

THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING

Tuesday 20th February 2024 at 7.30pm in The Norman Wodson Pavilion

PRESENT: Cllr Deryck Dipper, Cllr Lynn Palmer, Cllr Kim Saban, Cllr Natasha Smyth,
Cllr Martin Spackman (Vice-Chair)

1 member of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

Vice-Chair Martin Spackman presided, welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.40pm

ACTION

24.021 Apologies for absence

Parish Councillors: Cllr Steve Bosson (away), Cllr Brita-May Hawes (away) **ACCEPTED**

Others: None

24.022 Declarations of Interest and dispensations

- Interests: Cllr Kin Saban: payment to her husband's company to be approved
Cllr Martin Spackman: Personal (non pecuniary) interest to Sutes Farm planning
- Written requests for dispensations for declarable pecuniary interests: **None**
- Consideration of requests for dispensations: **None**

24.023 Approval of Minutes

- RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the 23rd January 2024 Parish Council Meeting.**
The Chairman signed the amended Minutes.

Clerk

- Items not covered on the Agenda: None**

The meeting was not suspended for public comments

24.024 Village Life Magazine

Cllr Kim Saban agreed to write a report for the April edition.

KS

24.025 Police report

The report for the area for January was received from PCSO Leon De Bruyn

Area Crime Report January 2024

*NO REPORTED CRIMES – Does not include reports for domestic incidents.

HIGH CROSS: *NO RECORDED CRIMES.

THUNDRIDGE: Burglary x1.

WADESMILL: *NO RECORDED CRIMES.

PCSO Leon De Bruyn, PCSO Supervisor, East Herts Rural

24.026 Ware Charities: No report

24.027 Planning

1. New Planning Applications

3/24/0091/OUT	<p>Land East of High Road, High Cross: Up to 95 dwellings</p> <p>Cllr Martin Spackman abstained from voting. RESOLVED: To object to this application on the grounds that it is contrary to the 2018 EH District Plan and the Thundridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan and that it ignores the village boundary red line established in the Neighbourhood Plan. It would have an adverse impact on the character of the village, does not set out how adjacent flooding will be dealt with and it does not represent sustainable development. It provides no real benefits for the community.</p> <p>It was also RESOLVED: to print and distribute a leaflet to every High Cross household to encourage support to the objection.</p> <p>The full letter of objection can be read on the Parish Council website and on the East Herts Planning website.</p>
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Clerk

Clerk

3/24/0251/HH	16 Youngsbury Lane: Single storey front extension	RESOLVED: <i>No comments</i>
3/24/0151/FUL	Campus & Co, High Cross: Canopy to rear	RESOLVED: <i>No comments</i>

Clerk
Clerk

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

1. Late applications: *NONE*
2. Other planning matters:
 1. Millen Homes Wellcroft proposed scheme: No update information
 2. 8 Chestnut Grove: Enforcement notice E/24/0032/ENF was noted
3. Decision Notices. *Noted as set out in the Planning Appendix A.*

Clerk

4. Conservation Area High Cross

The EHC Principal Conservation and Urban Design Officer wrote to say EHC is in the process of starting a programme of Conservation Area Appraisals, and will assess potential areas in due course, including High Cross and the report from BEAMS.

Additionally, they are starting the production of a Draft Local List of Non Designated Heritage Assets, which once ready would go out to public consultation, and High Cross is one area which they intend to survey for candidates.

The Parish Council responded that it would be happy to assist with any activities regarding High Cross and that it would like to be kept up to date on progress. An invitation was extended for the Conservation Officer to attend a Parish Council meeting to explain the work that will be undertaken to assess High Cross. The Conservation Officer replied that they would be pleased to engage with the Parish Council in due course.

24.028 Finance

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

1. Cashbook Accounts and Reserves 31st January 2024

	Unity Bank	Saffron B/S
Cashbook Balance 1 st January	39,814.33	21,313.43
Income to 31st January	1,873.75	0.00
Expenditure to 31st January	3,377.31	0.00
Cashbook balance 31 st January	38,310.77	21,313.43

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

Clerk

2. Bank Reconciliation 31st January 2024

RESOLVED: To approve the bank reconciliation at 31st January 2024 as presented.

Cllr Kim Saban signed the reconciliation sheet

Clerk

3. Performance against 2023/24 budget as at 17th January 2024

The Clerk presented a detailed breakdown of the performance against budget to 17th February.

Budget income £50,951. Actual income to date £52,837. Forecast £58,464

Budget expenditure £220,241. Actual expenditure to date £208,142. Forecast £226,421

RESOLVED: To approve the 2023/24 performance against budget as presented.

