

Annual Ugley Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Ugley Parish Meeting, held at 7.00pm on 29 March 2021, via Zoom.

Present:

Cllr. Nick Shutes (Chairman) and Mrs. Louise Johnson (Parish Clerk).

Members of the Public: 8, including,

Cllr. David Cross (Vice-Chairman), Cllr. Nick Bowers, Cllr. Matt Francis,
Cllr. Clayton Powter, Cllr. Roger Pryor, Cllr. Elisabeth Reay,
County Cllr. Ray Gooding, District Cllr. Janice Laughlin.

- 1. Welcome.**
- 2. Apologies for Absence** None.
- 3.** The minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2019 were confirmed as a true record.
- 4. District Cllr. Janice Loughlin's report**
The work at the Council continues despite Covid. Meetings are being held via Zoom, although this works well, it is not the same as speaking to someone in person. On the 25 March local authorities were informed that the Government concluded that it was not possible to extend legislation to permit local authorities to hold meetings remotely. So, meetings will have to be held in person from 7 May 2021, which will cause a lot of anxiety for some people.

The Local Plan

The Planning Inspector was dissatisfied with some aspects of the previous Local Plan, they were most concerned about the proposed Garden Communities. They said that other sites in the district would not be developed or permitted for a specific period in the future, which would adversely affect the vitality and viability of existing towns and villages. The Planning Inspector did not want the Garden Communities, he wanted more houses in the towns and villages. There has now been a call for sites, some of which are now published on the website. The Council will carry out an assessment on the sites, they will not confirm which sites have been allocated, but will provide information when making decisions regarding sites in the new Local Plan. The sites will be published in an open consultation once the Council has prepared its draft policy.

Stansted Airport Planning application enquiry.

The appeal began in January 2021, it was against the UDC Planning Committee's refusal of the Manchester Airport Group planning application in January 2020, the enquiry ended on the 12 March 2021. The application was approved by the Chairman's casting vote in November 2018. It was considered, due to material changes largely climate change and the

Council's declaration of a climate emergency since the previous committee's decision, for approval and a second planning meeting was convened. No members of the Planning Committee were called to give evidence at the appeal, which was quite unusual. The decision on the appeal will be made public in June 2021. All parties are expected to pay their own costs, unless the Inspector considers that one party acted unreasonably, there has been rumours that UDC has acted unreasonably.

The Budget

Council tax has increased, a band D household will increase by £5 per year. Uttlesford only collect the tax for Essex and the Police.

UDC accounts have not been signed off, as it is under a criminal investigation review; the police investigation has been on-going for nearly 2 years.

5. Essex County Councillor's report

Covid has been the big issue this year; reports today record Essex as having the lowest rates in the eastern region, which is a big step forward.

Highways

North Hall road is still causing a major concern, there seems to be disbelief that this is a difficult and complex project. Great care is required regarding the services that are buried in the road which includes a watermain, there are also overhead power lines that have to be considered. Some bore holes are being dug in the next couple of weeks to test the ground and soil condition, and negotiations with the service companies are incredibly significant. There is also a short supply line which needs to be identified as to its exact position. There is an issue on gaining access to do the work, and an agreement needs to be drawn up with the adjacent landowner. The negotiations with the Environmental Agency are complex, they are asking for a retaining wall adjacent to the river which would be a major piece of work on it onw, this must be built before the road can be replaced. All this work is going on now and the intention is to appoint a contractor in the new financial year, which is within the next month. A package is being put in place to repair the verges plus a large pothole, because of the nature of the work it is not an instant job. The additional sign will be raised at the Highways Panel, this is to be placed on the double bend asking motorists not to beep their horns.

So that is the situation as it is, a lot of the complaints have been that nobody has been seen on sight, and so the assumption is that Essex Highways are not doing anything, but a lot of the negotiations with service companies and Environment agencies must go ahead first before anyone can turn up and start tipping concrete on to the road.

A website has been set up to keep everyone up to date.

The budget

ECC has decided not to increase the council tax this year. The reason is because across Essex there are some very deprived areas and with the number of people that have been furloughed or have lost their jobs an increase in Council would have a very significant impact. However, there is

to be an increase to the social care precept by 1.5%, the adult social care has had the biggest single impact in respect to expenditure.

An extra £7.3 million for the last three years had been set aside for the Highways Panel, which totals £200,000 per year per district, this has doubles the available funding for the Highway Panel and means a lot more projects will be able to go ahead, a small amount has also been included for the administration to try and speed up the process.

One million has been allocated to mental health, which is a big issue at the present time.

An education task force is being set up, which is going to look at the problem with young people missing large parts of their education. There are two sides to this, the academic side plus the social side, ECC are putting £1.5 million into this project.

£2 million is going to help businesses across the county.

6. Ugley Parish Council's Chairman Nick Shutes report

What a year it has been, but a relatively quiet one for the Parish Council.

We did not have regular meetings between February and September when we resumed with Zoom Meetings.

We had an exceptional meeting in Councillor Prior's barn in July to discuss the issue whereby the Parish Council did not own the ponds around the village green.

It had come to light that Land Registry records showing that the Parish Council owned the various sections of the greens, the ponds were not included. It appears that when a Royal Commission in the 1970s allocated the greens to the Parish Council this was taken literally and did not include the ponds.

We decided that we would continue to assume responsibility for the ponds and duly decided to have them cleaned out, which was done very economically using an excavator on day works.

The only other item of note during the year is the closure of North Hall Road due to the erosion of the adjacent riverbank and the resulting additional traffic being diverted through Patmore End. The main long-term concern is the probably irreversible damage to the roadside verges.

One long term benefit of the pandemic is that communities have come together and know their neighbours better. This is certainly the case in Patmore End.

I would like to thank Ray Gooding and Janice Loughlin for keeping us updated on County and District matters, respectively. And special thanks to Louise for keeping everything running so efficiently in difficult times.

7. Finance Report

Ugely Parish Council ended the year with £7,058, this was £700 more than the year before, however, this was due to £700 having not yet been donated to St. Peter's Church.

8. Starting Balance	£ 7,058.08
Credits	£ 6,404.83
Total	£13,462.91
Payments	£ 5,614.72
Total	£ 7,848.19

9. The meeting finished at 7.40pm.