

Markyate Parish Council

MINUTES OF MARKYATE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2009 AT 7.30PM IN THE JONES ROOM, MARKYATE VILLAGE HALL, MARKYATE

Present: Councillor: E King, Chairman, Cllr P Bunyan, Vice Chairman, Cllr C Bennett, B/Cllr Chapman, Cllrs I Crawford, Cllr C Dullea, Cllr S Pilkinton, Mrs J Bissmire (Clerk)
In attendance: 1 member of public

36/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr J Gower and Cllr R Peterson due to personal commitments and Cllr S Deacon due to business commitments.

37/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr E King declared a personal interest in item 63/09, overgrown trees in Peggy's Field due to living in close proximity.
Cllr E King declared a personal interest in item 65/09, sewage overflow due to the writer of the letter being friends.
Cllr E King declared a personal interest in item 59/09, picnic tables in Peggy's Field due to living in close proximity.
Cllr S Pilkinton declared a prejudicial interest in item 43/09 Business in High Street due to family connections.

38/09 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 5 May 2009, with one amendment were a correct record and was signed by the Chairman. This was proposed by Cllr S Pilkinton and seconded by Cllr I Crawford.

The Chairman noted two emergency items to be added to the end of the agenda: (1) Sports for Us and (2) Nomination paper for election to the HAPTC Executive Committee.

39/09 MINUTES OF THE HALLS COMMITTEE MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Halls Committee Meeting held on 23 March 2008, as circulated, be received and adopted.

40/09 PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 68

No public questions at this meeting

C

41/09 PLANNING DECISIONS

Planning Decisions received from Dacorum Borough Council

4/00418/09/FHA, 28 London Road, Single storey front extension, Granted

4/00402/09/FHA, 46 High Street, Pitched Roof to Garage and side Conservatory, Granted.

42/09 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following three planning applications were received after publication of the agenda.

4/00789/09/FHA, High Oaks, Cheverells Green, Replacement Orangery. No objection.

4/00864/09/STU, Kensworth Nurseries, re-conductoring of overhead cables. For information only.

4/00867/09/STU, Little Woodend Cottages, Puddephats Lane, re-conductoring of overhead cable. For information only.

43/09 BUSINESS IN HIGH STREET

A resume of events leading to a letter dated 21 May 2009 was circulated to all members.

As Cllr Pilkinton declared a prejudicial interest in this item, she made the following report and left the meeting at 7.40pm

"My brother is the freeholder and he leases this property. I have no knowledge whatsoever of the person who has written this letter, I know nothing about this Limited Company. I will be forwarding this to my solicitor for his advice".

It was reported a general enquiry was made by the Clerk to DBC along with two other queries. The response from DBC stated the trading at this address was within permitted use; therefore this matter was closed. It was confirmed the Clerk responded to a general enquiry which is normal practise and the Parish Council said the Clerk acted responsibly and correctly.

It was **RESOLVED** to write to the business concerned stating as far as the Parish Council is concerned this matter is now closed and any further correspondence should be directed to DBC.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Pilkinton returned to the meeting at 7.47pm.

44/09 CLERKS REPORT

The following was reported:-

- One of the picnic tables had been installed in Peggy's Field, the cost for cement was £38.64 and the same is required for the second table to be installed.
- The Public Notice for the Markyate Street St John the Baptist Commemorative Plaque has been displayed for 28 days at St John the Baptist Church and the notice board at the corner of Cavendish Road and has now been forwarded to the Diocesan Registrar of St Albans with the completed Certificate.
- A report circulated to all members was noted regarding the change to bus services. New timetables must be advertised as there are significant changes. Centrebus have been asked to ensure they publicise the changes. New timetables have been placed on notice boards in the village.
- Members were reminded if there have been any changes to their interests previously registered, they must complete Form 2 of the Model Code of Conduct Order 2007 which is available from the Clerk.

Action: ALL

45/09 CRICKET CLUB

It was reported there has been no response from the solicitors regarding the letter sent from the Parish Council dated 6 May 2009, in particular clause 5.5 (a)(ii) & (vii) the Parish Council's decision that the clubhouse is included in the lease which was taken in to account when the rent was reviewed.