Clerk

4. Payments for approval

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

	Gross	VAT incl
E.ON: Electricity January	227.12	37.85
Clerk reimburse: Postage (allotments)	2.75	
Payplus: Payroll January	36.94	6.16
Broadmead: Play equipment maintenance February	60.00	10.00
Clerk: Expenses February	24.40	
Clerk: Salary February	776.24	
HMRC: PAYE	90.60	
HMRC: Employer's contribution	15.02	
Return allotment payment (Cheque)	30.00	

Clerk reimburse: MS365 annual licence (50% shared cost)	39.99	
Everflow Water: Water 16/3 – 15/4	65.39	
SP Saban Ltd: Balance for new pavilion doors	1220.00	203.33

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

It was noted that Stewart Bullard has not invoiced for the Wodson Field cuts for 2023. The Clerk to chase Bullard's invoice and also ask for the 2024 price.

Clerk
Clerk

5. Section 106 monies

1. Quotes for fencing and gates on Cold Christmas Lane

Quotes from three companies were considered. Subject to a confirmed price for 2 x new 100mm square posts for a weld-mesh main gate, it was **RESOLVED to accept the quote of Simon Young for the gates and new fencing on Cold Christmas Lane, up to a total price of £8,000. Once the revised quote is received, the Clerk to apply for the S106 funding to pay for it.**

NS
Clerk

2. Quotes for allotments improvements

One quote was received and another is awaited, but no decision was made.

MS

3. Application for S106 gates funding

As agreed at 24.028.5.1 above.

Clerk

6. Highfield Nursery debt repayment status

Noted: The Clerk reported that £364 of the £4,165 remains outstanding. The debt continues to be paid off regularly at £50 per month, although the February payment has yet to be received. The Clerk continues to follow up monthly. **RESOLVED: To accept the repayment position.**

Clerk

7. Wodson Pavilion rebuild cost

It was agreed to hold off until the DAS insurance position has been clarified and to stay with Zurich for another 12 months.

SB/BMH/
DD

8. HCC Annual lighting: outstanding invoices for 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23

The Clerk to pursue ownership question.

Clerk

24.029 Website

In view of new information and further clarification from Cuttlefish, it was acknowledged that the current 2Commune contract would hold good until its expiry date in October and could then be renewed with Cuttlefish. **RESOLVED: to look again at the Cuttlefish contract in July or September.**

Clerk

24.030 Norman Wodson Pavilion

1. Post Project Appraisal Report

The following report was received from Cllr Deryck Dipper:

DD

1. Introduction

This report provides an appraisal of the Wodson Pavilion Refurbishment Project covering:

- Background to the project
- Project Management
- Service Objectives
- Financial appraisal
- Conclusion

2. Background to the Project

The Council produced its Business Case in 2022 setting out options for the investment of its cash reserves in services for the parish. The clear preferred option was to proceed with the much needed refurbishment of the Wodson Pavilion. This would include the following work:

External – replacement roofing felt and all cladding, soffits and fascias with insertion of new insulation and creation of a new external door into the toilet area for use of the children's football team.

Internal – new floor, ceiling and wall plaster boards, upgraded electrical services and kitchen and full redecoration.

The project then moved into the procurement phase as described below.

3. Project Management

In its Business Case the Council set out its intention of pursuing a robust procurement plan to achieve the Refurbishment Works. This included:

- 3.1 Appoint an architect to produce the specification of the works, seek planning permission and monitor the progress of the works and oversee the payments process. The architect Kevin Lake of Lake Associates, was appointed in April 2022. Planning Permission was received in December 2022 and the Works Specification produced in January 2023. Monitoring of the works and payments was undertaken during July to September 2023.
- 3.2 Produce an Invitation to Tender Document. This was finalised in January 2023 and lodged on the Governments web site Contract Finder on 26th January 2023 with a deadline for bidders of 6th March 2023.
- 3.3 Produce a draft contract for bidders to review as being a requirement for signature. The contract was duly produced using the JCT standard model and included with the Invitation to Tender.
- 3.4 Manage a competitive bidding process and assessment of bids. The Council received 10 bids and facilitated site visits for all of them. An appraisal of the bids was undertaken and a final decision taken on the preferred bidder based on best price and quality of submission which was Ofstrand Ltd. The JCT contract was signed on 19th April 2023.
- 3.5 Achievement of the Works during the school summer holiday of 2023. All of the Works were duly completed on time before the end of the 6th week of the summer school vacation.
- 3.6 Conclusion – the procurement process met all of the requirements set out in the Business Case and delivered completion of the project on time causing no delay to the reopening of the Day Nursery in September 2023. This report now examines the outcome on the service objectives.

