

Minutes of the Clavering Parish Council Meeting Held in Clavering Village Hall on Monday 25th July 2011

(Key to votes: P: Proposed S: Seconded F: For the Proposal Ag: Against Ab.: Abstained)

Present: Rebecca Stanford (Chair), Mike Patmore, Brian Barrow, Ron Couchman, Jenny Allan, Eggie Abrahams, Sarah Penman, Stephanie Gill, Mark Wilkinson, District Cllr Edward Oliver, 15 Parishioners, Clerk.

1. **Welcome by Chairman:** The Chairman welcomed all to the July meeting.
2. **Apologies and reasons for absence:** Des Abrahams (health), Richard Carter (vacation), County Councillor Gooding.
3. **Declarations of Interest on agenda items** (existence and nature)
 - Stephaine Gill – Friends of Clavering (Prej. Int/ School Governor), 17 Pelham Road (prej Int/sch governor with owner)
 - Ron Couchman – Village Hall - (Prej. Int / Village Hall Trustee), Churchyard fundraising (prej.int/cuts the grass), 17 Pelham Road (prej.int/friend)
 - Eggie Abrahams– Jubilee Field & Village Hall (prej. /On Committee)
 - Mike Patmore – Bowls Club (pers. Int / Chair of Bowls Club)
 - Mark Wilkinson – Planning applications for Brices Yard & Butts Green – (Pers. Int. / neighbour)
 - Rebecca Stanford – 17 Pelham Road - (P. Int. / friend)

4. **Complaint** – Ron Couchman addressed the Council and public regarding a complaint which was made against him following the last parish council meeting. Ron Couchman read out his statement.

“A complaint has been made about my conduct as a Councillor by Mrs Melody Carter. The Monitoring Officer of the District Council has suggested that I make a statement at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

The Complaint concerns comments I made at the last Parish Council meeting when describing three to four foot high Cow Parsley, Docks and Stinging Nettles as an eyesore: that this had been included in the relevant parts of the application form for the Best Kept Village competition entitled – ‘Eyesores outside your control’. Whereas Mrs Carter feels that this is an area of unspoilt natural beauty over which the Parish Council has control.

I believe my description to be fair and accurate and that the application form was filled in in an appropriate manner. I believe the complaint to be unfounded.

Councillors and Parishioners might like to consult Council minute and the Best Kept Village application form along with the Entry Guidelines to understand my comment, copies of which are held by the Parish Clerk.

As complaints about the conduct of Councillors are a matter for the Standards Board of the District Council I will make no further comment at this stage”.

5. **Public Participation session with respect to items on the agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest.**

Mr Murdoch – thank councillors especially Richard Carter & Mr Rowley and all other residents who helped to cut and clear the grass recently on Hill Green. He believed that Ron Couchman should not be subject to public humiliation regarding the recent discussions on Hill Green by a parishioner.

Mrs Carter – in response to Cllr Ron Couchman and Mr Murdoch made it clear that she did not report Cllr Couchman to the standards board, that it was infact Cllr Couchman who reported himself to the Standards Board. She hoped that the distress caused to parishioners by Cllr Ron Couchman’s comments regarding the ‘eyesore of the village green’ in Clavering could be easily put right with an apology to the village. Mrs Carter was disappointed that Cllr Couchman still believes he is right and she is sorry she has angered another parishioner in doing so. This was not her intention.

Mr Howland would like more agendas printed out for the public use.

Mr Andrew Martin, Planning Consultant for the developer of the Jubilee Works site introduced himself and was following up to the request from the developer for a housing need survey.

The Rural Housing Enabler, employed by Rural Community Council of Essex, would be happy to undertake a out a social housing need survey if the PC require it. This would involve a letter/survey being distributed to all parishioners with a SAE direct to her. Following this the RCCE would provide a report for Capita and CPC.

