, on The Avenue, due to the ES Norse vehicle not being able to park safely on the brow of the hill for emptying the bin. It had therefore been suggested that a further bin could be placed at the junction of School Lane with The Avenue; adjacent to the pavement. The Clerk suggested that before the idea was taken any further, she should write to the householders in the location to seek their opinions and this was agreed.

Action: Cllr. Findley, Cllr. Bennett and The Clerk

10. Recreation Ground and Parklands Woods:

a) To receive update on Five 'Lottery Money' Projects – A report on the progress of the Five Lottery Projects had been circulated and Cllr. Hawthorne expanded on this with additional details. The good news is that the Bat Survey has identified many and varied species live in the Woodlands (*full report available from the Clerk*).

b) Additional Item – To discuss criminal damage to the car park and Football Pitch surfaces at the Recreation Ground – The Clerk reported that a vehicle had marked the car park and football pitch whilst 'doing doughnuts' late one evening. The CCTV had recorded the act but it had not been possible to identify the vehicle (because in the dark the headlights make it impossible to read the number plate). The matter had been reported to the police and they had agreed to ask patrol cars to visit the area. Cllr. Findley had kindly closed the gate over the past three nights but this had proven difficult due to legitimate use of the facilities late into the evening.

After debate it was decided not to close the gate in future, but to improve the fencing with a new post and chain and to investigate upgrading the CCTV on site.

- c) Additional Item – To raise awareness of Chris Cage’s retirement - Cllr. Skinner notified Council that Chris Cage was to retire from her duties at the Community Hall and the matter would need to be discussed at the July meeting.

Action: Cllrs Skinner, Findley and Foskett and the Clerk

11. Finance Matters:

- a) To receive accounts for May 2020 and inspect the Bank Statements:

The Accounts to 31st May 2020 had been sent to all and there were no questions. Cllr. Edworthy agreed to examine the Bank Statement when the invoices were paid.

- b) To discuss allocating reserves to certain possible expenditure and making a declaration of our target General Reserves amount:

After discussion it was agreed the following items should be detailed in the accounts as allocated reserves as at 1st April 2020:

Number	Item	Amount	Explanation
1	Woodlands Projects	£6,658.00	5 Specific projects
2	Play Park Refurbishment	£1,000.00	Building up fund for future work
3	Staff Emergency Costs	£3,000.00	In case of staff sickness
4	Car Park Refurbishment	£1,000.00	Building up fund for future work
5	Woodlands General	£2,000.00	In case large trees need to be felled

This would give a total allocated reserves of £13,658.00 and it was noted that items 2 – 5 would only be increased upon further resolution. This was proposed by Cllr. Pearce, seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all Councillors were in agreement.

With reference to the Target General Reserves amount, after discussion it was agreed to hold between 30% and 100% of annual predicted expenditure at any one time. The General Reserves as at 31st May were £17,302.40 against an annual predicted expenditure of £22,589.00; representing 77% presently.

This was proposed by Cllr. Skinner, seconded by Cllr. Pearce and all Councillors were in agreement.

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders and continue the meeting until concluded

- c) To discuss ownership of PA System and possible transfer to St Mary’s PCC:

After discussion the Clerk was asked to write to the Church Wardens to ask if the system could be transferred to them; as it was housed in the Church Hall.

d) To discuss Clerk's 'Working From Home Allowance':

The Clerk had circulated details on a change in policy by HMRC, allowing home workers to claim up to £6 per week 'Home Working Allowance', exempt from any tax implications. Councillors felt it was important to keep the Clerk's expenses in line with national guidelines and Cllr. Jones proposed the Home Working Allowance was raised to £6 per week. This was seconded by Cllr. Skinner and all Councillors were in agreement. The Clerk thanked the Councillors for this amendment and indicated that she would implement the change with effect from the next invoice.

e) To discuss moving to online banking for all payments (currently Clerk has 'View Only' access):

After an explanation of the process for using full online banking with Lloyds and the changes to the Financial Regulations that would be needed, it was agreed that the Finance Councillors and Clerk should investigate this proposal further and report back to the July meeting with a recommendation.

f) To authorise the following Invoices for Payment:

• J Hallett (Salary + Office & mileage expenses)	£570.33
• SCC Pension Fund (Clerk's pension)	£165.50
• HMRC Cumbernauld (Clerk's PAYE)	£57.00
• Torc Ecology Ltd (Bat Survey)	£912.00

The above payments were proposed by Cllr. Hawthorne, seconded by Cllr. Crocker and all Councillors were in agreement that they be paid. The Clerk agreed to take the cheques to Cllrs. Edworthy and Skinner for signing.

g) To note Payments made since last meeting:

i. None

h) To note Payments received since last meeting:

i. None

Action: Clerk

12. Documentation – To agree and adopt or acknowledge review of the following:

- a) Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy (June 2020)

After clarification of a point, Cllr. Jones proposed the above document be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. Bennett and all Councillors were in agreement. The Clerk agreed to take a hard copy to Cllr. Jones for signature.

Action: Clerk

13. To receive reports on meetings attended on behalf of the Council and to discuss:

- *There were none*

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14. To receive agenda items for the next meeting and to discuss next meeting:

- Items postponed from this and previous meetings

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as **21st July 2020 at 7.00pm**, via Zoom Video Conferencing.

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 9.19pm

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair: Dr. Kathryn M Jones

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

Chair's initials.....