



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ARDELEY PARISH COUNCIL held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.30 pm in the village hall.**

Councillors present: Cllr Adrian Waygood, Chairman  
Cllr Stuart Norman  
Cllr Simon Peace  
Cllr Tim Noble  
Cllr Jackie York

Officer attending: Lorna Ewen, Clerk

Others present: 9 members of the public

**24.01 Apologies for absence:** Cllr Jim Egginton and also from District Cllr Aubrey Holt.

**24.02 Declarations of interest:** None.

**24.03 To receive the minutes of the last meeting** held 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Proposed by Cllr Waygood as an accurate record, seconded by Cllr Peace, approved unanimously (except for Cllr Norman who was not present at the previous meeting) and signed by the chairman.

**24.04 Matters arising:**

Re. 23.100 Tom Oakley from Oakley Arboriculture has confirmed that the tree surgery will be carried out on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February. The 'Walkern Trench' has at last been repaired.

**24.05 Correspondence:**

- Mr R Vincent had kindly asked if he could help by tidying around the Ardeley pond again. The council expressed its thanks to Mr Vincent.
- A letter of appreciation had been received from a parishioner thanking the councillors for their voluntary efforts on behalf of the parish.
- The Cabinet Office will be encouraging all councils to change to a '.gov' website address; this will be organised by Netwise when the time comes.
- Police report for December: There were no crimes reported in Ardeley. Residents are being encouraged to check the roadworthiness of their vehicles during the winter months.

**24.06 Financial report** and cheques for approval: A cheque had been issued to Mr Andrews for the hedge cutting in Munchers Green and retrospectively added to the schedule, along with the usual cheques for the clerk's salary and litter collection.

Proposed by Cllr Waygood, seconded by Cllr Noble and approved unanimously.

**24.07 To consider and approve draft Budget for 2024-5 and set the annual precept charge.**

There was still a comfortable surplus to be maintained in the event of unforeseen tree surgery etc. allowing the demand for £6000 to be held for another year.

Proposed by Cllr Peace, seconded by Cllr Norman: The precept demand to be made for £6000. Resolved unanimously and the form duly signed.

**24.08 Planning:** To consider current planning applications.

3/24/022/LBC Moor Hall Farm, Moor Green: Proposed by Cllr Peace, seconded by Cllr York: This council has no objection. Resolved unanimously.

**24.09 Highways:**

Progression of speed reduction measures, for Cromer and Luffenhall- reduction of 30mph areas to 20mph: Prior to the meeting, Cllr Egginton had reported to the clerk that he had been in contact with Sue Nichols, the Twenty's Plenty organiser in Buntingford, who has confirmed that Ardeley Parish Council is on the Herts Register, together with a hundred other parish councils which have expressed an interest. EHDC are not currently considering rural areas for speed reduction measures, but North Herts DC are, so Luffenhall are advised to apply through District Cllr Steve Jarvis.

Horse rider warning signs, update: Cllr Noble is endeavouring to contact Mr Natt for his views as to the siting of any signs required.

The parlous state of local roads was then discussed:

1 Clerk to request an update for Cromer Road drainage problems from Ben Randall and Cty Cllr Crofton.

2 Also the dangerous potholes outside Bury Grange on the road from Ardeley to Cromer.

3 Also the potholes are worsening in Blind Lane up to the windmill.

4 At the bridge at the Bourne at Wood End, emergency repairs are still outstanding. There are potholes and the road surface is in a dangerous condition.

**24.10 Ardeley:**

Telephone box repair and repainting: The clerk reported that Peartrees furniture will remove the door and repair it in the workshop and the repainting of the telephone box will take place when weather conditions permit. Cllr Peace to liaise.

Playground equipment repairs: Re 23.98, Broadmead Leisure will carry out the repairs to the equipment as itemised in their September inspection between February and March.

Litter collection issues: Cllr Waygood has been corresponding with District Cllr Holt as there is still an unacceptable lack of bin emptying in Ardeley.

**24.12 Wood End: Wayleave proposal from Openreach** to install 4 telegraph poles and 1 metre of ducting on parish council land to improve fibre internet connection to the residents of Wood End for which Ardeley Parish Council will receive a one-off payment of £634.41

Proposed by Cllr Waygood, seconded by Cllr Noble, approved unanimously and signed by the chairman.

Also, a form presented for signature giving Openreach permission to dig to clear existing ducts on parish council land between Cherry Farm and Greenlands, Wood End.

Proposed by Cllr Waygood, seconded by Cllr Noble, approved unanimously and signed by the chairman.

**24.13 Proposals by RES Ltd for a Solar Installation in the Beane Valley:** To formalise the council's view and response to local opposition prior to the submission of any planning application.

The council was informed that some 600 signatures objecting to the proposals had been collected by residents. In addition, the clerk had received 31 emails of objection from 38 individuals.

Cllr Norman expressed his vehement objection, the proposals being completely contrary to the government guidelines in almost every aspect, such as the need to protect environmentally sensitive areas, the effect on the scenic views, the likely harm to the heritage asset etc. Cllr York agreed that the proposal was misplaced and wholly inappropriate to the area, as did Cllr Peace. Cllr Noble added that the site was too undulating and too prominent, with the associated eye sore of 8' fences and inevitable transport issues on unsuitable local roads. Cllr Waygood expressed his complete opposition and was of the view that solar installations should be confined to brown field sites.

Proposed by Cllr Norman, seconded by Cllr Waygood: This council opposes the proposals by RES Ltd; clerk to write to EHDC and HCC in advance of the application being submitted to express APC's unanimous opposition. Carried unanimously.

**24.14 Parish council land:** To consider commissioning a tree survey.

An up-to-date register of parish council land is required. The clerk had written to Mr Flynn, tree officer at EHDC for advice and was awaiting a reply.

Proposed by Cllr Peace, seconded by Cllr Waygood: 1) A visual review to take place in May of trees bordering roads and footpaths. 2) A decision to be taken in July as to whether any action is needed. 3) Any work to be carried out during the winter. Resolved unanimously

**24.15 Urgent matters not previously notified:** Cllr Noble mentioned that there had been a complaint about blackthorn debris left in the road following hedge trimming; it was not known which contractor was responsible.

**24.16 Date of next meeting:** Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The meeting closed: 20.15.

Public participation and comments:

The drains in Cromer are an ongoing issue. The faults are due to Ringways' poor workmanship-changing the diameters of the pipework, and the road gulleys need to be cleaned as they are full of silt; HCC is not addressing it.

B1037 is a disastrous road but it is not within the parish council's remit and the only action would be for the council to write letters. Cty Cllr Crofton is the point of contact but he is not on the Highways Committee.

The solar plant application for Graveley has been rejected which might provide useful information as to the arguments employed. It will be a long running battle, pre-application, formal objection once the application is lodged possibly again at appeal. What is Clothall's position as some of the land falls within North Herts boundaries?

The chairman concluded by thanking everyone for attending.