

# LITTLE GADDESSEN parish council

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL ON March 20th, 2023

PLEASE NOTE THAT MINUTES ARE ALSO PUBLISHED ON THE WEB SITE  
<https://littlegaddesdenpc.org.uk>

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. Hyde, Kelly, Magson, Saner, Thompson & Townsend. Also in attendance, the Clerk, County and Borough Councillor Terry Douris (arrived at 8.15 during item (e)), and twelve members of the public.

**APOLOGIES:** There were no apologies

### 1. FORMALITIES

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained how the meeting would be run.

The attendance of Councillors was noted and recorded in the register.

**Approval of the Minutes.** The Minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and were signed at the end of the meeting.

**There was one declaration of interest by the Chair, Paul Kelly in respect of the planning application for number 50 Nettleden Road.**

### 2. OPEN SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Cllr. Kelly asked if anyone wished to raise any matters not already covered in the agenda.

- David Brattle noted that he wished to contribute to the items regarding the Village Hall insurance and roof. His comments were noted with the relevant agenda items.

### 3. REPORTS AND MATTERS ARISING

#### (a) To receive a report from Hertfordshire Constabulary.

There was no one present from Hertfordshire Constabulary, however, 1 crime had been reported in February.

#### (b) To discuss the current enforcement issues at Church Road

The meeting was informed that:

- Discussions with DBC were going well.
- A permanent injunction had been ratified meaning that no activities could be carried out on the land that could be construed as development beyond what had been done before the injunction was issued

Signed by the Chairman.....

Dated.....

17/4/23

**(c) To update on planning matters regarding the Bridgewater Arms Car Park – Cllr Townsend** summarized the achievements secured resulting in LGPC removing its objections to revised proposals:

- Signage had been reduced from 5 to 3
- The height of the signage had been reduced
- The Anti climbing device had been removed
- The picket fence extended to enable bollards to be removed
- The collar of camera pylon and post to be painted white
- Condition that no further bollards can be added without planning
- 2 extraneous columns to be removed
- 2 new information boards 1 to be placed on each side of the site access
- Hours of operation 09:30 onwards

The meeting acknowledged the work that Cllr Townsend had put into consultations and negotiations with the parties involved and thanked him for these achievements.

**(d) To update on upcoming Parish Council Elections**

It was noted that:

- Some interest had been received from members of the parish, however, numbers were currently unlikely to exceed the number of available seats.

**(e) To discuss traffic calming**

The siting of gate at the roadside at Ringshall to indicate the proximity of a residential area and encourage a drop in speed was discussed. Borough Cllr Terry Douris asked that the Clerk write to him to him with a proposal. **Action:** The Clerk

It was noted

- Highways had agreed to provide an additional Speed Indicator Device (SID) for Nettleden Road instead of providing a camera. LGPC has requested that the socket be installed at Ringshall by the junction with Beacon Road and the SID located in the empty socket at Nettleden Road North by the Spinney.  
**Action:** Cllr Thompson to follow up with Highways on this.
- the SID in Hudnall must be moved prior to 30 June at a cost of £525 including data download (£375 without data download). Borough Cllr Terry Douris asked that the Clerk write to him to request that the SID in Hudnall Lane be relocated to Cromer Close.  
**Action:** Decision required if data needed. Clerk to follow up with Cllrs and DBC

**(f) To agree the next steps regarding the insurance of the village hall**

A discussion took place on whether or not the current insurance

- policy terms were fit for purpose to enable an appropriate payment to cover a catastrophe requiring a rebuild;
- was in the most appropriate name and if it should be taken out by LGPC (the Custodian Trustee) rather than by the VHMC (the Managing Trustee) as it might be arguable that the VHMC have no insurable interest in the building and were effectively a tenant. A concern was raised that the insurers may refuse to pay the VHMC and that it might be more appropriate for LGPC to insure the building and to recoup the premium from the "tenant".

Signed by the Chairman.......... Dated.....17/4/23.....

Two suggestions were made:

- a variation agreed and enacted to the Deed to change the responsibility for obtaining and holding the insurance to LGPC, or
- that LGPC is named as a beneficiary of the insurance to give the insurers clarity regarding the Deed determining the existing Governance structure.

The easiest solution ensuring the insurance of the Village Hall could be relied upon in the event of a disaster was preferred. The subject of reclaiming VAT arose, this and the correct way forward regarding insurance both required specialist advice.

