

**Minutes of Birchanger Parish Council meeting
held on Tuesday 7th March 2017 at 8.00 pm.
in Birchanger Village Hall**

Present: Angie Driscoll (AD) - Chair
Elizabeth Godwin (EG)
Maria Davy (MD)
Linda Pocklington (LP)
Alex Stewart (AS)
George Taylor (GT)
Sandy Dowle (SD)
Ken Wheatley (KW)
John Revell (JR)

1 member of the public
Keith Williams (Parish Clerk)

262. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

263. Apologies and Reason for Absence

None.

264. Declarations of Interest

None.

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

There were no representations from the public.

266. Minutes of the last meeting

Acceptance of the minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 7th February 2017 was proposed by SD and agreed as a true and accurate record, and duly signed by the Chairman.

267. Recreation Ground Working Group/Allotments – Glebeland

- a) Play area inspection report from AS (already circulated) - noted
- b) Allotment meeting report from LP (already circulated)- noted
- c) A budget of £500 for purchase and installation of bicycle racks was agreed

KW will update the allotment rules, in conjunction with the parish clerk, and circulate to councillors. It was agreed that the parish council will reimburse the Allotment Association for purchase of weed killer.

268. Planning application UTT/17/0128/FUL – 5 Wood Lane – erection of two dwellings.

The following comments have been agreed by the Planning Committee and will be referred onto Uttlesford District Council by the parish clerk.

In principle, Birchanger Parish Council has no objection to the siting of two houses on this site. However there are objections to the submitted plans:

This part of Wood Lane adjoins the Sports and Social Club, which is amenity land registered as a community asset, and has an open aspect which should be retained.

The five bedroom property on Plot 1 is large and overbearing in comparison with the surrounding buildings. A smaller dwelling, similar to that proposed for Plot 2, would be preferred. There are only three other dwellings in Wood Lane, two of which are bungalows and the other (Oak Lea) is, like the existing property, a hybrid chalet bungalow with first floor rooms within the roof. A two storey building would be incongruous to the surroundings.

The Parish Council is not in favour of garages in front of houses. The submitted plans show that garage/ car ports are proposed for both houses, situated at the front of the plots and perpendicular to the front boundary. These would result in a view from the road of the plain brick end walls, up to 5m high to the apex for the Plot 1 garage. This would close up the open aspect of the street scene to an unacceptable extent. The garage proposed for Plot 1 seems unnecessarily large and made worse by the den in the roof space.

In order to retain the open aspect, no high fences or hedging should be permitted along the front boundary.

The ecology desk based report suggests that there are no ponds within 500 metres of the site and no reports of great crested newts within 1 km. This is not correct and may need further investigation to ensure that no protected species are at risk. There are many ponds in Birchanger. A number of these are well within 500 metres of the site including one in Wood Lane itself and the majority are known to contain a range of newt species including great crested newts as well as grass snakes.

There should be a condition applied to ensure that a wheel washing facility is employed on site to reduce mud on the surrounding roads.

The balcony at the rear of the house on Plot 1 would overlook the rear garden of Plot 2.

269. Proposal from England Highways for additional cycle path at Duck End.

The proposal "C" is the preferred option. England Highways will be recommended to consult local residents, and also discuss suitable lighting .

270. Police and Crime Commissioner consultation

AS had sent an email response saying that the parish council would be looking into a response. He has not yet completed the questionnaire but will do so and return it to the authorities.

271. Appointment of councillor onto Employment Committee

John Revell was appointed to the Employment Committee.

[2017/057]

272. Finance

- a. Account Balances (already circulated)
- b. The payments were accepted and authorised to be made.

GT said that the council should continue to pursue on-line banking facilities.

273 Reports from county and district councillors

Ray Gooding – Although not able to attend the meeting, RG sent the following report.

- I do not have much to report this evening other than the fact that 87.58 of children got their first preference of Secondary School and 95% got first or second. These are the best results achieved by Essex.
- The Budget has been set at 3% increase for Adult Social Care with no other increase for general issues, the fifth time in six years that the general budget has been held level.
- Youth services in the county are now receiving national recognition for the excellence they provide. Innovation has now ensured that 2.5 times the number of youth sessions are being provided, a record number of young people have received in the county and 86,000 hours of volunteering have been completed by young people.

274. Closure of meeting

There being no further matters to discuss the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21.05.

[2017/058]