

THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING

Tuesday 24th January 2023 at 7.30pm in The Norman Wodson Pavilion

PRESENT: Cllr Deryck Dipper, Cllr Brita-May Hawes, Cllr Kim Saban, Cllr Natasha Smyth,
Cllr Joyce Spackman, Cllr Martin Spackman, Cllr Brian Taylor
2 members of the public
Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

Covid-19 risk assessment and risk mitigation:

- Hand gel was available for all participants.
- The wearing of face masks was optional for the meeting.
- Tables and seating were spaced to maintain a reasonable distance between those present.
- Councillors were encouraged to perform a home lateral flow test on the day of the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm

ACTION

23.001 Apologies for absence

Parish Councillors: Cllr Steve Bosson (away) **Accepted**

Others: Mrs Sue Patel

23.002 Declarations of Interest and dispensations

1. Declarations: **Noted:** that Cllr Steve Bosson, being a trustee, has a non-pecuniary interest in High Cross Village Hall, and a dispensation for all planning matters relating to North Drive and The Glebe Field; that Cllr Brita-May Hawes and Cllr Kim Saban have dispensations for all planning matters relating to North Drive and The Glebe Field; that Cllr Deryck Dipper has a dispensation for all planning matters related to Thundridge Hill, including Ware North development. Cllr Brian Taylor, being a trustee, a non-pecuniary interest on High Cross Village Hall matters.

Cllr Brita-May Hawes and Cllr Kim Saban have an interest in allotment matters as they are allotment tenants. Cllr Brita-May Hawes also declared an interest in the matters of North Drive lamp post W3, which is located on the edge of her property. Cllr Natasha Smyth declared a DPI in the Nursery and some Pavilion development matters.

Cllr Martin Spackman declared a DPI in that he had an invoice for payment approval.

2. Written requests for dispensations for declarable pecuniary interests: **None**

3. Consideration of requests for dispensations: **None**

23.003 Approval of Minutes

1. **RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the 29th November Parish Council Meeting as drafted.**
The Vice-Chairman signed the Minutes.

Clerk

7.40 pm: Suspension of meeting for public comments

A parishioner said that Old Church Lane is in a very poor state and needs to be repaired and the verges tended. The Council pointed out that this an agenda item, having been raised in an email by another parishioner. The Clerk said he had referred the matter to Cllr David Andrews before Christmas, who replied that he had passed it on to County Highways. The Clerk said he had chased it up, but has had no response to date. Cllr Martin Spackman said he would raise it with Nicholas Maddex since it is understood that Old Church Lane could now be within his remit. **MS**

A parishioner said the website did not have the September and October approved minutes, nor the November draft Minutes. The Clerk said they should all be there, but that he would check and amend as necessary.

Concerns were raised that the Wadesmill footbridge over the River Rib is covered in slushy leaves making it slippery and dangerous, particularly for those who are not very steady on their feet. The Council said it would look into this and arrange for the footbridge to be cleaned as necessary.

7.48pm: The Meeting was restored to order

23.004 Village Life Magazine

Agreed: That Cllr Deryck Dipper write a summary of the meeting, mainly focussing on the Ware North hybrid planning application and the budget/precept, and send it to the Clerk for other items to be added and then submitted for publication in the March magazine. The Clerk agreed to include information about the May 4th Parish Council election.

DD/Clerk

23.005 Police report

No report received. Cllr Martin Spackman said PCSO Karen Broad is unwell at present.

Clerk

23.006 Planning

1. New Planning Applications

3/23/0046/FUL	<p>Moles Farm: Change of land use; demolish agricultural buildings and build two dwellings.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To object on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It requires the bridleway to be surfaced with tarmac.</i> <i>There are concerns that by surfacing the bridleway to Moles Farm, the metalled bridleway could subsequently be extended to eventually meet with the Ware North development. This would be totally unacceptable.</i> <p><i>Vehicular access over a bridleway can only be with the express permission of the land-owner by way of access rights. Has this permission been obtained?</i></p> <p><i>Although Section 62 (2) of the Highways Act 1980 gives Local Highway Authorities a power to carry out works to improve highways, case law has determined that if the construction of a hard surface changes the character of a way, it goes beyond 'improvement'. Therefore, the highway authority should take safety implications and the enjoyment of current users, including riders, into consideration. Improvements to a bridleway must make the way easier, safer, or more enjoyable for its users, enhancing its suitability for use. Any works to a bridleway which detract from its suitability might not be a proper exercise of the highway authority's power to improve a highway. However, if permission is granted, then stone mastic asphalt (SMA) should not to be used.</i></p>	Clerk
3/23/0019/HH	<p>Westmill House. Retrospective: convert garage into 1-bed annexe</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Parish Council has no comments.</p>	
3/22/2406/FUL	<p>Land North and East of Ware (Ware2)</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Parish Council to object on the grounds set out in item 2.2.1 below</p>	

2. Applications received too late for the agenda and other planning matters

1. Late applications

3/23/0109/HH 39 Arthur Martin Leake Way: Extend garage and convert into annexe.

