



NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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**MINUTES OF NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY
12th July 2021 AT 7 pm Sunnyside Rural Trust New Road Northchurch HP4 1NJ**

Those Present:

Cllr Somervail Vice Chairman

Cllr Capozzi

Cllr Edwards

Cllr Pocock

Cllr Pringle

County Councillor Douris

Officer: Usha Kilich

35/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Clarke, Cllr Godfrey and Cllr Rees sent their apologies.

36/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare an interest linked to any item on the agenda

There were no Declaration of Interest.

37/21 Public Participation allowed 15 minutes

There were no members of the public present.

38/21 MINUTES

a. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 28th June 2021.

RESOLVED, proposed by Cllr Somervail, seconded by Cllr Capozzi. Unanimously agreed.

b. Matters arising from previous meetings that are not included as an agenda item below.

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

39/21 REPORT FROM BOROUGH/COUNTY COUNCILLORS

To receive a report from Borough/County Councillors

Councillor Douris reported the following;

1. It was agreed at a Cabinet meeting that £50 will be payable to every child that is eligible for free school meals during Summer Holiday, this equates to £1,720,000.

2. £445,000 will be allocated to adults with challenging circumstances this is from additional Covid related funding
3. £194,850 will be allocated for Families and Children again this is for Covid related funding
4. The Locality Budget will be increased from £10k to £15k subject to approval, Cllr Douris confirmed that £1000 will be allocated to Northchurch Parish Council for the Quiet Relaxation area.

Cllr Capozzi informed Cllr Douris that Karl Stonebank, Grants & Funds Officer, from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is waiting for information from Mike Jarrett on Go20 Gateway application. Cllr Douris is due to meet with Mike Jarrett and will bring it to his attention. Cllr Pringle advised members that the Road Safety Working Party has supported Go20 and the delay has been from Herts County Council Officers and Police and Crime Commissioner Officers and NOT from Go20. Cllr Douris had no comment on the subject.

Cllr Pringle asked Cllr Douris if there are any criteria applied when spending the Locality budget. Cllr Douris' commented that the money spent has to:

- a. Benefit the community
- b. It cannot be against Herts County Council's Policy
- c. It cannot have any ongoing revenue commitment.

Cllr Pringle went on to say that leading up to the "purdah" period councillors are not allowed to announce public money to influence the election.

Cllr Douris refrained from making any comments.

Councillor Pringle reported the following:

1/ LOCAL PLAN UPDATE:

Northchurch Parish Council is aware of the Regulation 18 consultation on the draft local plan which took place over the winter during lockdown.

I, along with other local Councillors, Residents Associations, Town and Parish Councils, local environmental groups and many residents in Northchurch, Berkhamsted and Tring objected strenuously to the draft plan.

The consultation was poorly publicised due to the constraints of lockdown. Substantial development is proposed in Northchurch (which is not recognised as a village in its own right but is instead described as West Berkhamsted) as well as across Berkhamsted and Tring.

On 30 June, 2021 a report collated by council officers was presented to a planning scrutiny committee at DBC outlining public concerns.

The most common objections from local people were:

- Government mandated growth number for this area is much too high, not based on evidence, and based on out-of-date national statistics
- The large-scale building on Green Belt is not justified and insufficient work has gone into identifying brownfield sites • Existing infrastructure and transport are insufficient to sustain more growth, but the Plan says little about how those will be improved
- No consideration of how the pandemic may have changed the commercial and residential realities of this area

There was a debate about whether to proceed directly to the final stage (Regulation 19) or to delay. There was a general consensus that the draft local plan was fundamentally flawed and whether it should be rewritten.

My colleagues on the committee argued that there should be a substantial rewrite, based on such fundamentally flawed pillars, and as such the Regulation 18 consultation with the public should be repeated. The impact on the settlements of and greenbelt surrounding Tring, Northchurch and Berkhamsted was highlighted as being drastic and unjustified and my colleagues who sit on the committee and who represent Tring and Berkhamsted argued strongly for the plan to be rewritten and represented to the public for further consultation, particularly as there are so many variables that still need to be factored in, such as new planning laws and the impact on CV19. Councillors representing Tring and Berkhamsted argued that decisions were being made from a Hemel-centric perspective. Although my colleague who represents Tring Central forced a vote on the issue of committing to another S18 public consultation, this was voted down by the committee. My colleagues also raised the issue that there needed to be specific provision for social housing (as opposed to the ambiguous 'affordable housing') in the draft.

My colleagues were also able to secure a key concession to establish a 'Task & Finish' Group which will provide scrutiny and guidance to the officers working on any changes to the Local Plan.

The most obvious flaw with the local plan is that the number of proposed new houses is not justified by the evidence.

2/LACK OF RESPONSE TO EMAILS FROM NPC COUNCILLORS

Cllr Edwards raised concerns that DBC officers have a record of failing to acknowledge or respond to emails, which is hampering the work of the Planning Committee of which Cllr Edwards is chair. In particular, I understand there was a delay in response to the concerns Cllr Edwards raised about the lack of reference to Northchurch in the Bearoc 2 road signs. I have raised this matter with James Doe at DBC and as a result he has asked Sara Wheelan to investigate. I have provided her with an outline of the problem and she will be looking into this problem over the next several days. I have asked if she can liaise with Cllr Edwards directly to understand the extent of the issue.

