

**Minutes of virtual Birchanger Parish Council meeting
held on Tuesday 4th May 2021 at 7.30 pm.
via Zoom.**

Present: Angie Driscoll (AD) – Chair
Peter Sampson (PS)
George Taylor (GT)
Geof Driscoll (GD)
Sally Taylor (ST)
John Revell (JR)
Linda Pocklington (LP)

Melvin Caton (district councillor) (MC)
Ayub Khan (district councillor) (AK)
Ray Gooding (county councillor) (RG)

0 members of the public
Keith Williams (Parish Clerk)

807. Chairman’s Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

808. Apologies for Absence

None

809. Declarations of Interest

None.

810. Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest.

None.

811. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 6th April 2021 (previously circulated) were agreed as a true and accurate record, and will be duly signed by the Chairman.

812. Planning

- 1. UTT/21/1255/PAQ3 – Barn at Birchanger Hall Farm (Prior Notification of Change of Use)**
Prior notification of change of use of agricultural building to 2 dwellings.

This application is for a pair of semi-detached dwellings using the shell of a largely metal barn on an agricultural track at the rear of the development known as Harrisons.

The application is outside the village development limits and inside the Metropolitan Green Belt. Birchanger Parish Council endorses the preservation of the Green Belt which surrounds the village each year at its Annual Parish Meeting and is overwhelmingly supported by the village in this.

[2021/185]

The barn is metal and has no meritocracy in preservation. It has not been used for agricultural work purposes for at least 10 years having been rented to Birchanger residents for storage purposes. It is not exceptional. The existing structure is not suitable as a residential property and, in fact, a new building would need to be constructed inside the present shell. This is therefore not a simple change of use.

Many barns in Uttlesford have been successfully converted to residential use but these have almost entirely been outside the Green Belt, of timber construction and merit otherwise. It is not the case here.

The application does not appear to have sufficient parking as there is strong potential for some of the rooms to be used as additional bedrooms.

The proposed parking for house 1 appears to be on the other side of the ditch which runs alongside the barn with an apparent access constructed across the ditch which can flood regularly. This is for one car only with garage provision adjacent to the second house. It is also outside the curtilage of the barn. This arrangement as proposed will lead to potential blockages of the track/footpath 26. Footpath 26 is extensively used by dog walkers, ramblers and cyclists.

Whilst Birchanger offers access to the local road network, the bus service is very limited. There is no shop in the village so most residents travel by car to shops, schools etc. The addition of two 3/4 bedroom properties will therefore considerably increase the traffic via Harrisons/footpath 26. This increase in traffic created by these properties, together with visitors, deliveries etc would considerably outweigh the proposed, negligible, reduction in agricultural vehicle movements.

In 2014 an appeal was refused for a single house in the Green Belt on the opposite side of the track and to the south of this application. One of the reasons was the proposed access routes including using Harrisons/footpath 26. It is unclear why the same reason should not be valid for this application.

From an ecology point of view, in 2017 a bat survey was carried out at St Mary's Church in Birchanger. The church is approximately 300m from the barn. Common Pipistrelles and Soprano Pipistrelles were discovered and whilst according to the Ecological Impact Assessment no bats were discovered roosting in the barn, it is noted that they could use the adjoining ditch and nearby treeline for foraging. Allowing this development to take place could have a major impact on this protected mammal.

This is an entirely inappropriate development of a barn which has no merit to warrant approval for residential occupation.

813. Finance

a. Accounts Balances (already circulated)

Noted

b. Invoices and payments for approval

Approved

1. Account Balances b/f 31st March 2021

Unity Trust Bank

41923.40

[2021/186]

2. Payments due for April 2021

A&J Lighting	SO	45.90 (monthly maintenance)
EALC	On line	280.13 (affiliation fees)
Ace of Spades	On line	249.60 (grass cutting March 2021)
TBS Hygiene	On line	129.60 (dog bin and rubbish bin emptying)
Ken Wheatley	On line	75.00 (computer repairs)
e-on	DD	90.50 (electricity for March 2021)
Payroo	On line	6.00 (payroll expenses)
Keith Williams	On line	441.43 (salary for April 2021)
HMRC (Keith Williams)	On line	110.20 (PAYE for April 2021)
Keith Williams	On line	20.00 (office rent April 2021)

Total payments for April 2021 1448.36

3. Account Balance c/f 30th April 2021

Balance @ 30/04/2021	40475.04
Precept (first instalment)	<u>6657.50</u>
Balance c/f	47132.54

Note 1: The payments to HMRC was made by the parish clerk and is being reimbursed.

814. Allotments

Plot 3 .

The polytunnel has deteriorated and is causing concern.

LP reported that she has met with the allotment holder S.S who is proposing removing the plastic from the polytunnel and replacing it with netting. This was agreed by the Parish Council. The Parish Clerk to advise Zoe.

The allotment holder in question was not satisfied with the old rolled down chicken wire being left in place following a replacement length of wire, but after the meeting agreed to overlook this.

There is some sagging and damage to another section of the chicken wire boundary fence of allotment 3 and the gate does not close properly. LP suggested that D.D be asked to quote for carrying out the necessary repairs.

Plot 1.

L.C wished to erect a permanent walk-in polytunnel. This was not approved. The Parish Clerk to advice Zoe.

815. Annual Audit-

Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2020/21 Part 2. To be signed by Chairman and RFO.

This was noted.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21. To be considered by councillors and signed by the Chairman and Parish Clerk.

The Parish Council considers that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements and agreed that the requirements of sections 1-8 of Section 1-Annual Governance Statement had been met.

816. SSE Update

- The Inspectorate has asked for further evidence following the Climate Change Committee's recommendations which will now include international aviation and shipping. All concerned parties, comprising MAG, UDC and SSE will be making submissions.
- GD advised that the decision of the Planning Inspectorate is still awaited.
- SSE is changing its name to Stansted Airport Watch (SAW).
- SSE/SAW believes it is unlikely that aircraft movements will return to pre-Covid levels for some years.
- SSE/SAW is not expecting any further planning applications regardless of the Inspectorate's decision.

817. Telephone Box

The Parish Council has declined to adopt the telephone box. The Parish Clerk to advise BT.

818. Footpath 15

A resident has reported that footpath 15 is considerably overgrown with brambles which needs clearing, and that there is what appears to be some slurry deposited on the track. This has been reported to Highways Public Rights of Way (PROW). They have carried out a site visit and have scheduled for work to be carried out, although at this stage the council does not have an actual date or what it will entail.

RG has also made representations to PROW and awaits their response. He believes that water pouring down from the stables, where there is no guttering, is causing erosion of the footpath.

819. Reports from County and District Councillors

Report from AK

With regard to the Travellers, he is concerned that even if they are ordered to leave, what will prevent them from returning?

Report from County Councillor Ray Gooding (RG).

Concerning the Barn planning application, it is felt that any impact on highways infrastructure will be negligible. He is of the opinion that due to current legislation regarding planning applications of this nature it is unlikely that the objections will succeed and that planning permission will be granted.

820. Closure of meeting

There being no further matters to discuss the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.18 .

[2021/188]