

KNEBWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on the 13 September 2017 in the Knebworth Village Hall at 8.08 p.m.

Present: Councillors Roger Willcocks, Kevin Burr, Rosemary Conybeare, Philip Farr, Graham Fothergill, Jenny Harrison, Stephen Hemingway, Colin Stringer and Paul Ward

In attendance: The Clerk plus two members of the public

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Jobling and Mr Jefford.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

4. Planning

4.1 17/01863/1 154-156 London Road, Knebworth, SG3 6HA

Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 48 assisted living extra care (Class C2) apartments for the frail elderly, including communal facilities and car parking along with ground floor commercial unit (Use A1, A2, A3, D1 or D2) fronting London Road

A draft report, previously circulated, considered the dominance, impact on the high street, parking, and highway matters of the proposed application. The Council agreed that the development would have a detrimental impact on the high street, and the report was approved subject to minor revisions.

The list of recommended planning conditions were agreed with the addition of the removal of all advertising material from the area within six months of the building be opened.

The list of recommended s106 funding, specifically for Knebworth, was agreed.

1. Accessible parish council office
2. Improvements to the pavement and disabled facilities within the village centre.
3. Public toilet upgrade
4. Improvement to road crossings in the village centre
5. Provision of an external power source for Christmas lights on the building.

5. To consider a request for funding by Save Our Green Belt North Herts Group

Mr Hemingway, as a District Councillor, declared an interest in the Local Plan and withdrew from the debate.

The group has requested funds to engage a barrister to represent it at the NHDC Local Plan Examination in Public, to demonstrate that the plan is unsound, and if necessary to go to a judicial review. The group has raised £23,500 to date with Codicote, Wymondley and Ickleford Parish Council's confirming support. An estimate for legal counsel for the EIP is £35,000. A judicial review may cost £100,000. The group has a draft agreement regarding Parish Council awards, payment is on receipt of an invoice and any unused funds are returned prorata; Parish Councils being preferential creditors.

The Council discussed the potential for hostile developer applications, if the Local Plan is found unsound. The Planning Consultant has confirmed that Green Belt land still has the existing protection, which requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated for development to be approved.

In other districts similar groups have lobbied for funds but have only focused on areas it wished to support. There was concern that the group may not be focused on the whole of North Herts.

The District Plan is out of date, the Parish Council has objected to areas of the plan affecting Knebworth. SOGBNH is looking at the macro strategy, which will focus on objectives that the Council has not addressed.

It was confirmed that SOGBNH would provide copies of its legal Counsel's advice to groups that have provided funds for the campaign.

Proposed by Mr Farr, seconded by Mrs Harrison and

Resolved: to support the request for funding.

For 5, Against 1, Abstention 3. Carried.

Proposed by Mr Farr, seconded by Mr Stringer and

Resolved: to contribute £2,500 to the SOGBNH fighting fund on condition that it will provide the Parish Council with a copy of counsel's advice.

For 5, Against 1, Abstention 3. Carried.

6. Minutes

Proposed by Dr Fothergill, seconded by Mrs Harrison and

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 2 August 2017, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

7. Matters arising from previous meetings

7.1 To consider office provision at the village hall

Dr Fothergill and Mr Stringer met with Mr Lloyd, architect, to discuss providing a parish council office on the village hall site. Modification of the existing hall is difficult due to various constraints by site and provision of public buildings. There is space in the western side of the hall to provide an accessible office, and with the removal of the conifers at the rear would only result in the loss of three car parking spaces.

Proposed by Mr Stringer. Seconded by Dr Fothergill and

Resolved: to accept Mr Lloyd's quote of £2250, to produce a feasibility study to provide an accessible office on the village hall site.

8. Local Plans

8.1 To consider representation at WHBC and NHDC Local Plan Hearing
A meeting with Woolmer Green Parish Council has confirmed that it is willing to collaborate and share costs on representation at the EIP for WHBC and NHDC Local Plans. The WHBC EIP begins soon and Mr Griffiths, the planning consultant, is to attend.