John Lefever. Regional Head of Development for Hastoe. Hastoe would not want to be involved without the support of CPC. CPC are required to decide if a housing need survey is required. There are 2 elements to a scheme. 106 element fits within the village planning boundary and follows district wide policy for social housing. The developer chooses which housing association it wishes to work with. Affordable housing, out of

the development limits, would require local parish council support. The PC chooses the housing association to work with which looks at local applicants. He said there may be some affordable housing within the boundary but he could not confirm this. The housing needs survey identifies the need for rent and/or ownership/shared ownership; in reality it is usually a blend of the two.

Edward Oliver wanted to remind the council and parishioners that on 26th July 2011, Eggie Abrahams was to receive the honour of becoming an Honorary Alderman, at a ceremony at the Council Offices. Eggie wished everyone a long and happy life and good luck to Clavering and all that reside here.

6. Minutes of the last meeting held on 13th June 2011. Amendments; Rebecca Stanford confirmed that the agenda should be a record of actions and not a document of personal comments she asked the council if a sentence by Ron Couchman, in the draft minutes, should be removed under 'greens'. BB suggested that this comment was subject to a parishioners complaint and should remain. Stephanie Gill said that the statement in part was subjective. Voting should read AG 2, F 8 under the same point. Stephaine Gill added that she had a personal interest in the Cricket Club as secretary of the Cricket Club. Item 4 – Ron Couchman's name added as a contender to the vice chair appointment. Spelling of Mr Murdoch's name to be corrected. With these amendments made Rebecca Stanford signed the minutes as an accurate record.

7. Clerks Report – Distributed Prior to the meeting for review.

7.a. Correspondence

- i. Fundraising Request from Friends of Clavering School Bus. Rebecca Stanford briefed the public on the history behind the funding request. Funds required have since been raised and funding is no longer required. It is our understanding that Essex County Council will fund a bus escort from September and Mrs Gill confirmed this.
- ii. Fundraising Request from Clavering Parochial Church Council. The Treasurer, Cllr Edward Oliver, had written to the Council seeking funding. The Council agreed to award the sum of £600 Ron Couchman declared a prejudicial interest and left the room. Rebecca Stanford read out the letter to the Councillors detailing the request. P: Stephanie Gill, S; Jenny Allen, F:8, Ron Couchman absent.
- iii. Funding Request from Uttlesford Association of Local Councils £25 subscription fee. P:MW, S:SP, F:8, Ab:1
- iv. Funding Request from Rural Community Council of Essex (£55 annual subscription) P:RC, S:MW, F:9
- v. Jubilee Works, Stickling Green. Letters summarised by Rebecca Stanford were from Hastoe, Kift Consulting (regarding Community Land Trust, consultancy firm), Richard Carter's statement was read out, Thomas Hatch from Capita who apologised for not informing the PC prior of their intentions to the public meeting. Ron Couchman reminded the council that no application for planning has been made and that pre-emptive decisions should not be made. Councillors agreed.
- vi. Mill Lane Signs. Meeting to be arranged with John Bradford from UDC. Ron Couchman & 1 other councillor is happy to meet John Bradford with parishioner to discuss sight line. Clerk to obtain dates and liaise.
- vii. Letter from Mr Rowley – Sightline of Lower Hill Green. Could the sightline be reconsidered before next year cutting? Councillors agreed that this could be done and would consider when tender is discussed (September).
- viii. Letter from Hastoe East re; Jubilee Works proposal. (read out in point v.)
- ix. Letter from Richard Carter regarding Jubilee Works proposal. (read out in point v. by Rebecca Stanford).
- x. Letter from EALC Congratulating Clavering on 'Highly Commended' award for Best Kept Churchyard Competition. Rebecca Stanford congratulated and thanked those involved. A copy of the letter is to be forwarded to those concerned.
- xi. Parishioner has written to the Council to offer assistance and seek permission to a remove a dead tree and tidy up ivy and suckers from Limes around Lower Hill Green area. No cost to the council. Councillors agreed unanimously.

8. Risk Assessment Record Update. Bus Shelter has been painted.

9. Finance (Ron Couchman is RFO for Clavering Parish Council). The Financial Report was forwarded prior to the meeting, Ron Couchman reviewed all items on the report and asked for any comments. Of note; Bank reconciliation – earmarked fund for 'Parish Land Maintenance', it was agreed that this fund should be renamed 'Parish Furniture' which more accurately reflects the use of the fund. Clerk to remove Ray Lomas from Insurance Document. (insurance on this policy for over 75's is only in place on obtaining a doctors letter which the Council will fund).