RESOLVED: To object due to over development of the site and the loss of a parking space in a road where street parking is already heavy, noting that the garage was included as a parking space on the development plan. The Clerk agreed to check the Neighbourhood Plan.

Clerk

2. Ware North update

1. Cllr Deryck Dipper gave a report on the Ware North hybrid development plan 3/22/2406/FUL, using a number of examples from the Ptarmigan plan. Cllr David Andrews had said that he wanted to know the Parish Council's response.

RESOLVED: to raise serious concerns as follows:

- A10 Junction – the Parish Council has noted comments regarding the anticipated usage of this junction when the development progresses and wishes to express serious concerns when, with significant increase in traffic joining and exiting fast moving A10, there is a growing fear of potential accidents. This***

junction has been designed with a short run off exit and entrance and because it is located closely to the next junction (south), traffic often does not move over to the outside lane to permit traffic entering the dual carriageway. There was a quite serious accident in the autumn of 2022 on the southbound carriageway caused by a collision of vehicles entering the carriageway colliding with vehicles using both lanes. This requires more consideration as a significant rise in numbers using the junction arises from the proposed development.

- 2. Green belt limit: The new site boundary of the proposed development must be reinforced as the limit of encroachment into the green belt which is a key feature of the Parish Council's 2018 Neighbourhood Plan.*
 - 3. Ware Town centre traffic congestion: The Parish Council considers an increase of 1,800 houses will bring about a significant quantity of additional traffic, some of which will enter the town centre area. There is considerable congestion in the town at peak hours and a growing increase could lead to potential gridlock and forcing people to go elsewhere. Could that ultimately affect local town businesses?*
 - 4. 331 Bus diversion: The Parish Council noted the suggestion of diverting the 331 Bus around the estate development. The Parish Council will wish to consult parishioners, but at peak times this bus service is used by school children and commuters and such a diversion could add 15 minutes or more onto school travel times. The bus into Hertford via Ware leaves High Cross at 8am and reached Hertford at 8.30am in time for children using schools there. Any diversion would mean the bus having to leave much earlier causing the journey to school to be unnecessarily lengthened by 50%. This diversion must not occur at peak times – the estate circular bus should meet the estate need and getting children into Hertford. A diversion of the bus would adversely affect all outlying villages north of Ware.*
 - 5. Light pollution: The proposal to fit astro-turf pitches on some of the school playing field area will undoubtedly be accompanied by floodlighting so that the facility can be used in the evenings. This is close to Moles Farm and the Parish Council is concerned this will cause further light pollution to Moles Farm residents who will have become surrounded by developments. Floodlighting nearby may cause significant light pollution. Has this been considered?*
 - 6. Biodiversity: How does building on green field land increase biodiversity?*
 - 7. Schools: Schools and shops appear around 2030. How will demand for education services be managed as houses are completed during 2025 – 2029 before schools are built?*
 - 8. Lack of consultation time: The Parish Council considers the consultation period is far too short. There are over 120 documents and few of these can be fully absorbed in a single month's consultation period.*
 - 9. Sewerage: There are concerns as to how sewerage facilities will cope, especially as there have been reports of spillage into local rivers.*
 - 10. Planning drift: The Parish Council has noted the estate master plan drawings but is aware that the final plans submitted by prospective developers can be quite different. How will this planning drift be avoided for this development?*
2. Moles Farm Flooding: the alleviation work undertaken by the farmer appears to have resolved the problem since no flooding occurred during the recent heavy rains.
 3. Ware Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 consultation deadline 26th January: Noted.
3. **Decision Notices.** *Noted as set out in the Planning Appendix A*

4. Progress on existing development: Glebe Field

1. The problem with the pebble footpath has been resolved by Osprey Homes replacing it with tarmac as per the approved plan.
2. Footbridge across the watercourse: It was noted that the handrail is inadequate with only one rail; it therefore presents a considerable to users, especially children who could easily slip into the watercourse. The Clerk to raise with Osprey.
3. Additional item: The Clerk reported that, in response to concerns raised in the October meeting (Minute 22.155.4.2), Network Homes have agreed to install a knee-high barrier (birdmouth fencing) where children shoot into the road on their bikes and skateboards. Scheduled to be done on 28th February. Some councillors objected that that this action was not necessary and had not been agreed by the Council.

