

## **WALKERN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 4 February 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, M James and K Overall. Four members of the public were also in attendance.

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

#### **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Silver Birch tree in Aubries has been cut back and the debris and dead tree from the corner of 1 Wrights Meadow removed.

Walkern Parish Council has been successful in its application for a grant towards fitness equipment at the WSCC sportsfield. Many thanks to Jo Ransom of WSCC for assisting with the application and Cllr Nudds for overseeing the whole process on behalf of the Parish Council. The project will commence as soon as safe to do so.

A new litterbin has been installed by the bus stop in Stevenage Road and the old one removed and reinstated at the sportsfield.

The Parish Council's response to the London Luton Airport Authority (LLAA) consultation on new flight plan proposals has been submitted. This can be viewed on the Parish Council website.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **Public Forum**

Mr Dave Standing, in his role as Secretary of the River Beane Restoration Association (RBRA) attended the meeting to ask the Parish Council for a donation towards upkeep of the River Beane. Most of the work is carried out by volunteers but funds are needed for PPE and weed spraying equipment due to a proliferation of invasive species such as giant hogwort and Himalayan Balsam along the river. Other Parish Councils along the River Beane are being approached for support also. The Parish Councillors all agreed to a donation of £100.

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

Jacqueline Veater, Planning Consultant, has estimated her fee to be approximately £6,000 for the work necessary to update the WNP. The more that Councillors can do, the less that will be so the Parish Council agreed to take on as much as possible. Dave Standing has offered to help with the mapping work. New pictures need to be inserted, for example from Box Wood where the vista has changed with the building of the Mears development at Aubries, the originals to be kept for comparison of the changes. Policy 8 will be removed now that the Mears development is more or less completed and another put in its place, with a bigger mapping area of Box Wood, which is in the Parish of Walkern and not part of Stevenage. If any changes are required for the Village Hierarchy Study, Jacqueline Veater

can assist with that also. Cllr Overall, on behalf of the other Councillors, thanked Cllr Rist for the work she has put into this to date.

### **Walkern Sports & Community Centre – Update**

The new kitchen has been installed and the loose fire door adjusted. The School Grounds Company has agreed to continue for another year to maintain the sportsfield at no additional cost.

### **Box Wood – Proposal to add Footpaths to the Definitive Map**

Over time, firebreaks within the wood have become unofficial footpaths and a proposal has been made to Herefordshire County Council by members of the public to make these permitted footpaths and therefore added to the Definitive Map. Evidence is being gathered to show that the footpaths have been used for 20 plus years. The Parish Council and local residents are concerned that the ancient monument site may be damaged, as will flora and fauna within the wood, although this may put off potential buyers of woodland plots in the future. The Parish Council would like to be consulted on any application and Cllr Deffley will contact Hertfordshire County Councillor Ken Crofton to see what exactly is being requested.

**Action: Cllr Deffley**

### **Electoral Review of East Hertfordshire District Council**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is conducting an electoral review of East Herts District Council to decide upon the number of elected Councillors, the number and name of wards, where the boundaries between wards should lie and the number of Councillors within each ward. Walkern Parish Council has been invited to attend a zoom meeting held on 24 March 2021. Councillors to confirm their wish to attend to the Clerk.

### **Finance**

#### **Payments made since the last meeting:**

Staff costs -	£1388.79
The School Grounds Company Ltd - maintenance of sportsfield	£ 647.00
Parrs Ltd - new dog waste bin	£ 251.94
EHDC - new socket to reposition the Speed Indicator Device	£1014.00
CPRE - annual membership fee	£ 36.00

The above payments were ratified and the following agreed on the proposal of Cllr T Deffley and seconded by Cllr Overall.

WSSC - reimbursement of gas boiler service	£ 288.00
Mr N Bennett - install new waste bin and remove old one/cover	
Visit for repairs to fire door at WSSC	£ 100.00
RRTrees - tree crown lift and dead tree removal	£ 350.00

Tax Assist Accountants prepared the monthly budget report which was presented to all Councillors.

The annual precept forms have been returned to EHDC.

The annual Charity returns for the Recreation Ground Charity and Charity for the Benefit of the Inhabitants of Walkern have been completed and returned to the Charity Commission.

## **Planning**

### **Planning applications received since the last meeting:**

The Old Recreation Ground, Totts Lane, Walkern - 3/20/2637/FUL  
Erection of single storey, timber structure field shelter.

2 Winter's Lane, Walkern - 3/21/0027/HH  
First floor side extension above existing garage.

8 Winter's Lane, Walkern - 3/21/0077/HH  
Addition of open front porch, replace two front dormers with single wider dormer, addition of rear dormer and rooflights, replacement of side porch, garage conversion, removal of chimney, alterations to fenestration, cladding, brickwork walls with self-coloured render.

18 Glebe View - 3/21/0117/HH  
Demolition of rear conservatory and detached garage. Construction of ground floor side and rear extensions.

All planning applications and Parish Council comments can be viewed at:  
<https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk>

### **Planning applications granted:**

5 Greenway, Walkern - 3/20/2262/HH  
Rendering of front and partial side elevations, replacement windows and cladding of porch.

### **Planning applications refused: (appeal)**

Rooks Nest Paddocks, Stevenage Road, Walkern - APP/11915/W/20/3256691  
Change of use of agricultural/equestrian land to residential.

## **Correspondence**

Correspondence was received from a resident concerned about the possibility of children/pets falling into the ford from the footbridge. The Parish Council felt that the post and rail fencing was considered an adequate safety barrier.

Hertfordshire County Council has confirmed the road between the War Memorial and the turning to Benington will be closed at some point in the next 18 months for work to be done on or near the road. An alternative route will be signposted at the time. Details can be seen on the Parish Council website.

### **Schedule of Outstanding Items**

The Clerk will obtain two more quotations, for consideration by the Parish Council, to maintain the Recreation Ground from 1 April 2021 as the current contractor, Perfect Gardens & Landscapes wishes to increase the cost of its visits.

**Action: The Clerk**

### **Any Other Business**

None.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4 March 2021 commencing at 7.00 pm via zoom. For details on how to attend please contact the Clerk via email at [heidi.broadly@walkernparishcouncil.org](mailto:heidi.broadly@walkernparishcouncil.org)