4. Service Objectives

The Business Case focussed mainly on the preservation and improvement of services at Wodson Field and facilitating easy access to it from all over the parish. The Council has been keen to secure renovation of the Wodson Pavilion with improvements to it and this was achieved with the completion of the contract. This has provided a secure location for day nursery services for the foreseeable future and also access to the pavilion at weekends for toilet facilities for children participating in football matches.

These improvements are reflected in the use of the facilities by the two main users:

- Thundridge Pre-School – currently 60% of the children using this day nursery are from the Parish.
- Ware Lions football club – 20 boys from the parish currently play for Ware Lions at the Wodson Field and the club has a growing membership.
These numbers highlight the excellent use by parish families of the facilities which supports the service aims in the business case. This report now explores the financial appraisal.

5. Financial Appraisal

The Business Case stated that the estimated capital expenditure on the project would be approximately £160,000 and would be within the long term cash reserves which at that time was £167k.

Since the time of the business case there has been very high inflation and the project bids were assessed on year later so it is necessary to make a provision for price increases. Using RPI as the indicator the increase year on year from April 2022 to April 2023 was 11.4% .

This raises the Capital Cost estimate in the business case as follows:

Wodson Pavilion Refurbishment Capital Cost forecast	£
Capital Cost estimate April 2022	160,000
RPI addition April 2022 – April 2023 11.4%	<u>18,240</u>
Uplifted Capital Cost estimate at April 2023 price levels	<u>178,240</u>

The Council's long term cash reserve was stated at April 2022 as being £167,000. Since that

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time interest has been received of £3,635 bringing the reserve to £170,635.

The expenditure recorded with the final payment in September 2023 before release of a retention fee is £164,459. The retention fee is £4,214 and with a contingency of £627 this brings forecast future payment to a maximum of ££4,841. Thus the total expenditure is:

Expenditure at September 2023	£164,159
Final retention fee with contingency	<u>£4,841</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>£169,000</u>

A final comparison can now be drawn between outturn and budget and reserves:

	Capital Cost £	Cash Reserves £
Updated Capital Cost estimate and Reserves	178,240	170,635
Outturn Expenditure including retention	<u>169,000</u>	<u>169,000</u>
Achieved under forecast and cash reserv	<u>9,240</u>	<u>1,635</u>

With the addition to the budget for inflation it can be seen the project finished under the adjusted Capital Cost estimate and within long term cash reserves as required by the business case.

6. Conclusion

This report has assessed the outturn performance of the refurbishment of the Wodson Pavilion against several indicators set out in the Business Case. The result described above is summarised below.

- Project Management – completed the bidding documents and the assessment of bids leading to a signed contract by April 2023 enabling a summer timetable for the Works.
- Project Management – delivered the completed Works on time summer 2023.
- Service Objectives – met the objectives in the business case with high levels of numbers from the parish using the day nursery and football club facilities.
- Financial appraisal – delivered the project within both capital cost estimates in the business case and within the limit of the long term cash reserves for this project.

Overall the Council has successfully managed the Wodson Pavilion Refurbishment Works Project completing it on time and within its cash reserve budget.

3. Replacement toilet door hinges

Not yet rectified

4. New electricity contract

The current E.ON contract expires on 26th March. Cllr Deryck Dipper said a new contract with Valda via Love Energy had been signed in January, but nothing heard since. Cllr Deryck Dipper to follow up asap.

DD

5. RABI: acquisition of additional land

The Clerk reported that he had written again to the RABI CEO and is awaiting a response.

Clerk

6. Installation of new pavilion doors

The new doors have now been fitted and keys distributed. Final key numbers to be confirmed.

24.031 Recreation Areas

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

24.032 Allotments

1. 2024 Tenancy Agreements

It was noted that four tenants have yet to pay their rent. The Clerk to send reminders.

Clerk

2. Council inspections of allotments due 16th March

It was agreed that following the Allotments Working Group inspection, any tenants who's plots remain unattended will be sent eviction notices.

