

## WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2007 AT THE PARISH CENTRE LOCKLEYS DRIVE WELWYN COMMENCING AT 7.45PM.

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**PRESENT:** Councillor J Roper (Chairman) and Cllrs M Benson, J Blackburn, S Butler, H Hughes, C Hukin, L Page and I Skidmore.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** R Findlay (Clerk to the Council) J Lewis (Office Administrator)  
Mr I Colpitts and Dr H Ober (Members of the Public)

**WELCOME:** The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllr L McLusky (Funeral)

*At this juncture, Cllr Sidmore arrived and gave his apologies for being late.*

**2007/89      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Cllr Hughes declared an interest in item 14, 'Friends of Mardley Heath' as he is a member.

**2007/90      MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2007:**

**Resolved**, that the Minutes were a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chairman.

**2007/91      MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2007:**

NALC Conference. Councillors were reminded Councillors of the Conference and asked to contact the Clerk if they wished to attend.

**2007/92      MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2007:**

The Council thanked the Clerk and Cllr Skidmore for the preparation of the Year End Accounts for 2006/2007.

**Resolved**, that the Minutes were a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chairman.

**2007/93      MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2007:**

There were no matters arising.

**2007/94      CANDIDATES FOR CO-OPTION TO THE COUNCIL:**

Two candidates had put themselves forward for the vacancy of a Councillor for Hawbush Ward, Mr I Colpitts and Dr H Ober.

They separately addressed the Council and answered questions.  
Dr H Ober addressed the meeting and answered questions.

Initials.....

At this Juncture, Mr I Colpitts and Dr H Ober wanted to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

It was therefore agreed that item 6 on the Agenda (*Decision of Council for Co-opted onto the Parish Council*) be moved to later in the proceedings under 'Exempt Business' items.

**2007/95                    AGREE NEW BANK MANDATE:**

**Resolved**, the new Bank Mandate allowing any Councillor to have the authority to sign cheques, be dispatched to the bank after the new co-opted Councillor had signed it.

**2007/96                    NOMINATE A REPRESENTATIVE TO SIT ON WELWYN HATFIELD'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE:**

It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Neville remain as the representative.

**Resolved** that Cllr P Neville be nominated to sit on Welwyn Hatfield's Standards Committee.

**2007/97                    CODE OF CONDUCT:**

The Clerk reported that she had attended the "Cracking the Code" Conference held by NALC. She reported that she had some information that she would hand out to Councillors after the meeting, which could help Councillors better understand the new Code of Conduct and suggested that the decision to adopt the new Code be deferred until the next Council meeting.

**Resolved**, the item to be placed onto the next agenda.

**2007/98                    REVIVAL OF ASSOCIATION OF WELWYN HATFIELD PARISHES:**

Details had been circulated prior to the meeting Cllr Neville suggested the revival of the "Association of the Welwyn Hatfield Parishes".

The Clerk suggested that HAPTC are also consulted and should be included.

**Resolved**, the Clerk approach HAPTC to ask them to initiate bring all the Parish and Town Councils in the area together.

**2007/99                    REVIEW OF BOUNDARIES/ELECTORAL CHANGES.**

- (a) This was an urgent matter as the dead line was 7<sup>th</sup> August 2007. Cllr Neville reported to Council that the Boundary Line was not drawn in the correct place and would affect electors in Oaklands and Digswell.

**Resolved**, the Clerk make representations that the Council did not agree with the proposed inclusion of some properties in Great North Road in the amended Digswell Ward, these properties having a more direct geographic connection with Oaklands/Mardley Heath Ward.

- (b) It was reported that an email from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council was enquiring whether Welwyn Parish Council wished to have another election in 2008 instead of the scheduled election due in 2011 which would bring it in line with the Borough Council elections.

Initials.....

**Resolved**, the Council are **AGAINST** holding the Parish Council elections in 2008 and want the elections to be held in 2011 as scheduled.

**2007/100**

**BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CORPORATE & COMMUNITY PLAN.**

It was reported that a reply had been received from Welwyn Hatfield Borough outlining the Council's comments on the Borough's Corporate & Community Plan.

**Resolved**, that once the 'Association of the Welwyn Hatfield Parishes' has been set up that the members have a meeting with the Borough Council.

**2007/101**

**HIGH STREET CLOSURE.**

The Chairman reported that Hertfordshire Highways had been in touch with him to discuss the closing of the High Street in Welwyn for repair work to the drainage system and asked the Council to consider some requests from them.

The Clerk informed the Council that Hertfordshire Highways Officers had not used the correct procedure of informing the Clerk on any of this matter and had instead gone through the Chairman and should not be making any decisions at this time as she was not able to advise Council.

**Resolved**, that the correct procedure was to go through the Clerk and that the Clerk contacts Hertfordshire Highways seek more information on their proposed works. The Clerk was asked to report back to the Council and to arrange an extraordinary meeting.

**2007/102**

**FRIENDS OF MARDLEY HEATH.**

The Council was reminded that the Friends of Mardley Heath had contacted the Council previously requesting a donation for the purposes of purchasing equipment to enable them to look after Mardley Heath.

