

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 27TH MARCH 2007 AT 7.45PM
AT THE PARISH CENTRE. LOCKLEYS DRIVE. WELWYN.**

There were no members of the public who wish to speak during the 15 minutes allocated for Public participation.

Present: Chairman, Councillor J Roper and Councillors J Blackburn, A Burnapp, C Hukin, P. Neville, C Passmore, M Rowland and I Wheeler

In Attendance: R Findlay, (Clerk), J Lewis, (Office Administrator) and One member of the Public

Apologies: Councillors M Benson (Other Commitments), S Butler (Other Commitments), and I Skidmore (Holiday)

2007/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

J Lewis declared a personal interest in the correspondence received to be discussed at item 10 on the Agenda.

2007/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2007:

The Chairman asked that the date of the meeting be amended to show '27th it was then agreed that the minutes were an accurate and correct record than duly signed by the Chairman.

2007/25 MATTERS ARISING:

• **Special Expenses:**

The Clerk reported that no reply had been received yet from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

• **East of England Plan:**

The Clerk reported that she had responded to the consultation. They had acknowledged receipt of the consultation document.

• **Leisure**

The Clerk reported that the Library Service at Welwyn have agreed to the Cleaner continuing her normal hour of work.

2007/26 REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS:

The Clerk reported she had received suggestions from Cllrs. Blackburn, Neville and Skidmore. It was agreed the Clerk to report her finding and to compile a list of the suggestions for the meeting in April.

2007/27 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STANDING ORDERS:

It was agreed that the suggestions of the Council's Financial Standing Orders be placed on the Agenda for the April Meeting. It was agreed all suggestions should be with the Clerk within the next two weeks.

2007/28 ELECTION:

The Chairman reported that he had been publicising the Election in the Parish Magazine.

It was reported that four Councillors would not be seeking re-election: Cllrs. Burnapp, Passmore, Rowland and Wheeler. The Chairman thanked each of the retiring Councillors on behalf of the Council for their loyalty and dedicated service to Welwyn Parish Council.

The Chairman asked Councillors to suggest or approach any prospective Candidates to stand in the current Elections.

2007129 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES:

- **Planning and Licensing Committee, 6 March 2007** The Chairman of the Planning Committee presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting and answered any questions. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for sending in the Council's response to the East of England Plan.

It was reported that Mr Aston of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Planning Department would be attending the April meeting. The meeting would therefore start at 7.00pm.

- **Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Committee, 13 March 2007** In the absence of the Chairman the Vice-Chairman presented the minutes to Council and answered any questions.

Allotments Cemetery and Churchyard Committee, 20 March 2007

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes and answered questions.

- **Finance Committee, 19th February 2007**
In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman presented the minutes and reported to Council.

The Vice Chairman asked that the Council accept payments totaling **£19,426.09** be agreed.

Unanimously agreed.

Resolved, the accounts for March totaling **£19,426.09** be paid.

2007130 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES:

Welwyn Anglo-French Twinning Association

The Minutes of their last meeting was presented to Council and duly noted.

2007131 COUNCILLORS WRITTEN REPORTS:

Welwyn Parish Plan Steering Committee: Commuter Parking in Digswell

At this juncture, J. Lewis declared a personal interest in this item and retired from the meeting.

Cllr. Butler had written the report (Appendix 1). As she was unable to attend the meeting she had asked Cllr. Blackburn to answer any questions.

The Council were asked to support the three following recommendations.

- 1) To extend parking restriction with single yellow lines forbidding parking before 10am on certain key roads. This will result in improved traffic flow on through roads around the station and will allow residents of Neighbouring (loses to access their garages and parking spaces.

Resolved, the Council unanimously supports recommendation No.1

- 2) To enforce these measures. There is considerable dissatisfaction with lack of official interest or action when incidents of improper, dangerous and inconsiderate parking, often including aggressive behaviour by drivers, are reported.

Resolved, the Council unanimously supports recommendation No.2

- 3) To provide more parking spaces at the station. The use of the old coal yard, which is not suitable for housing, has been suggested. This land is otherwise derelict wasted space.

Resolved, the Council unanimously supports recommendation No.3

It was reported that the Parish Plan Steering Committee's Transport Working Party has been in contact with an operator who is possibly willing to provide transport to Welwyn-North Station.

After discussion the Council also wanted it recorded that they would support the Parish Plan Steering Group, Transport Working Party who are looking at the feasibility of Transport being made available for commuters to Welwyn North Station.

Under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and accredited representatives of the newspapers are excluded from the meeting from this point onwards on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

2007/32 CIVIC CENTRE:

The Clerk reported that she had an email from the District Council regarding any progress regarding the rental fee. The Clerk had replied that the Council was still waiting for legal advice.

A short report, which had been previously circulated from the Chairman of Finance, was discussed.

Resolved, the Clerk to write a strong letter to the District Council based on the wording in the report.

2007/33 STAFFING MATTERS:

The Clerk reported on the progress of the staff.

Resolved, and unanimously agreed from 1st April 2007 to employ John Lewis on a permanent contract as the Senior Office Administrator'.

(Details of the conditions are recorded in the 'Confidential Minutes File)

2007/34 CLOSE OF MEETING:

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.43pm

Signed Chairman of the Council

Date ..: 2007

APPENDIX (1)

Commuter Parking in Digswell: Next Steps

The problem of commuter parking in Digswell is of long-standing and previous attempts to resolve the issue have foundered for a variety of reasons.

Responses to the Questionnaire sent out as part of the ongoing Parish Plan Initiative emphasised the strength of feeling of Digswell residents and led to this issue being a key topic for the Traffic Working Party set up by the Steering Committee. This Working Party did its own survey of parking and also devised, circulated, collected and analysed a questionnaire. The response rate was 43% (more than 230 households).

The survey showed that more than 140 cars belonging to users of Welwyn North Station were parked on Digswell roads while there were empty spaces in the Station car park. From the questionnaire 176 respondents favoured increased on road parking restrictions while 59 favoured resident parking permits.

Based on these results and direct consultation with residents the Working Party proposed to the Steering Committee that the following recommendations be put to Borough and County Councils and that prior to that the active support of the Parish Council be sought. It should be emphasised that these recommendations are based on observation and are evidence based.

- 1) To extend parking restriction with single yellow lines forbidding parking before 10am on certain key roads. This will result in improved traffic flow on through roads around the station and will allow residents of neighbouring (loses to access their garages and parking spaces.
- 2) To enforce these measures. There is considerable dissatisfaction with lack of official interest or action when incidents of improper, dangerous and inconsiderate parking, often including aggressive behaviour by drivers, are reported.
- 3) To provide more parking spaces at the station. The use of the old coal yard, which is not suitable for housing, has been suggested. This land is otherwise derelict wasted space.

The Steering Committee unanimously endorsed the recommendations of the Working Party. It seeks the active support of the Parish Council as the most immediate level of local government and proposes the following next steps.

To set up a meeting of all interested parties to discuss these recommendations and others than may emerge from the meeting. This would include Parish, Borough and County Councillors and Officers, First Capital Connect and NCP. It should be noted that Grant Shapps MP is aware of the concerns of Digswell residents and has offered to participate, subject of course to availability.

of this Paper are being sent to Borough Councillors Perkins and Storer, Copies to County Councillor Richard Smith and to the office of the MP.

Welwyn Parish Plan Steering Committee, March 21 2007