Clerk

Clerk

23.007 Finance

Note: Copy of full Cashbook spreadsheets submitted for following items 1, 2 and 3

1. Cashbook Accounts and Reserves to 31st December 2022 (Third Quarter)

	Unity Bank	Saffron B/S	Redwood
Cashbook Balance 1 st December	58,641.16	82,972.14	85,054.82
Income 1 st to 31 st December	3,695.16	141.05	0.00
Expenditure 1 st to 31 st December	2,095.43	0.00	0.00
Cashbook balance 31 st December	<u>60,240.89</u>	<u>83,113.19</u>	<u>85,054.82</u>

RESOLVED: To approve the Accounts as submitted to the Council.

Clerk

2. Bank Reconciliation as at 31st December 2022

	Unity Bank	Saffron B/S	Redwood
Bank Balances 30th September	63,616.41	83,113.19	85,054.82
Unbanked payments	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unbanked receipts	2,010.00	0.00	0.00
Cashbook balances 30th September	<u>63,616.41</u>	<u>83,113.19</u>	<u>85,054.82</u>

RESOLVED: To approve the Bank Reconciliation as submitted to the Council.

Clerk

3. 1. Payments for approval

All payments made under the General Power of Competence, LA 2011 s1(1)

	Gross	VAT to reclaim
C Spackman: The Pit	200.00	
Payplus Ltd November-December	69.24	11.54
Clerk: Office supplies	15.30	
Broadmead Leisure December	60.00	10.00
Everflow Water Feb/March (no charge – account in credit)	0.00	
E.ON December	258.71	43.12
Broadmead Leisure January	60.00	10.00
Clerk: expenses December-January	29.79	
Clerk: salary January	734.64	
HMRC: PAYE January	80.20	
HMRC: Employer's NIC January	7.84	
M Spackman: Hedges/Trees/affix bin (late invoice)	1,240.00	

RESOLVED: to approve payments as per the Clerk's list presented to the Council.

Clerk
Recoverable
VAT included

4. 2023/24 Budget and Precept

Budget: An updated budget proposal for 2023/24 (year1) was studied, including forecasts for 2024/25 (year 2) and 2025/26 (year 3). The budget allowed for the Norman Wodson pavilion refurbishment costs to be covered in 2023/24. This included the full use of the £168,000 long term reserve funds in that year. The proposal was to increase the 2022/23 precept of £33,150 by approximately 2.1% each year to 2025/26.

RESOLVED: To accept the budget proposals as presented to the Council.

Precept: RESOLVED: To set the 2023/24 precept at £33,850.

It was agreed that an explanation for the increase should be printed in the March Village Life magazine.

DD

5. Precept Form

The Presiding Chairman, the Clerk and two councillors signed the EHDC precept form. The Clerk to send it to EHDC.

Clerk

6. Wodson Field fence and gate options from available Section 106 funding

A number of ideas and options were considered. It was agreed that the funds should be spent wisely and on priority based needs. The Wodson Field fence along Cold Christmas Lane and the entrance gates in particular are definite candidates. The boundary fence along Ermine Street although not in good condition, is supplemented by the hedge; to replace it would require the hedge to be removed and therefore replacing this section was rejected. It was questioned whether the allotment gardens would qualify for the Parks & Gardens contribution, bearing in mind that the charity SPACE (supporting families with neurodiverse children and young people) now has an allotment plot. The Clerk to investigate.

Clerk

A bench for The Pit from recycled plastic to be considered.

ALL

It was agreed that councillors would bring their ideas to the February Council meeting for further discussion.

The S106 money totalling approximately £36.2k comprises approx £10.5k Children & Young People Contribution and £25.7k Parks & Gardens Contribution.

23.008 Norman Wodson Pavilion

1. Building Replacement Evaluation Working Group

1. Procurement JCT Contract

CLlr Deryck Dipper reported that the procurement contract notice will be launched on Contracts Finder on 25th January and that the JCT tender details are being finalised and should be ready to send to responding interested contractors on Monday 30th January.