The Clerk reminded the Council that the Borough Council owned the land and it should be the Borough that they are requesting a donation from and that the electorate of the Parish already pay Special Expenses to the Borough Council for maintaining Mardley Heath.

**Resolved**, that the Clerk contact the 'Friends of Mardley Heath' advising them that Mardley Heath is owned by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and that any request for funding should initially be directed to the Borough Council. She was also to assure the Friends of Mardley Heath that Welwyn Parish Council would forward their request to the local Ward Borough Councillors with a statement supporting their request for a donation from the Borough Council.

**2007/103**

**WELWYN PARISH GUIDE 2007-2008.**

The Clerk reported to the Council that a new issue of the Welwyn Parish Guide needed to be considered.

**Resolved**, the Clerk will liaise with Cllrs Benson, Page and Skidmore to obtain further information on the costs of producing a guide and report back at the next meeting.

**2007/104**

**JULY REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTIES.**

**1. Planning & Licensing Committee.**

Cllr Hukin, Chairman of the Committee presented Minutes of the July meeting for information. There were no questions on the Minutes.

Initials.....

**2. Finance Committee.**

Cllr Skidmore, Chairman of the Finance Committee, presented minutes of the July meeting.

He recommended that Council agree income and expenditure for June 2007.

**Resolved**, payments for June 2007 totalling **£26,936.26** were accepted by the Council.

**3. Leisure & Open Spaces Committee.**

Cllr Benson, Vice-Chairman of the Committee presented minutes as Cllr Blackburn the Chairman of the Committee was absent from the meeting.

The Committee gave their apologies to Cllr McLusky as she was the only person to arrive for the arranged judging of the Allotments on 29<sup>th</sup> July.

It was reported that the Judging would now take place on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2007 at 11.30am meeting at the hut.

It was also reported that Committee had received an urgent request from Hertfordshire Disabled Cricket requesting:

1. A donation towards the provision of a Synthetic Cricket Pitch as they had secured funding of £7,000 but needed to raise £1225.00 as soon as possible before the funding would be withdrawn. They had £600 but need an extra £625
2. That the Council allows for the installation of the Synthetic Pitch to be placed next to the original Cricket Square at the playing fields at Ottway walk.

**Resolved**, that the Council agrees a donation of £625.00 to Hertfordshire Disable Cricket to be used for the purchasing of a Synthetic Cricket Pitch.

**Resolved**, that the Council allows Hertfordshire Disabled Cricket to install the Synthetic Cricket Pitch on the playing fields at Ottway Walk.

**4. Youth Working Party.**

Cllr Roper reported that he had met with two suppliers of Skateboard and Moto-cross park equipment and the Clerk was waiting for the two quotes and another had yet to be obtained.

**5. Civic Centre Working Party.**

Cllr Benson presented the notes of the meeting held in July.

The Clerk reported that she had conducted a confidential survey asking regular hirers their views of the Civic Centre. She reported that overall the hirers were happy with the Civic Centre and the other comments were mostly on the decoration and kitchen of which the Council is already addressing.

The Council gave their thanks to Des Wilson, the Caretaker of the Civic Centre for his valued contributions at Working Party meetings.

**6. Cleaner Villages Working Party.**

Cllr Blackburn presented reports on the second 'Cleaner Villages Week' walkabouts of Welwyn, Digswell and Oaklands/Mardley Heath. He thanked the leaders for their time and contribution. He also expressed his hopes that there be more volunteers next year.

*Initials.....*

**2007/105 WRITTEN REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES.**  
None were received.

**2007/106 COUNCILLORS' WRITTEN REPORTS.**  
None were received.

**EXEMPT BUSINESS**

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, for items 6, 18 and 19 on the agenda, the Chairman at this point excluded the public and accredited representatives of newspapers 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.

**2007/107 (Agenda Item 6)**  
**DECISION OF COUNCIL FOR CO-OPTION ONTO THE PARISH COUNCIL.**  
The Council held a ballot to co-opt a Councillor representing Hawbush Ward onto the Council. The Clerk collected and counted the ballot sheets and announced that Mr I Colpitts had received 6 votes and Dr H Ober had received 3 votes.

It was **Resolved** that Mr I Colpitts be co-opted onto the Council representing Hawbush Ward.

**2007/108 CIVIC CENTRE LEASE – UPDATE.**  
The Clerk reported that the Council's solicitor has written to Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in regard to the Borough Council's demand for an increase in rental fees on the Civic Centre. (*Copies had previously been circulated*).

**2007/109 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE.**  
**Full confidential details of this item are recorded in the Confidential Minutes.**

The Clerk explained to Council that although there was a Grievance & Disciplinary Procedure for staff in the Council's Standing Orders the Council did not have a Complaints procedure for any complaints from Councillors against the Clerk and the Clerk towards Councillors. The Clerk then explained that NALC has a Model Complaint procedure that she would like the Council to consider. A copy would be handed out to all Councillors for consideration.

It was **Resolved** that a Complaint Procedure be considered to be included into the Council's Standing Orders at the next Council meeting.

**2007/110 CLOSURE OF MEETING.**  
The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.45pm.

Signed:.....

Chairman, Welwyn Parish Council

Date:.....2007