

WALKERN PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7 January 2021

The meeting was held via Zoom and commenced at 7.00 pm.

Those present were the Chairman, Cllr T Deffley, the Vice-Chairman, Cllr M Rist and Cllrs C Nudds and M James. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Overall. District and County Cllr K Crofton sent his apologies also. Three members of the public attended.

The minutes of the previous meeting, having been circulated, were accepted as a correct record on the proposal of Cllr Rist and seconded by Cllr Deffley.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Cllr Rist will contact the person arranged to cut back the Silver Birch tree on the corner of Aubries/Stevenage Road and to remove the debris on the frontage of 1 Wrights Meadow, to enquire when this work will be carried out. **Action: Cllr Rist**

The Clerk has received a copy of the Definitive Map showing the permitted public pathways within Box Wood.

Declarations of Interest

None.

Public Forum

Concern has been raised that footpaths created through Box Wood over the years may be added to the Definitive Map. There are currently only two permitted footpaths inside the wood, adjacent to Gresley Way, just inside the wood and then adjacent to Gresley park leading to public footpaths across open fields. The Parish Council is concerned it has not been consulted on this, as Box Wood is within Walkern Parish and the protected ancient monument site is within the wood, together with native wildlife and the protected bluebells, which the Parish Council aims to protect at all cost. The Clerk will contact Cllr Ken Crofton to seek his advice on how to proceed with this. **Action: The Clerk**

Update on the Policies for the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan (WNP)

Cllr Rist is looking at the WNP policies very closely to make them all as watertight as possible for the future. The Councillors have looked at her rewording of Policy 12, Urban Design and Planning, Cllr Deffley commenting that it looks good but it will be for EHDC to accept the changes eventually. Cllr Rist is in contact with Jaqueline Veater, Planning Consultant, who can assist also with any grants towards funding the update of the plan, if available and to confirm that any policy updates are correct before it goes back to EHDC. **Action: Cllr Rist**

Walkern Sports & Community Centre – Update

Nigel Bennett is currently replacing the kitchen in the community centre. There are some electrical issues that need addressing also. The quotation from Herts Window Care to install partitioning to divide the hall has been accepted and work will go ahead in due course. WSCC has received a grant and will put £3,000 towards the partitioning with the Parish Council paying the balance as Landlord and owner of the building.

The final fire door can then be installed. The Parish Council unanimously agreed that the current contract for maintenance of the sportsfield should continue for another year due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Clerk will notify The School Grounds Company and Nigel Bennett of this decision. **Action: The Clerk**

Gresley Park -Update

EHDC has confirmed approval of this development and work to the spine road will be the first part to commence for vehicle access. The Parish Council understands more test pits for archaeological excavation works are due to take place also.

Mears Developments – Update

The development is continuing and the Parish Council would like to visit the site in the near future to check any outstanding issues have been dealt with. The Clerk will arrange a site visit. **Action: The Clerk**

Fitness Trail at the Sportsfield

The Parish Council grant application towards purchase of the equipment has been completed and sent back to EHDC. The Chairman thanked Jo Ransom for helping Cllr Nudds with the lengthy application. The meeting with HAGS, the chosen supplier, to go over the site plan will be cancelled and rearranged in the near future once the Parish Council hears back from EHDC.

Litterpicking and Bin Emptying

The Parish Council is pleased with the work being carried out by the new village litterpicker. Concern has been raised again about the amount of household food waste that is being put in the bin by the bus stop. The Parish Council will change the bin for a covered one to try and deter whoever is doing this. The Clerk has tried to order a bigger bin based at WSCC for litterpicking use but EHDC has confirmed we have the largest available and we cannot have two! The Clerk will ask Nigel Bennett if the litterpicker can use the WSCC bin in the meantime whilst the community centre is closed. **Action: The Clerk**

Covid-19 Tier 4 Information for Residents

Please go to the Gov.uk website for up-to-date information on the current situation. Cllr Deffley will replace posters on the entrance to the sportsfield and the Recreation Ground. At the moment all recreational areas are open but please do abide by the rules of social distancing in an outside space.

Action: Cllr Deffley

Finance

Payments made since the last meeting:

Staff costs -	£1438.01
BWP Creative - Parish Council website maintenance Oct/Nov 20	£ 144.00
BWP Creative - Parish Council website maintenance Dec 20	£ 72.00
Walkern Journal - annual grant	£ 300.00
SLCC - Clerk's annual membership	£ 130.00

The above payments were ratified on the proposal of Cllr Deffley and seconded by Cllr Rist.

Tax Assist Accountant prepared a monthly budget report which was presented to all Councillors.

It was agreed by the Parish Council that the parish precept for the forthcoming year 2021/2, should remain the same as last year at £29,237.00. The Clerk will arrange for the forms to be signed and returned to EHDC.

It was agreed that the Chairman and the Clerk should set the precept for the forthcoming year and confirm with the Parish Council via email. The Chairman and the Clerk will set up a Zoom meeting with Mr Alexander of Tax Assist Accountants for advice as necessary but the monthly budget analysis for this year is our guideline for next years budget.

Action: Cllr Deffley/Clerk

Planning

Planning applications received since the last meeting:

9 Yew Tree Close, Walkern	Erection of ground floor front extension, extension to loft to include front and rear roof lights. Cllr Rist will look at the plans and report back to the Parish Council if any comments should be made to EHDC.
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Schedule of Outstanding Items

A new Grazing Agreement for 2021 will be forwarded to Tracey Harris.
The Clerk will notify Perfect Gardens & Landscapes that their contract to maintain the Recreation Ground will continue for another year.

Any Other Business

It was agreed that the Parish Council should continue with shopping and collecting prescription for anyone requiring help over the next few months. Please email or telephone the Clerk if you require any assistance.

Two of the lights are not working along the sportsfield path. The Clerk will notify Hertfordshire County Council.

Action: The Clerk

Cllr Nudds will write a response to the London Luton Airport Authority (LLAA) on flight plan proposals for the future as part of their current consultation with consultees and the general public. Please see the Parish Council website for details if you wish to send in a comment.

Action: Cllr Nudds

The Parish Council wishes to make a Community Award to a person/business, who has made an outstanding contribution to village life over the past year. If anyone has a nomination to make please email the Clerk at heidi.broady@walkernparishcouncil.org or the Chairman at tom.deffley@walkernparishcouncil.org.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4 February 2021 commencing at 7.00pm via Zoom. For details on how to attend please contact the Clerk via email at heidibroady@walkernparishcouncil.org

