

EAST HARPTREE PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD VIA A ZOOM MEETING ON TUESDAY
26TH MAY 2020 STARTING AT 7.30PM**

	<p><u>Present:</u> Cllrs Andrew Jones (Chair), Pam carver, Richard Coombs, Kate Gillingham, Wendy Gregory and John Vinson; also present Cllr David Wood (B&NES) and Alan Butcher (Clerk). The chairman advised attendees on the procedures relevant to virtual meetings.</p>	
2005/1	<p><u>Apologies for absence.</u> None.</p>	
2005/2	<p><u>Public Forum</u> The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow public participation.</p> <p>i) The applicant for the planning matter 2005/6i was present and gave an explanation for the proposals advising that the introduction of the clear roof sheets was necessary for the well being of the animals housed in the barn and also to reduce energy consumption as, currently, it was necessary to use artificial lighting for up to 24 hours per day. She also advised that the agent for the application was aware of the problem with the impact of the roof sheeting on the Dark Skies policy and was seeking a solution. Councillors asked a number of questions including the reasons why there were no windows and ventilation on the elevations which would reduce the need to the roof lights. Cllr Carver asked if the reason for this was for security purposes. The applicant advised that the walls were concrete block with timber slats above. It was also suggested that the number of sheets could be reduced to cover only specific areas. The chairman thanked the applicant for their information.</p> <p>ii) Report from Ward Councillor. Cllr David Wood advised that schools would re-open next week if it was safe to do so. Also both green waste collections and the household waste facility at Keynsham would reopen from Monday 1st June. In terms of the financial effect of the Covid 19 emergency, the loss of revenues and additional costs resulting from the emergency, B&NES would have a deficit for the year of around £53m, a large proportion of the council budget. Income of council museums, car parks and other attractions and loss of rental income from council properties had been substantially reduced whilst additional expenses including support of vulnerable people, care homes and council tax support and business rates suspension. The council had received around £10m from the government by way of grants but it was likely to take several years to recover the financial situation. The council was currently preparing an emergency budget which would be signed off in July. The council were looking to deal with a £40m+ shortfall which was double the amount of previous cuts to council budgets over a four year period in a period of four weeks. Cllr Carver asked if proposals</p>	

	<p>such as the virtual footpath in the High Street would be at risk as a result of this process. Cllr Wood offered a positive response and was promoting the scheme during the ongoing discussions and hoped that it could go ahead. Cllr Vinson asked if, as ward councillor, Cllr Wood thought that the rural areas were being treated equally with the more urban areas of B&NES. Cllr Wood advised that he was spending time in protecting local businesses which were important to rural communities as well as ensuring that front line services in rural areas received an equal provision. Cllr Gregory asked if Cllr Wood was satisfied with the response from government in the provision of resources, etc. Cllr Wood felt that local authorities had been “ short-changed” compared with other sectors which had received much greater financial and other assistance. The government had said that the rebuilding of the economy would fall to local government as well as relying on local councils to fulfil a number of its promises during the emergency when it had found that it was unable to do so. Cllr Wood summed up by advising that services such as planning site visits had been suspended but that he hoped that they could be re-started for the Pinkers Farm pavement situation and the like. The chairman thanked him for his report.</p> <p>The formal meeting was then re-convened.</p>	
2005/3	<u>Declarations of Interest:</u> None.	
2005/4	<p><u>Confirmation of the Minutes of previous meetings:</u></p> <p>i) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17th March 2020 were amended to include Cllr Gregory as an attendee at the CNEWG meeting, agreed and signed as a true record. A hard copy of the minutes were signed by the Chairman.</p>	
2005/5	<p><u>Formal Motions requiring a decision:</u></p> <p>i) To review and agree the Parish Council response to the B&NES Local Plan Partial Update and Draft Statement of Community Involvement. The chairman summarised the works to date and the documentation which had been circulated and discussed by all councillors. This had included an excellent and very well researched set of responses from the Climate and Nature Emergency Working Group (C&NEWG). Cllr Carver had asked both the C&NEWG and the Village Environment Group (VEG) to produce responses relating to the policies relevant to their areas of interest and expertise. She noted that the Parish was very fortunate to be able to draw on such well qualified people and this was unanimously agreed. However, Cllr Jones was concerned that the response from the Village Environment Group had only been received and circulated to councillors, just before the meeting. The chairman advised that he had compared the responses received from the CNEWG and VEG and they</p>	

presented a very similar response in respect of the Environmental issues. Cllr Jones suggested that it was therefore not necessary for the VEG response to also be incorporated into the Parish Council response. Cllr Vinson felt that both the responses from the external groups should be included with the Parish Council response to add extra weight and show that this was a concerned community response. Cllr Jones advised that the responses received should not now be incorporated into the Parish Council response. In answer to a question from Cllr Carver, not all but one of the councillors had reviewed the VEG response received just before the meeting. Cllr Carver said she therefore agreed with Cllr Vinson that both should be included, to emphasise the Parish Council's endorsement of this work. Cllr Jones proposed that the responses from the CNEWG and VEG be appended to the Parish Council response. Cllr Gillingham asked if those responses were also being sent in direct by each of the groups; Cllr Carver confirmed that they would be. Cllr Jones asked councillors for any comments on the response documents circulated by Cllr Carver. Cllr Gregory had no further comments and was happy to include the external groups responses as appendices to the Parish Council response. Cllr Vinson had no further comments on the response put forward by Cllr Carver; neither as did Cllrs Gillingham and Coombs. Cllr Carver noted that she preferred it would be more straight forward to see the external groups responses included as appendices as proposed. Cllr Jones also agreed with councillors' comments and put forward wording to be incorporated into the documents concerning the external groups. Cllr Carver suggested a slight amendment to that wording which was agreed. Cllr Carver agreed to pull together the final version of the response which would be sent to B&NES by the Clerk before the deadline on Monday 1st June. Cllr Jones proposed that the Parish Council response including the appended responses from the CNEWG and VEG form the response to the B&NES consultation from East Harptree Parish Council. This was agreed unanimously. Councillors also gave a vote of thanks to Cllr Carver for all her work on the response. Cllr Carver proposed that the response to should be sent by email to the B&NES given email address. This was agreed, Cllr Carver and the Clerk to liaise about the submission of the agreed response and appendices before the deadline.

- ii) To review tenders received and decide future actions to continue the upgrade of the Parish Council website. The Clerk responded that a brief had been sent out to four potential providers. One price had been received after the end of the tender process and that another tenderer had responded during the tender period with options rather than a price as requested and, as a result, there had not been a valid successful tender process.

He suggested that it might be prudent for the council to agree to explore options with one or more suppliers to see what was available to the council and what the price might be. The clerk advised that the current annual cost was around £130. The clerk also advised that he had investigated Wordpress and was not confident that the required updating of the site could be achieved without external input.

The clerk noted that currently he ran a Parish Council website to comply with the councils's legal requirements and that it would not be possible to include wider contributions without a significant upgrade. He suggested that, if necessary, the existing host Krystal could be discarded in favour of another company rather than duplicate costs. Cllr Jones was concerned about the implications of changing the host on webmail and the like. The clerk advised that the council owns the domain name so it would be a change, hopefully, using the same address. Cllr Gregory advised that it was likely that the same webmail would be retained but that the website element which was an "off the shelf" package would duplicate the existing system. Cllr Gregory offered to provide a comparison between sites. Cllr Jones asked if the clerk would be able to handle the new website, Cllr Gregory advised that both companies offered some training as part of the package. She advised that, as she had already spoken to the suppliers a number of times, she did not want to speak to them again unless the council were serious about proceeding with either. Cllr Jones summarised that the consensus was to move forward with the two suppliers who had responded and asked if councillors wished to add a third supplier. All agreed to remain with the two respondents.

Following further discussion Cllr Jones proposed that the tender process should be considered closed. This was agreed unanimously.

Cllr Jones advised that a change of the brief, for instance by removing the requirement for a sample home page or to use the existing host, could allow the existing suppliers to continue in the new estimate process.

Cllr Gregory asked the clerk whether he was committed to the existing host company. He responded that whilst he was very familiar with the existing system, he would not be overly concerned by the change except that he might take longer for him to familiarise with the new system. Cllr Gregory agreed to review the brief and make appropriate changes as discussed. In concluding the discussions, Cllr Jones proposed that the Parish Council should draw a line under the tender process, it not having produced the specific result required either to brief or comparative cost and proceed on the basis that the proposed expenditure was below the £1000 (£3,000) lower limit. Agreed unanimously.

All agreed that Cllr Gregory should continue to discuss the Parish Council requirements and amended brief and obtain estimates from the two suppliers who responded previously.

2005/6	<p><u>Current Parish Council Matters</u></p> <p>i) Planning application 20/01570/VAR – Part Parcel of land at Coley Narrow – Variation of Condition 3 (roof materials) of application 19/03010/FUL (Change of use from agricultural to mixed use and erection of buildings). This matter was taken before discussions on 2005/5.</p> <p>Cllr Gillingham felt that the Dark Skies policy would be compromised by the proposals and that it would be better to look to include side windows. Cllr Vinson wanted to know what alternative suggestions had been put forward by the agent; he also commented on the need to take regard of climate change given the current energy use of the current artificial lighting. Cllr Gregory concurred with these comments as did Cllr Coombs who also felt that there were too many windows being proposed. Cllr Carver noted the need for security when considering the introduction of side windows. It was noted that the building was a standard “barn” construction with block walls with boarding above. Cllr Jones felt that there were too many rooflights which would cause excessive light spill but there was a need to reduce reliance on artificial lighting. Cllr Vinson felt that the effect on bats of use of side windows against roof lights needed clarifying.</p> <p>Cllr Jones proposed that the council should object to the application on the grounds of the Dark Skies policy but that the response should include comments about the need to explore other solutions to mitigate the problem with light spill and also the environmental effect of energy consumption. It was agreed that the response should include the comment that the applicant should work with B&NES to find other solutions to mitigate the Dark Skies problems. Councillors agreed unanimously to object to the application but to include the comments as stated.</p>	
2005/7	<p><u>Matters of Report.</u></p> <p>i) Cllr Jones advised that the training arranged with ALCA had been postponed.</p> <p>ii) Cllr Gregory asked if consideration could be given to changing the Parish Council banking to ethical banking.</p>	
2005/8	<p><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting:</u></p> <p>The next meeting to be held as a virtual meeting on 16th June 2020.</p>	

The meeting finished at 9.40pm

Alan Butcher, Parish Clerk,

10th June 2020

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