9. Station Pub

The Station Pub Group has asked if one or two councillors would sit on its committee. It was agreed that the chair, vice chair, and/ or chair of planning would attend meetings as necessary.

Representation at the Planning control meeting which is to discuss the pub planning application was considered. Mr Hemingway as a district councillor agreed to use his five minutes. All objectors have a total of five minutes to make comment. Mr Ward is to contact SOSPub to agree who will register to speak at the meeting.

10. Library

The Council approved the proposed 'pod' for the new library.

11. Rights of Way

11.1 To consider upgrading part Knebworth 007 and Welwyn 001 to a
bridleway

The Council agreed that improvement to part Knebworth 007 and Welwyn 001 would be more pleasant in wetter conditions. However it did not agree to a route through the cemetery, but recommended a track around the side of the cemetery, which is currently used.

11.2 To receive an update on proposed modification orders

A number of evidence forms have been submitted to the clerk for three paths on Tubbs Wallace land. Applications for Modification Orders have yet to be filed. It was suggested that evidence forms might be obtained for the short route around the cemetery around Wadnall Way.

12. NHDC By laws

The Council had no comment on the consultation to revoke numerous NHDC bylaws.

13. Audit 2016/17

The clerk reported that the external audit for 2016/17 is complete and there were no issues raised.

Proposed by Mr Hemingway, seconded by Mr Stringer and

Resolved: to approve the Annual Return for 2017, including the external auditor's report.

14. Clerk's Report

14.1 The government has issued a Litter Strategy based on education, enforcement and infrastructure.

14.2 Installation of fibre broadband is to be completed in Old Knebworth by March 2018

14.3 The timber play equipment in the recreation grounds has been damaged again. One of the vertical posts has snapped at the base. Playquest has stated that it is not failure but inappropriate use. The cost to repair including an inspection is £650.

14.4 The installation of the play equipment in Lytton Fields will be completed tomorrow. NHDC has confirmed that s106 funding will be allocated.

- 14.5 The combat cableway seat was replaced, but has been damaged by dogs biting it.
- 14.6 The boilers in the pavilion required repair.
- 14.7 Two lights in the pavilion required replacement.
- 14.8 The toilets in St Martins Road have been vandalised.
- 14.9 The Tennis Club wishes to trim a conifer which is within its leased area so that it can erect the boundary fence.
- 14.10 Pollarding of the trees will commence on 25 September.
- 14.11. Data protection regulations have changed. HAPTC is running a course in November. The clerk is to attend.

15. Accounts

- 15.1 To approve the List of Payments 1 August 2017 to 31 August 2017
Proposed by Mr Ward seconded by Dr Fothergill and
Resolved: to approve the list of payments for August 2017.

- 15.2 To approve quotes

15.2.1 Fence repairs

The Council approved repairs to fencing in the recreation ground and Lytton Fields at a cost of £700.

- 15.2.2 The Council approved the Playquest quote of £650 to repair the timber equipment.

16. Insurance Review

The insurance policy is to be renewed with the addition of the new play equipment
Proposed by Mr Hemingway, seconded by Mrs Harrison and
Resolved: to keep the fidelity guarantee at £250,000.

17. Any Other Business

- 17.1 Mr Stringer requested that the Council write to McCarthy and Stone to remove the advertising on the front of Constance Court.
- 17.2 Dr Fothergill reported that the Hertford Road access on to Watton Road is now closed until February 2018. There is however a route around Broadwater.
- 17.3 Mr Hemingway informed the Council that there is a new executive for Transport at NHDC. He has asked if the Council would consider supporting double yellow lines down one side of the High Street. The Council thought it more appropriate to have a meeting to discuss parking management for the village.

The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for 11 October 2017.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.23 p.m.

Chairman _____

Date _____