The deadline for tenders to be received by the Clerk will be 10am Monday 6th March and a Tenders Panel meeting is to be held on the evening of 6th March to review them. The March Parish Council meeting is proposed for Tuesday 21st March in order to appoint the successful contractor by the end of the month.

Clerk/
SB/DD

2. RABI: acquisition of additional land

No progress to report.

Clerk/DD

3. Safety gate exit from the outside compound: update

CLlr Martin Spackman said he had a quote of approximately £700 (+VAT) for the gate, plus fitting costs of approximately £600, ie a total of approx £1,300 +VAT. It was agreed that this looked very expensive and alternative quotes should be obtained. CLlr Martin Spackman to follow up.

MS

23.009 Recreation Areas

1. Play area: Safety Report. The Broadmead January report was received and noted: No action required.

2. (i) Car Park surface dressing update: The second and final dressing has been completed. The Clerk noted he has not yet received an invoice.

MS/Clerk

(ii) Ongoing flooding issues: The Clerk reported that, following CLlr Steve Bosson's conversation with the dressing contractor where it was suggested the completely blocked drain in the road outside the gate may be a contributing factor, the blocked drain had been reported on the Highways Fault site. The Highways response had just been received stating that an inspection found no fault with the drain and therefore no action will be taken until it appears on the next gully cleaning schedule.

23.010 Allotments

1. 2023 Tenancy Agreements

The current 2023 tenancy position was reviewed against the Clerk's report.

TAWG

It was noted that one tenant has paid only £58.50 instead of the invoiced £60 because of having to pay for insufficient postage on the envelope. The Clerk noted that no one else had reported the same problem and that most renewals and invoices had, in any case, been sent out by email.

Clerk

2. Land Registry Title Absolute.

The Clerk reported that Land Registry has banked the £40 fee but has not yet sent the new Title.

Clerk

2. Tenancy issue and course of action

1. Update on legal proceedings.

The Clerk said he had nothing further to report. It was therefore considered unnecessary to invoke Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude press and public.

23.011 Highways, Footways and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

1. North Drive:

1. Update on removal of lamp post W3: No progress.

BMH

2. Ransom Strip boundary/road kerb installation: Cllr Steve Bosson to discuss at a meeting with EHDC.

SB/Clerk

3. Surface water problem by No 10: EHDC is taking up the problem with Network Homes. In their opinion, the problem has been caused by vehicles driving over the footway to access No 10. The footway is not constructed to take the weight and, since there is no dropped kerb, it is unlikely that crossover permission would have been granted. It was noted that the flood water causes pedestrians to walk in the road.

SB/Clerk

4. Reinstatement of combi bin at North Drive/Poplar Close junction: The bin has been reinstated, with thanks to Cllr Martin Spackman.

2. Broken Wadesmill village entrance signs update: The Clerk reported that there has still been no response from either Cllr David Andrews or Ian Hollinrake of HCC.

Clerk

3. Poor condition of Old Church Lane: This was considered under Public Comments earlier in the meeting.

23.012 Other matters

1. The Feathers ACV nomination: The Clerk reported that the nomination has been submitted to EHDC and a decision is now awaited.

Clerk

2. Parish Council elections, 4th May: The importance of having people stand for election was explained by the Clerk, not least of all in order that the Parish Council may retain the General Power of Competence under LGA 2011. It was agreed that the Clerk would write a piece for the March Village Life and that enquiries should ideally be directed to the Clerk or alternatively to East Herts Democratic Services. Nomination packs and a timetable will be provided by EHC in due course. It was noted that some current councillors may not stand again.

Clerk

23.013 County and District Councillor report

No report received.

23.014 Urgent and other matters not listed on the agenda

None.

23.015 Correspondence (Noted as per the agenda).

- EHC: Ware Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 consultation: 1 Dec – 26 Jan (22.177.1.4)
- Parishioner: request to take up poor condition of Old Church Lane with HCC (23.011.4)

23.016 Matters for future agendas

Clerk/SB

- **Quarterly review of Neighbourhood Plan Appendix H outstanding action tasks:**
- Neighbourhood Plan Appendix H action update on outstanding tasks: Quarterly review due in March:
 - Retain The White Horse as a pub: *The Parish Council raised a strong objection to the recent planning application. However, that planning application has now been approved.*
 - Nominate Community Assets listed in Appendix E of the Neighbourhood Plan: *The Feathers has now been nominated.*
 - Make Clarkson Memorial and the information boards more visible and maintain regularly:

Under consideration.