**TWAG/
Clerk**

2. **Tenancy issue update and course of action**
Update on legal proceedings.
RESOLVED: Under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, press and public to be excluded due to the confidential nature of this report and in the public interest. This item to be deferred to the end of the meeting.
- 24.033 Highways, Footways and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)**
1. **North Drive resurfacing:**
The Clerk reported that he had sent a copy of the Deed of Grant to Kylie Perrin of EHDC, pointing out in particular that £20k was to be lodged with the EHDC solicitor against any default by the developer. EHDC have responded that that they are taking it up with their solicitor. **Clerk**
2. **Broken Wadesmill village entrance sign:**
The Clerk reported that he had again taken this up with Ian Hollinrake of HCC who has undertaken to liaise with Ringway to look at the matter. **Clerk**
3. **Unkempt area opposite the White Horse:**
A parishioner has expressed a desire to tidy up the area that belongs to the Parish Council. To be discussed further at the March PC meeting. **Clerk**
- 24.034 Other matters**
1. Fly tipping in The Pit. Cllr Martin Spackman reported no progress. **MS**
2. Tree survey. **RESOLVED: To accept the Tracy Clarke Tree Consultancy quote of £720.** The Clerk to arrange for them to liaise with Cllr Martin Spackman to show them around. **Clerk/MS**
- 24.035 County and District Councillor report**
No report provided.
- 24.036 Urgent and other matters not listed on the agenda**
A text was received before the meeting from a parishioner complaining that there are no signs on the fence or gates prohibiting dogs to be allowed on the Field. Earlier signs have been lost or removed. It was agreed that new large signs are to be purchased and fitted to the fence and gates.
- 24.037 Correspondence:** noted as per the agenda
- Parishioner: re anticipated planning developments
 - Parishioner: re Sutes Farm development (24.027.1)
 - Parishioner: re North Drive pothole concerns (24.033.1)
 - Parishioner: Unkempt area opposite the White Horse (24.033.3)
- 24.038 Matters for future agendas** (as per this meeting's agenda) **Clerk**
- To examine papers held by previous Clerk before considering committing to archive. **Clerk**
The Clerk is waiting for the previous Clerk to deliver the papers for examination.
 - Website: To review Cuttlefish contract in July or September 2024.
 - Quarterly review of Neighbourhood Plan Appendix H outstanding action tasks:
 - Local history overview: *Add to website and/or village magazine.*
 - Promotion of the Turnpike and Doric columns beneath Wadesmill Bridge: *Add to website and/or village magazine.*
 - North Drive:
 1. Update: Removal of lamp post W3: *No progress.*
 2. Update: Ransom Strip boundary/road kerb installation when road resurfaced. *With SB/EHDC*
 - To add other matters raised: *None raised.* **SB Clerk**
- 24.039 Date and venue of the next Parish Council Meeting** **Clerk**
Tuesday 19th March, 7.30pm at the Norman Wodson Pavilion
- 24.032.2 Clerk's Allotments report with press and public excluded under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960:**
Tenancy issue and course of action: The Clerk verbally updated the Council on the current position of the legal action and court's Case Management Hearing on 10th April 2024.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.42pm

Signed.....

Dated.....

APPENDIX A

Planning decisions and awaited notices

3/23/2123	Great Henirage Cold Christmas Lane Thundridge - Erection of detached garage. <i>Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
PL/0326/23	Land adj to Ware Recycling Centre: Temporary access (2 years) for construction traffic. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/22/2406/FUL	Land North and East of Ware (Ware2): Hybrid application <i>The Parish Council raised serious concerns</i>	Awaited
PL/0343/23	Cemex Westmill Quarry. <i>Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/23/1207	Oakleys -Steel framed building to spray vehicles <i>The Council had no Comment</i>	Awaited
PL/0357/23 (CM0081)	Westmill Landfill – construction and operation of solar farm and associated infrastructure <i>The Parish Council objected to this application</i>	Awaited
3/23/1911/HH	Bourne House Cambridge Road Wadesmill - Ground floor side extension, basement side extensions and other works <i>The Council had no objection</i>	Awaited

Licensing Applications

23/1195/PLV	Dog & Whistle 112 Fore Street – Variation to opening hours. <i>The Parish Council had no comment</i>	Awaited
23/1202/PLV	Samy Ltd (formally Mcolls) Baldock Road – Extension to opening hours and days. <i>The Council had no comments.</i>	Awaited
3/23/1450/PL	Emine Café & Stores – Premises license change to increase hours from 9am – 8pm with an additional 12 late closes per year until midnight for themed evenings. <i>Whilst the Council appreciated the need to diversify the business, the Council had concerns regarding lack of parking, increased litter, potential antisocial behaviour, noise nuisance late at night with live music.</i>	GRANTED subject to conditions

Planning Enforcement notifications

E/24/0032/ENF	8 Chestnut Grove: Erection of a residential accommodation not incidental to main dwelling.	Awaited
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