Invoice No. 32112 for £862.50 payable to Paul Berg and Taylor solicitors acting on behalf of the Parish Council was noted for payment.

Due to the arrival of one member of public after item 40/09, Public Comments, Standing Orders were suspended at 7.54pm in order for the member of public to speak.

The member of public said he had attended a Council meeting previously and had reported twelve items which required attention; to date only three had been addressed. The minute relating to this matter was read out with the relevant actions carried out but the member of public said the overgrown areas were the same as when he first reported them. It was reported the Village Warden had attended the areas concerned the next day after being first reported and would again but it was not possible in the three days worked by the Village Warden to attend every area every day.

After much discussion it was agreed a meeting will be held with B/Cllr Chapman and the member of public, also the Village Warden to meet with him to look at the areas of concern.

In conclusion the Parish Council said they had done all they could but the outstanding issues were not within their remit and are the responsibility of either DBC or Herts Highways.

Two particular items of concern are the wall to the rear of the food premises in Hicks Road which DBC has placed enforcement on and the A5 lay-by where refrigerated lorries park overnight causing disturbance to the adjacent houses.

Agreed: B/Cllr Chapman to arrange a meeting to look at the areas of concern and Village Warden to contact member of public to look at overgrown ivy.

Standing Orders were reinstated at 8.03pm

46/09 EXTERNAL AUDIT

On going.

47/09 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2008/09

The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor Clubfinance Ltd had approved the accounts for 2008/09.

It was proposed by Cllr S Pilkinton and seconded by Cllr P Bunyan and **RESOLVED:** that the Internal Auditor's Report for 2008/2009 be accepted. The Parish Council noted the report as follows:--

A Appropriate books of account have been properly kept through the year. **Agreed: Yes.**

B The Council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for. **Agreed: Yes**

C The council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and had adequate arrangements to manage these. **Agreed: Yes.**

D The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves where appropriate. **Agreed: Yes.**

E Expected income was fully received; based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for. **Agreed: Yes**

F Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts; expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for. **Agreed: Yes**

G Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied. **Agreed: Yes.**

H Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained. **Agreed: Yes**

I Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out. **Agreed: Yes.**

J Year-end accounts were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments/income and expenditure), agreed with cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and, where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded. **Agreed: Yes.**

1) K **The council has met its responsibilities as a trustee. Agreed:**

For any other risk areas identified by the council (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:

IT system controls to cover data security and integrity: Yes

Schedule of Recommendations are:

- When quotes are obtained for purchases over £1000 and the lowest quote is not selected, the reason for choosing the quote is recorded.
- That the Council carries out the required annual review of its system of internal audit
- That year end accruals are reviewed, in particular in relation to matters outstanding with the external auditors.

Actions agreed:

- Minutes to include why quotations are declined
- Review effectiveness of the Internal Audit presented at this meeting, to be carried out for 2009/10 in March 2010.
- £2500.00 for Lubbock Fine to cover external audit on going costs entered under accruals

Agreed: This was a good report and the Parish Council gave thanks to the Financial Officer as this was her first internal audit and the Clerk.

48/09 ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009

The Clerk had circulated copies of the completed Annual Return. It was

RESOLVED

That Section 1 Statement of Accounts and Section 2 Annual Governance Statement were correct and signed by the Chairman and Clerk for submission to the external auditor.

Annual Accounts 2008/2009 Return of Statement of Assurance

- a) The Clerk presented the Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31 March 2009 to the Parish Council for approval, and the accounts were signed as representing fairly the financial position of the Parish Council as at 31 March 2009.

It was proposed by Cllr E King and seconded by Cllr S Pilkinton and **RESOLVED:** that the **Annual Return figures for 2008/2009** be approved.

- b) It was proposed by the Cllr S Pilkinton and seconded by Cllr P Bunyan and **RESOLVED:** that the **Statement of Assurance for the Annual Accounts for 2008/2009** be approved

Action: Clerk/FO

49/09 TO REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT

As part of the Annual Return the Council has to confirm that it has reviewed its internal audit procedures and is happy that it is effective.