3/INVITATION TO CLAIRE HAMILTON

At the end of winter I invited the new DBC chief executive to send some DBC officers to Northchurch as it appears that they do not display working knowledge of Northchurch as a village with its own history and identity. I had anticipated that this might take place over the summer, when CV19 numbers would have been lower. However recently the CV19 numbers have been rising. I will extend a provisional invitation for late September, in the hope that this will be possible and that NPC could host the visit - this may need to be a future agenda item.

4/ VENTILATION FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS:

Following the most recent developments with CV19, it seems that spread of infection in schools is being left to individual head teachers to manage. We do not know whether there will be financial assistance from central government or HCC for the provision of air filters over the winter. I have written to the head of Ashlyn's suggesting that I would be in favour of local councils contributing towards making the school CV19 secure, should there be insufficient funding from central government. I intend to do the same with St Mary's school. The government clearly expects individuals and local organisations to take responsibility for the spread of CV19.

Cllr Doris will provide written response to Cllr Pringles item (4) Ventilation for Local School.

40/21 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

41/21 CLERKS REPORT

a. HAPTC All Party Parliamentary Group (AAPG) Meeting 12th July

Cllr Capozzi attended the APPG meeting on Monday 12th July and informed members what levelling up means for the town and parish councils. Cllr Capozzi stated that levelling up has different meanings depending on the area; i.e. groups attending the meeting from various parts of the country faced different problems such as perceived wealthier areas are overlooked despite having areas of deprivation which need help; , an improvement on Wi-Fi and mobile networks to help local businesses, better transportation and parish/town councils wanting greater power on planning decisions. The levelling up needs varied across the country.

42/21 Cllr Clarke proposes to approve expenditure for Wildflower signage/notice

In the absence of Cllr Clarke, Cllr Capozzi informed members that no quotes have been received, therefore, no decisions were made.

43/21 Cllr Clarke proposes a grant be awarded to Northchurch Cricket Club as recommended by the F&GP committee

In the absence of Cllr Clarke, Cllr Somervail informed members that due to the large value of the grant request, the F&GP had decided it would be appropriate for the applicant to present their report before Council members, therefore, the item will be deferred to the Extraordinary Meeting.

44/21 Cllr Clarke proposes a grant be awarded to the BHHHC as recommended by the F&GP Committee

In the absence of Cllr Clarke, Cllr Somervail informed members that due to the large value of the grant request, The F&GP had decided it would be appropriate for the applicant to present their report before Council members, therefore, the item will be deferred to the Extraordinary Meeting.

45/21 Cllr Capozzi proposes to approve the grant application from Age Concern Dacorum as recommended by the F&GP committee

Cllr Capozzi proposed to approve the grant for £1500, seconded by Cllr Edwards. Unanimously agreed.

46/21 Cllr Clarke to present the findings on quality toilet option

In the absence of Cllr Clarke, Cllr Somervail reported the following report sent by Cllr Clarke
Installation/maintenance costs are significant. At East Suffolk's site, the cost to build and install a traditional bricks and mortar (based on being able to connect to utilities and two cubicles) was estimated at £80,000-and £100,000 with maintenance at £4,500 per annum. In comparison, the cost of a waterless and compostable toilet was £34,000 with maintenance at £5,700

Cllr Somervail reported that based on NPC's annual expenditure of £80k, the costs cannot be justified, therefore, to visit other options.

It was unanimously agreed to approach George and Dragon for the use of their toilets for public use for a small fee. The findings will be presented at the next Council Meeting.

- 47/21 Cllr Capozzi to present the findings on the installation of drinking water with costs**
Cllr Capozzi presented her findings to the council with costs around £2/£3k plus VAT
for stainless steel. Should council feel this is appropriate, Cllr Capozzi will look into it.
It will be water metered.

It was agreed that Cllr Capozzi to pursue matter, however, there is an initial cost of £200 plus VAT to complete the application and for the representative to visit the site, the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman has the power to spend below £600, therefore, the Clerk will complete the application.

- 48/21 Cllr Capozzi proposes to review the current policy and fee charged to personal trainers and other professionals who use the recreation ground for exercise classes and charge clients and agree any changes required**

RESOLVED, seconded by Cllr Pringle. Unanimously agreed.

- 49/21 Cllr Clarke proposes that we ask DBC to require Taylor Wimpey" to replace any trees they have removed on the roads around Bearroc 2.**

Cllr Somervail proposed to amend the agenda item to pass the matter on to Woodland and Tree Officer, seconded by Cllr Capozzi. Unanimously agreed.

Cllr Somervail proposed to send the email to Tree and Woodland Officer at Dacorum Borough Council, seconded by Cllr Edwards. Unanimously agreed.

50/21 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

- a. To report on 1st quarter Year to Date Receipts and Payments and Bank Reconciliations. There were no questions raised as Cllr Capozzi informed members that the report was discussed in great detail at F&GP meeting.

51/21 Future Agenda Items.

1. Cllr Pringle was concerned about the venue for the meetings to be held whether they can be accessed to members of the public. In the winter it might be better to hold meetings at the Social Centre.
2. Cllr Capozzi to start the research on the water fountain
3. Cllr Capozzi to report on the finding on the use of recreation ground and the fees

52/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the 13th September 2021 at 7.00 pm Northchurch Social Centre.

Meeting concluded at 20.24