- Advertise local history in pubs (with accommodation): *Under consideration with Thundridge and High Cross Society.*
- Promotion of the Turnpike and Doric columns on Wadesmill Bridge: *Under consideration with Thundridge and High Cross Society.*
- Seek formal designation of parts of High Cross as a Conservation area: *Ongoing.*
- Bircherley Green bus depot re-development update
- Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) re excluding dogs from Norman Wodson Playing Field
- Parish lighting ownership to be confirmed.
- Highfield Nursery debt repayment status if payments not made.
- To consider projects for the Section 106 funding that is available (February PC meeting)
- Other matters raised:
 1. Whether a bore hole could provide water for the allotments.

MS/Clerk

23.017 Date and venue of next Council Meeting

Tuesday 21st February 2023 at 7.30pm in the Norman Wodson Pavilion

Clerk

The Vice- Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.58pm

Signed.....

Dated.....

APPENDIX A

Planning decisions and awaited notices

3/22/2429/HH	Hubbsrest, Marsalls Lane: Replace garage and conservatory with 2-storey rear and side extensions; extend front porch. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	GRANTED
3/22/2021/FUL	Norman Wodson Pavilion. Re-roof, create doorway, replace cladding. <i>The Parish Council supported this.</i>	GRANTED
3/22/1588/FUL 3/22/1574/FUL	Moles Farm: Change of land use; demolish agricultural barn and build two dwellings. <i>The Parish Council objected</i>	REFUSED
3/21/2798/HH 3/21/2799/LBC	Bankside Cottage, Ermine Street: New site access, driveway and detached garage. <i>No objections</i>	REFUSED
3/22/2370/HH	Standon Green End: Demolish existing garage and replace, add two extensions, gazebo, replace gates and fencing, landscaping, <i>The Parish Council objected.</i>	Awaited
22/1891/PL	Fusion Trading, Ermine Street/Lowgate Lane: alcohol licence	Awaited
3/22/2561/LBC	Swangles Farm: Install solar panels on garage roof. <i>No comments</i>	Awaited
3/22/2515/LBC	North Lodge, Hanbury Drive: 2 replacement windows <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/22/2370/HH	Standon Green End: Demolish existing garage and replace, add two extensions, gazebo, replace gates and fencing, landscaping, <i>The Parish Council objected.</i>	Awaited
3/22/2153/FUL	Oakleys: Retention of steel framed vehicle drenching facility. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/22/1663/LBC	Westmill House: Regularisation for alteration to garage windows. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/22/1878/FUL	Youngsbury: Erect extensions, internal alterations, etc <i>No comments, but LBC regs to be observed</i>	Awaited
3/22/1740/ADV 3/22/1765/LBC	The Feathers Inn: Illuminated signs <i>No comments, but LBC regs to be observed</i>	Awaited
3/22/1659/HH 3/22/1660/LBC	Windmill Cottage, 18 Ermine Street: install solar panels <i>No comments, but LBC regs to be observed</i>	Awaited
3/22/1663/LBC	Westmill House: Change to previously approved garage window size (3/21/1692/LBC) <i>No comments</i>	Awaited

3/21/2533/FUL	Standon Green House: New gates, fence, gazebo, decking, pond with fountains & lights, clay pathway, and associated landscaping. <i>The Parish Council objected</i>	Awaited
PL/0243/21	Ware Waste Recycling Centre: Construct Waste Transfer Station. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	No information
3/21/2819/HH	Watermill House, Old Church Lane: Retention of an open sided outbuilding. <i>The Parish Council objected</i>	Awaited
3/21/2778/FUL	Watermill House, Old Church Ln: Change of use: 4-bay car port to treatment rooms (RETROSPECTIVE) <i>The Parish Council objected</i>	Awaited
3/21/2600/HH	Watermill House, Ermine St: Detached outbuilding RETROSPECTIVE <i>The Parish Council objected</i>	Awaited
E/22/0109/ENF	Land near Fabdens: Enforcement investigation into caravan site	Awaited
E/22/0101/ENF	Oakleys: Enforcement investigation on large metal-frame structure	Awaited
E/21/0241/ENF	Watermill House, Ermine Street: Enforcement investigation	Awaited
E/21/0237/ENF	Standon Green End House: Enforcement investigation	Ongoing
E/19/0448/ENF	Land adj to The Bungalow, High Cross: Enforcement investigation	Unknown