It was proposed by Cllr C Dullea and seconded by Cllr P Bunyan and

RESOLVED

That the Parish Council confirms that as far as it is in its power to do so:

- The Internal Auditor seems to be independent
- The Internal Auditor seems to be competent
- The Internal Auditor seems to have a satisfactory relationship with the Clerk and Councillors
- The Audit Planning is satisfactory
- The scope is satisfactory
- The reporting is satisfactory

50/09 EXTERNAL AUDITS FOR 2004/05, 2005/06 AND 2006/07

A report prepared by Cllr Pilkinton was circulated to all members raising observations for our new external auditor.

It points out that the computer system to maintain the village hall bookings and accounts was originally set up in 1991. Technology then did not permit the sophistication we have today. In 2004 the first year of the accounts outstanding we did not have the computing power we now have. To maintain separate records, separate bank accounts had to be held. Today the Quickbooks accounting package used allows separate accounting with one bank account. The criticisms now raised do not relate to the accuracy of the figures or any particular entries, they are all basic ways of working concerning risk assessment, dates for statutory inspection, Asset register, Fidelity guarantees and definition of the power to spend. The question was asked why when these problems occurred in the 2004/05 accounts were the Parish Council not informed until 2009. It was noted these issues were not considered good practise or material at that time and although they have been addressed for some time now, it was felt the auditors had a duty to report any deficiencies as soon as identified. All issues raised are principles not figures.

It was **RESOLVED**

To ask BDO Stoy Hayward to point out any practises which they disagree with immediately in order for these to be rectified for the current year.

Action: Clerk

51/09 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

To approve the schedule for payment as attached.

It was proposed by Cllr C Bennett and seconded by Cllr C Dullea and **agreed** unanimously to approve the schedule for payment.

RESOLVED: that the schedule of payment be signed as circulated with the exception of cheque No. 103085 Came & Company, see minute 57/09.

The schedule of accounts listed the balances of the Parish Councils accounts as at today's date as follows:

MPC Current Account	£ 1257.78
MPC Savings	£ 57174.80
MPC Investment	£ 53028.51
Petty Cash	£ 9.77
Luncheon Club	£ 552.60
TOTAL	£103,023.46

52/09 PARISH PLAN

The following report was made:-

- We have now concluded the data collection and reports are available for analysis.
- The 2001 census has been used (for households and residents in Markyate) and the August 2008 Register of Electors to see if our results are representative, and unbiased.
- From the number of households on the Register of Electors, 36.4% were included in our survey.
- From the number of electors on the Register of Electors, 36.9% were included in our survey. This is very similar to the proportion of households; it shows a consistency in the results.
- Looking at the age distribution of residents counted in the survey, compared with the Census distribution by age range, the comparison is quite good. Our survey has those aged 75+ as 8.5% of electors compared with 8.6% in the census. This is very pleasing as we could easily have been under represented in this age range.
- When designing the new survey we used many of the questions posed in the previous Appraisal, so are able to see the change in views and needs.
- The Appraisal publication had about half its space devoted to local history, articles and reminiscences by local people and comments and pictures by some of the young people of the village. It is hoped the Parish Plan would have a similar balance of editorial, but this needs a new theme. It has been suggested road names, their derivation, notable properties and residents. We are seeking an editor for this part of the report. The History Society is to be contacted as a prime source of information.
- A brief meeting of the Parish Plan Group was held and it was **agreed** to divide the results into blocks by topic, with one Councillor leading the analysis and coming up with Proposals for the Parish Plan. These should be as bullet points for speed and clarity.
- A volunteer had offered previously to edit all the comments written in the open ended questions. These are being put together.
- Cllr Crawford to look at the Planning section, Cllr Dullea the education section and Cllr Bunyan health section. Each will consult with others who can help with their topic. For example Mr Hood should be approached regarding education as he helped with the choice of questions.
- Cllr Peterson will be responsible for the publication to liaise with Chris Rushe so that the tables can be edited on line.

Action: SP/IC/CD/RP

53/09 SHAPE YOUR FUTURE CONSULTATION

It was stated this is mentioned in the consultation to be reported under to item 66/09.

54/09 INTERPRETATION BOARDS

A meeting was held with Hertfordshire CC to discuss proof 1 and minor changes were made. Awaiting draft 2 for approval. On going.

Action: Clerk

55/09 HICKS ROAD INDUSTRIAL AREA

In absentia Cllr Gower his report was circulated to all members prior to the meeting which proposed the following:

- Understand and expand on the results revealed by the recent survey and prioritise HRIE within the Parish Plan.
- Conduct an audit of businesses operating in the industrial estate including the number of people directly employed there.
- Establish exactly the various lease and ownership status of the properties and land on the site.
- Consult stake holders and create a vision for the area with supporting artist impressions.
- Get a scheme on formal agenda's within Dacorum.
- Establish a timeline that is adhered to.

- Set a deadline for development to begin.

It was mentioned parishioners have made their choices for Hicks Road in the Parish Plan questionnaire. The most favourable options are for a police station (now irrelevant with the shared use of the Fire station) and a new surgery to be situated there. Our survey has been run in parallel with DBC work on their Core Plan. B/Cllr Chapman confirmed that in the current draft core plan there are houses being considered for Hicks Road (and across the Borough as a whole), with the existing Industrial businesses in Hicks Road being moved to far end of village, next to Dammersey Close.. Stakeholders have and will be consulted. It was **agreed** that our Plan must reflect what parishioners want. After much discussion it was **agreed** Cllr Gower to be asked to assess the Parish Plan to see what people want and pick up on this and liaise with Cllr Pilkinton.

Action: JG/SP

56/09 COMMON LAND AT CHEVERELLS GREEN

In absentia Cllr Peterson, this item is deferred.

57/09 INSURANCE SCHEME QUOTATION

A quotation was presented to the Parish Council from Came and Company under the 3 year binding agreement, minute 48/08, and it was

RESOLVED

To make payment for £2781.58 which includes Business Interruption for £20,000 and the addition of 3 picnic tables which increases Street Furniture to £1500.00.

Action: Clerk

58/09 THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION BILL

It was **agreed** a response to this legislation will be prepared by Cllr Pilkinton using the new Local Association Information Service (LAIS) made available through HAPTC.

Action: SP

59/09 THREE PICNIC TABLES

It was confirmed one picnic table has been fitted in Peggy's Field with the second table to be fitted next week.

It was reported consultation letters had been distributed to all surrounding properties advising of the position of the tables and two responses were received but no objections raised.

DBC have given permission to install the third table outside the Village Hall.

The Parish Council extended their thanks to Cllr Peterson for the hours spent installing the table together with the Village Warden.

Action: RP/VW

60/09 LAY BY ON A5

An email from Herts Highways was circulated to all members prior to the meeting which states "*strong justification to close a lay-by on the trunk road network is needed as we are aware of the importance of providing regular rest areas for drivers who are often making long journeys. This is particularly importance in non urban environments where the opportunities to stop can be fairly limited.*"

The Parish Council felt as the truck stop is one mile from the lay-by and there are four or five lay-bys on the A5 in close vicinity, there are sufficient rest areas for drivers.

It was **agreed** a letter should be sent to the Environmental Agency raising health and safety concerns as this lay by is in close proximity to houses and is used for fly tipping and other forms of misuse and is in an unsuitable position and including noise nuisance from all night running of refrigeration lorries.

It was

RESOLVED

To write to the Environmental Health, copy M Penning MP, expressing these concerns and B/Cllr Chapman to write personally in his capacity as Borough Councillor.

Action: HC/Clerk

61/09 CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The Clerk circulated the list of general correspondence which was duly noted.

62/09 MEETING DATES FOR 2009/10

The Clerk had circulated a draft 2 schedule of Meeting Dates for 2009/10 with the Budget & Finance Committee dates amended, which was approved for distribution.

Action: Clerk

63/09 OVERGROWN TREES IN VILLAGE

In response to concerns raised by parishioners regarding overgrown trees in Peggy's Field and around the village, it was **RESOLVED**

Confirmation of the exact trees concerned and the advice of a tree surgeon is sought together with quotations for the required work to be presented at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

64/09 SPEED ACTIVATED SIGN AT CHEVERELLS GREEN

It was reported this sign is now in situ but has been placed in the middle of a narrow path creating difficulties.

It was

RESOLVED

To contact Herts Highways raising this concern and asking for a report on this matter.

Action: Clerk

65/09 SEWAGE OVERFLOW AT REAR OF FIRE STATION

It was reported a letter from a concerned parishioner regarding the overflow of sewage to the rear of the fire station enclosing a copy letter to Thames Water Utilities. As there is a problem with the sewers coping in the village, it was

RESOLVED

A letter to be sent to Thames Water advising of the concern of the Parish Council and stating this matter is a long standing and recurring problem and should be resolved as a matter of urgency as this is a health hazard, the correspondent to be copied in.

Action: Clerk

66/09 LUTON AND SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE CORE STRATEGY: PREFERRED OPTIONS

This consultation document was forwarded to Cllr Pilkinton to formulate a response. The consultation sought views on the latest Core Strategy Document which is part of the Luton and South Bedfordshire Local Development Framework that sets out the strategy vision and spatial planning policies to be applied across the Luton and South Bedfordshire Growth Area. It sets out the preferred locations and strategic scale of development together with the means through which this will be delivered. The area covered is Luton and former South Bedfordshire District including Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Linlade, rural settlements and areas.

It was recommenced and

RESOLVED

To approve the response as follows:

- No objection to the housing options but public transport to have adequate service to make car use unnecessary.
- The A5 – M1 link has some importance to Markyate as it could take traffic that currently comes up and down the A5 and through Dunstable
- The county boundary does make an artificial barrier which people seeking work, in particular, do not recognise. There should be more cooperation with Hertfordshire to assess real transport needs.
- Markyate residents might well look to take up new employment opportunities, there is nothing to make their access easier, particularly in the airport direction.
- The housing developments are not likely to impact on Markyate.

Cllr Pilkinton was thanked for her time on this matter.

Action: Clerk

67/09 REPORTS

Finance Committee. Next meeting 23 June 2009

HAPTC. The HAPTC Conference is being held on 17 June 2009.

All councillors are invited; Cllr Pilkinton will attend, but encouraged others to join her. The Executive Committee minutes have been circulated.

School Governors. No report, two appeals for school places are going through at present.

Youth Management. It was confirmed during a meeting with Mr M Fawzi, HertsCC on 11 May 2009 it was felt this committee should be disbanded as the Halls Committee can deal with issues needing attention.

It was **RESOLVED**

To seek advice on the disbanding of this committee and bank account.

Action: PB/Financial Officer/Halls Administrator

Watling Neighbourhood Action. Minutes to be circulated.

68/09 AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

To be advised

69/09 ITEMS FOR MARKYATE MONTHLY

- Hicks Road
- Lay-by on A5
- Cheverells Green
- Picnic tables, thank you to Cllr Peterson
- Buses from Luton to Hemel Hempstead (46)
- Volunteers for Parish Plan
- Big Lunch
-

70/09 SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY

It was reported valid comments were made seeking to ensure the safety of our children. This published policy potentially leaves small children without escorts and ignores the difficulties encountered by parents with different children attending different schools/nurseries. These are real issues that should be properly addressed.

Action: SP

71/09 THE BIG LUNCH

The Big Lunch is being held on Sunday 19 July 2009 which is a nationwide function designed to bring the community together.

It was proposed to place an article in Markyate Monthly asking parishioners if they wish to join in this event with an all village Picnic in Peggy's Field. If there is interest, options include a charity collection, organised games and sports etc.

Action: RP/Clerk

EMERGENCY ITEMS.

Due to the following two items being received after publication of the agenda and the deadline for responses.

72/09 ELECTION TO THE HERTFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Parish Council

RESOLVED

To submit the vote for the following nominations:

Cllr Keith Williams, Cllr Michael Bradshaw, Cllr Rosemary Farmer, Cllr Margaret White and Cllr Robert Smith.

Action: Clerk

73/09 SPEAK UP FOR SPORT SURVEY

It was reported as Markyate is self sufficient in sport and receives no support for sport from DBC; information about this survey was only received through other sources but it was considered important Markyate sports clubs participate in this survey.

As the deadline was 4th June, Cllr Pilkinton established e-contact with as many Clubs as possible, forwarding them details so they could participate in this survey aimed at planning for future sports needs in Dacorum.

Econtact details for sports clubs in the village will be forwarded to the Parish Office for information.

Action: SP

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.45pm

Next meeting: 7 July 2009

Signed: _____

Date: _____