

KNEBWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on the 12 February 2020 in Knebworth Village Hall at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Roger Willcocks (Chairman), Adrienne Charter, Charlotte Cosson, Rosemary Conybeare, Philip Farr, Jenny Harrison, Steve Hemingway, Paul Jobling, Lisa Nash, Colin Stringer and Paul Ward

In attendance: The Clerk and two members of the public.

1. Public Participation

There was no public participation

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Godfrey.

3. To Receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensation

There were no declarations of interest.

The clerk requested that an item be added to the agenda due to the urgent nature of the business. She asked the Council to consider the acquisition of the private allotments at the rear of Watton Road. The chairman approved.

4. Minutes

Proposed by Mrs Harrison, seconded by Mr Ward and

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 8 January 2020 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5. To Note the minutes of Committee Meetings

Amenities Committee meeting held on 29 January 2020 were noted.

6. Matters arising from committees

6.1 Knebworth Tennis Club's request to fell trees to assist in converting to all weather courts

Proposed by Mr Stringer, seconded by Mrs Charter and

Resolved to approve the Amenities Committee recommendation to permit Knebworth Tennis Club to fell four conifer trees damaging the court surface and replace them with an approved species of trees.

The Parish Council recommended the club seek a grant from NHDC or KVT to cover the cost of felling the trees.

7. Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has produced a presubmission plan for Parish Council approval to take it forward to regulation 14.

Mr Ward thanked the Steering Group for their hard work in getting the plan to this stage.

Proposed by Mr Willcocks, seconded by Mr Ward

Resolved to agree the Knebworth Neighbourhood plan document to take forward to Regulation 14 Consultation.

8. Planning

The inspector is to hold further hearings on the NHDC Local Plan in March, topics to be discussed are Green Belt, growth villages and additional sites.

The four other growth villages have been contacted regarding joint representation at the hearings. Codicote and Wymondly have both agreed, Barkway is to appoint its own planning consultants.

Proposed by Mrs Conybeare, seconded by Mr Ward and

Resolved: to accept Mr Griffiths quote to represent Knebworth, Codicote and Wymondly at the additional hearings.

9. Consultations

9.1 North and South Central Transport Plan Consultation

This item was deferred until the next meeting

9.2 Rail Strategy

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

10. Station Pub

10.1 Update on refurbishment

Mrs Charter gave an update on the refurbishment of the pub, which is to open on 14 February. Practical completion was signed off on 3 February and the kitchen is currently being installed. Additional costs have been incurred with replacement cooling system, drainage repairs, flooring etc. Costs have been met through approved virements.

10.2 To confirm the tenancy agreement

The tenancy agreement has been signed and the tenant is now in place. Rent has been deferred for the first two weeks and is to be recovered in May.

10.3 To consider the legal position with regard to Beverley Homes

Proposed by Mr Ward, seconded by Mrs Nash and

Resolved: that under Section 100A (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business being transacted.

The legal position with regard to Beverley Homes was discussed and an agreement reached.

Proposed by Mr Farr, seconded by Mrs Conybeare and

Resolved: to approve Gosschalks' quote of £1500 to address the issues with Beverley Homes.

The clerk is to write to Gosschalks regarding the Council's position.

Proposed by Mr Ward, seconded by Mr Willcocks and

Resolved: that having completed the confidential business, the public and press could return to the meeting.

10.4 To consider formation of a committee

The Council agreed that it would extend the AWP remit to include establishing a management and maintenance programme for the pub.

11. Clerk's Report

11.1 A local business is concerned about the loss of another on street parking space on Station Road. The Planning committee did not object to the application for the dropped kerb to the property.

11.2. St Martins PCC has asked if the Parish Council will share costs of renovation of the shared notice board on St Martins Green. It has obtained two quotes, the cheapest is £420.

11.3. A number of residents are concerned about the low height of the McCarthy and Stone archway which will restrict access to any vehicles larger than small van. NHDC planning has confirmed that it is built according to the planning application. There are current problems with offloading off the highway which is also having a significant impact on the flow of traffic through the village.

11.4. British Gas gas and electricity 3year fixed contracts are up for renewal on 9 April.

11.5. At a recent meeting WHBC rejected inclusion of WGR3, land adjacent to 52 London Road, in its Local Plan.

11.6 CC Thake has asked for the council's view on electric charging points in the village. This is to be discussed at the next meeting.

12. Finance

12.1 Financial Review

Proposed by Mrs Harrison, seconded by Mr Ward and

Resolved: to approve the management accounts to 31 December 2019.

12.2 Accounts Paid

Proposed by Mr Farr, seconded by Mrs Harrison and

Resolved: to approve the accounts paid to from 1 January to 31 January 2019.

12.3 Quotes

The council approved the quote to repair the noticeboard on St Martins green.

Quotes for an external staircase and door for the pub were reviewed.

Proposed by Mr Ward, seconded by Mrs Charter and

Resolved: to apply for planning permission for an external access to the flat above the pub.

12.4 Allotments

Due to the expediency of this item the Chairman permitted the addition of this item.

The private allotments are for sale through Mather Marshall. The owner wishes to sell them quickly, however no valuation has been placed on them. The plot is just under 0.6 acre and currently agricultural land, which is selling for £15,000 /acre, although the agent states it is nearer £20,000/acre. This would value the land at £9,000-£11,400.

Mr Hemingway questioned the demand for allotments and recommended negotiation with land owners for a site rather than bid for the current site.

Proposed by Mr Ward, seconded by Mr Willcocks and
Resolved: to make an offer of £10,000 to purchase the allotments between Watton Road and St Martins Road.

Proposed by Mrs Harrison, seconded by Mr Ward and
Resolved: that should the bid be successful that a virement be made to use funds from the pavilion capital account.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 The next meeting is scheduled for 11 March 2020.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.04 p.m.

Chairman _____

Date _____