9.1 Monthly Budget Sheets. Receipts and Payments/Bank reconciliation – all reconcile.

9.2 Invoices Received.

To Whom	Date	Invoice	Net	Vat	Total
Clerk Salary (6 weeks salary)	July	008	450.36		450.36
Viola Water Central Limited	June		50.48	10.10	60.58
Home Start			50.00		50.00
Rural Community Council of Essex (Annual Subscription)	July		55.00		55.00
Acumen Wages Services	July	8906	17.50	3.50	21.00
Mark Gilbertson (Grass Cutting)	June	10059	185.00		185.00
MG Howard (CPFA) Internal Auditor	30.06.2011	1350	250.00		250.00
Totals			1058.34	13.60	1071.94

P: Rebecca Stanford to pay all invoices F: 9.

9.3 Consideration of Internal Auditors Report and Action Required. Ron Couchman. Report sent to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. Of note:

- Ron Couchman asked Councillors to review the summary page. The Internal Auditor's letter was circulated to all Cllrs regarding 'Clavering Parish Council – Internal Audit – dated 18th June 2011.'
- Jenny Allan to become the 5th a signatory on cheque book. Clerk to coordinate.
- Rebecca Stanford to talk to Jon Cook regarding land valuation liaise with Ron Couchman on land to be valued.
- To assist with the distribution of larger documents Eggie proposed to buy a photocopier, S; Ron Couchman, A: 6 , Ab: 1, F: 2.

9.4 Easement Money – Ron Couchman met Saffron Building Society to discuss transferring money to a higher interest account. However withdrawing the money prior to a year would incur costs. Options were investigated and discussed. Rebecca Stanford proposed that Ron Couchman should carry on with his action of transferring funds to a 6 month corporate bond at 2%. S: JA, All Cllrs agreed.

The Members of the Council suggested that they obtain paid legal advice to help clarify what the Council can do with the easement money and how it can be spent. P: SP – to send of a letter to 1) DEFRA 2) a specialist solicitor (advice from EALC/NALC) to clarify what the Council is able to do with Easement money. S: RS, F: 7, A: 2. Rebecca Stanford to assist Clerk to draft letter for solicitor without specific identifiable information being used.

Rebecca had been advised by the internal auditor that if no legal advice is sought Cllrs. could be held liable. If legal advice is sought and paid for then Cllrs are not liable in future.

10. Planning from UDC

10.1 Received – (note declarations of interest point 3).

APPLICATION No.	DEVELOPMENT	LOCATION	Dec.
UTT/1161/11/FUL	Change of use of part garden and two outbuildings to shop A1 with car park and new access	Waterside, Butts Green.	No objections (Mark Wilkinson left the room)
UTT/1228/11/FUL	Proposed erection of conservatory to side of property	Monks Cottage, Stickling Green	No objection
UTT/1194/11/FUL	Installation of 4 no. Additional windows	Unit 4 Brices Yard, Butts Green	No objection (Mark

			Wilkinson left the room)
UTT/1147/11/LB	Construction of a doorway in party wall to create one dwelling	Bury Cottage/Spencer Cottage, Middle St	No objection
UTT/1323/11/FUL	Proposed single storey rear extension and enclosure porch area	Copthall, Hill Green	No objection
UTT/1324/11/LB	As above with internal and external alterations	As above	No objection
UTT/1388/11/FUL	Proposed garage conversion	17 Pelham Road	No objection (SG, RAC & RS left the room)

10.2 Determined.

APPLICATION No.	DEVELOPMENT	LOCATION	Dec.
UTT/0779/11/FUL	Single storey side and rear extension	May Cottage, 5 Starlings Green	CA
UTT/0233/11/FUL	Change of use of land to form a tennis court with adjacent access track and hard standing area, and the erection of associated fencing.	Thurrocks Manor,	CA
UTT/0846/11/FUL	Erection of photovoltaic solar panels on grain store	Thurrocks Farm	CA
UTT/1186/AA/LB	Erection of a single storey extn. Demolition of a boiler room and chimney	Court Lodge	WD