**Action:** The Clerk and the Secretary to the VHMC, Fiona McWilliams, to speak on Fiona's return from leave before further advice was sought.

**(g) To update and agree on the next steps regarding the village roof refurbishment**

David Brattle, the Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee, updated the meeting on the proposals for the village hall roof:

- costings were awaited due to the bespoke requirements for a barrel roof.
- grants were not looking hopeful and solar panels were not possible given the roof design.
- once the costs were known how to fill any shortfall in funding would be explored by the VH.

**Action:** David Brattle to speak to planners about restrictions regarding design or construction materials.

**(h) To discuss the level of Financial and other support provided by LGPC for the Coronation of King Charles III**

It was noted that:

- deposit of £1170 for the marquee, and a deposit for the caller, had been paid.
- communications regarding the event were raised and LGPC was encouraged to ensure that it was doing what it could to increase awareness about the event. LGPC were paying for a banner.
- the Clerk and the School were liaising about insurance for the event to ensure the event was covered **Action: Clerk**

**(j) To discuss the provision of defibrillators in the village**

The First Aid Responders reported that:

- the village defib had been used and damaged over Christmas which flagged up a gap in resource.
- LGPC agreed to fund a cabinet costing circa £594 to enable the defib located inside the Sports Pavillion to be relocated to the outside to improve accessibility.
- more needed to be done to increase awareness of the location and how to access the defibrillators.
- taking advice from the First Responders on the selection of defibrillators to ensure compatibility with spares with other defibs in the village and speed of repair was essential.

**Action:** Clerk and First Responders to liaise on content for notices on Facebook, the Village Notice Boards and process for informing societies.

**(j) To note that the internal and external auditors will be providing a time table and agreeing terms of reference**

Signed by the Chairman.....  ..... Dated..... 17/4/23 .....



It was noted that the Clerk and internal auditor would be meeting in April with a view to preparing preliminary information for approval by the current council at the Council meeting on 17 April 2023.

**(k) To discuss and agree next steps regarding the ownership, protection and insurance of the village archives**

It was agreed that LGPC should be the official custodians of the village archives.

**Action:** Cllr Hyde to ask Ashridge for filing cabinets and to find out how the archives can be made digital for their protection and ease of access and to report back to the next meeting.

**(l) To agree the ROSPA playground attendees and costs**

The meeting was informed that:

- there had been a debate about the frequency and content of the inspection regime and risk management practices.
- the insurers had been consulted and required weekly inspections for public liability purposes.
- it was helpful rather than essential that individuals carrying out inspections were trained.
- a log of inspection with the date and a note of any actions required should be kept.
- there should also be a formal annual inspection carried out by ROSPA.
- the last ROSPA report had items that needed to be addressed and that the Chair had been exploring competency for repairs and maintenance with the insurers.
- the insurers informed the Chair that repairers didn't require an organization with an official badge stating they were repairers but needed a Green CSCS card
- the Clerk had prepared a separate Playground Risk Management Policy detailing how LGPC inspect the playgrounds, carry out risk assessments and make decisions on actions based on these which was pending review by the Chair and Vice Chair before a draft version was forwarded to the Council. **Action** Chair and Vice Chair
- some items were simple for LGPC to determine competence and others were less clear if LGPC was able to make that decision.
- The ROSPA inspection was booked for May.

The meeting was informed that once the policy had been approved by the Council it would be sent to the insurers for comment. It was then important that

- LGPC followed the policy,
- risk assessed the findings of inspections
- made decisions based on what the risks were and how and if they could be mitigated.
- sought quotes for repairs.

LGPC voted and agreed to have 2 trained people to carry out the playground inspections and that the training should include the ROSPA level 1 Look see and the Green Card CSCS training.

**Action:** Cllrs to agree who should be trained asap.

Cllr Magson proposed that

- a risk assessment of the 2 issues in the ROSPA report be carried out
- the Council review that assessment with a view to determine competence required to carry out the repair and then
- a quote and then engage someone to repair it.

Cllr Hyde noted how helpful Robert Cassidy of DBC had been and that he could be asked to assist with the current equipment that the proposed repairers sought to completely remove.

**Action:** The Clerk to contact Robert Cassidy

Borough Cllr Terry Douris recommended that where there had been no fee due for a repair that

Signed by the Chairman.....  ..... Dated..... 17/4/23

LGPC received a zero value invoice from the individual carrying out the work stating what work had been carried out, when and by whom as a "certificate of competence" To date LGPC had accepted photographs of works carried out.

**( k ) To agree the following governance documents and policies:**

**The Council confirmed that they had received, read and considered and discussed the following documents and formally agreed these.**

- The Standing Orders
- The Financial Regulations
- The Finance and Management Risk Assessment – Risk Assessment and Risk Management document
- The Asset Register

The discussions on the insurance of the village hall, risk management of the playground formed part of this review. It was agreed that the risk assessment and risk management documents would continue to be developed as part of LGPC commitment to risk assessment and management.

- The LGPC Publication Scheme was also agreed

**(n) The King's/Queen's Green Canopy – Proposal for the Lady Marion Triangle**

The planting of 'smaller' trees requiring less future maintenance such as Crab Apple or similar were discussed. It was agreed that this was a sensible solution and that Cllr Hyde would explore this further.

**4. ADMINISTRATION**

**(i) Correspondence not already covered above and that required action by the Council** There was none.

**(ii) Finance** The schedule of payments was approved together with the report on expenditure for the previous month.

**FINANCE SCHEDULE**

**a. Cheques /payments for approval. The Council agreed the following payments:-**

- Clerk Salary and PAYE
- Clerk expenses: Cllr email costs £21.60 inc VAT period 25/1/ to 24/02
- Clerk expenses: Clerk Microsoft £11.20 inc VAT period 25/1/ to 24/02
- Clerk expenses: EE Sim £9.00 inc VAT period March to April
- Clerk expenses: Stationery £19.15, ink £65.98, paper £10.78 all inc VAT
- SRT Warden Services\* March £220 ex vat
- MK Agri\* March maintenance: £943.20 ex VAT (including additional item £45 fence repair)
- Village Hall booking 28/02/23 £54.00 ex VAT

**The Council to note that the following payments had been made since the last meeting**

- SRT Warden Services\* – late receipt of invoices for January and February at £220 ex VAT\* each
- UK Marquee Hire Deposit £1170 inc VAT

**Cheques/payments received**

- Football club contribution to grassing/cutting etc £560

Signed by the Chairman.....  ..... Dated.....  .....

- Scottish Power Alternative Fuel Cost of Living Allowance in connection with the Electricity Cabinet on the Green £150
- \* Pre agreed contractual payments

(iii) **Health and Safety** – the chair reported that repairs had been carried out on the playground

(iv) **Planning Schedule**

To seek any responses from the Public regarding the applications received since last meeting. To agree the wording of the consultation responses to DBC for the applications. See attached Planning Schedule and Enforcement Summary for details of decisions made. Where there was a significant discussion additional information is provided below.

**50 Nettleden Road, HP4 1PL 23/00424/FHA**

- Cllr Kelly recused himself due to a conflict of interest and Cllr Magson took over the role of Chair. The Council heard a presentation in support of the proposals at number 50. Paul Kelly spoke as a member of the public about his input into the application.
- One of the applicants chose not to attend due to a potential conflict of interest based on their previous role as Parish Councillor.

The Council considered the presentation which emphasised the steps they had taken to comply with the planners concerns. Given the technicalities of some of the planning points LGPC decided to be Neutral on the application to allow the experts to decide on these points. George Godar noted that DBC had updated their planning portal that day to state that the proposed annex was a good sized structure.

The other applications received did not require a comment from LGPC. The Council had no objection to Becking Spring The Grovels in the attached schedule.

The list of unresolved enforcements was reviewed and it was noted that DBC were still suffering from a shortage of staffing and it was hoped that these outstanding enforcements would be expedited.

**5. COUNCILLOR UPDATE**

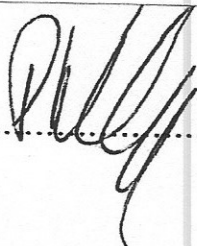
Cllr Townsend thanked George Godar for his support and work on the Bridgewater Arms Car park. Cllr Hyde thanked David Brattle for his repairs to the picnic tables and benches.

There were no other comments.

The meeting closed at c21.40

The next meeting is on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Signed by the Chairman.....



..... Dated.....

17/4/23