Key; UA = Unconditional Approval, CA = Conditional Approval, RF – Refused

10.3 Investigations.

- Under Investigation & New Cases: 7 ongoing
- Case File with Legal: No notification this month
- Investigations Closed: None this month

11 Access and Greens.

11.1 Grass Cutting Update. 13 people assisted with the clearing of grass from Hill Green. The Chair thanked all for their assistance. Tenders for Grass cutting are on September agenda.

11.2 Access Licence – The Chapel, update. Holmes and Hills Solicitors have written to the Council to confirm that their fees have reached £500 (a sum which Mr Stringer has agreed to undertake). He advises the Council “to extend their original undertaking to pay for any additional work on top of this £500” He believes a further 2 hours are required to complete this matter and that their delay is fault. Clerk to instruct Holmes and Hills to write to Mr Stringer to confirm the undertaking of revised costs.

12. PROW. (Public Rights of Way). 3 trees cleared from Elm Street Lane.

13. Village Organisations.

British Legion – children sports day now 4th September 2011. Veterans day out at Duxford – interested veterans to contact Mr Bevan.

14. Allotments (Mike Patmore) – all grass cleared. Leaking tap has been fixed. Mike Patmore to be reimbursed on receipt of invoice/next meeting.

15. War Memorial – update on grant application (Ron Couchman) – only eligible for repairs, maximum grant available is £150. Total bill is £450 for cleaning £300 for fixing. Ron Couchman would like to complete work prior to 11th November 2011 in time to act of Remembrance. Clerk to send paperwork asap. P: Mike Patmore – as soon as Clerk has been informed of grant decision, the Clerk will call the contractor to commence work. The work will commence regardless of the grant decision in time for Remembrance service. S: RS, F: all.

16. Bench Replacement (Jenny Allan) – Rotten bench to be removed and replaced by a new bench in memory of Richard Whitting.

(Eggie Abrahamas left the meeting 9.30pm)

17. Emergency Plan (Ron Couchman) – plan to be circulated for Cllrs to review and discuss in September. Clerk to place on September agenda. Clerk to forward meeting dates to the Emergency Planning Coordinator.

18. Chairman and Councillor Training – Rebecca Stanford thanked those who attended a recent training course on Code of Conduct. Langley Clerk has written to local parishes including, Clavering PC, to ask if they would be willing to attend an ‘inhouse’ training course for councillors to lower cost. Suggested items for the

course include Localism Bill and Data Protection. Clerk asked Councillors to supply areas they would like on the course. Clerk to confirm with Langley Clerk.

19. **Update on Youth Council** (Rebecca Stanford) – September agenda.

20. **Neighbourhood Action Panel** – cuts to police budget (Ron Couchman). Open meeting in the village are usually well attended. £10 is being asked to pay for the hire of the Christian Centre for the next quarterly meeting. P: Jenny Allen “to pay for the next meeting hire to gauge interest from parishioners” S: Ron Couchman, F6 A:1 Ab:1

21. **Report for Highways on any damaged signs, roads and railings** (Clerk); Railings by Coles Hills damaged. Mike Patmore has emailed highways regarding cutting at Blacksmiths Corner – but no response. Pothole by Wymans Nursery.

22. **Matters to be raised by members for the next agenda.**

- Easement Money - Stephanie Gill confirmed that following the training course undertaken by 5 Councillors, it became apparent that Cllrs will have to write ‘as individual’s’ to the Uttlesford District Council for permission to apply for dispensation (all councillors would potentially have to declare an interest as members of committees in the village) to discuss Easement money and its potential distribution. Clerk to write to Mr Perry, Standards Board at UDC for pro-forma letter.
- Dick Ball Meadow is already an agenda item.

23. **Date of next Meeting 12th September 2011 at 7.30pm**

Chairman
Clavering Parish Council

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm