



NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NORTHCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

11th March 2024 7.00 pm Social Centre Bell Lane Northchurch HP4 3 RD

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michela Capozzi	Chair
Mark Somervail	Vice Chair
Neil Pocock	
Lyndsey Abercromby	
Lara Pringle	
Parul Dix	

ALSO PRESENT:

Officer	Mrs U Kilich Parish Clerk
Members of the Public	Eight

85/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence
There were no apologies of absence to record

86/23 TO OBSERVE A 2-MINUTE SILENCE FOR LATE CLLR GORDON GODFREY

Cllr Capozzi asked the members to observe a two-minute silence for the late Cllr Gordon Godfrey who passed away on the 7th February 2024. Cllr Godfrey served as a councillor for Northchurch Parish Council for thirteen years, for a short period he was the Chair and also the Chair for the Allotment Committee. Cllr Godfrey was very passionate about Northchurch and was very involved in a lot of activities, as his health started to deteriorate, he was not as involved but continued with his duties behind the scenes. Cllr Godfrey will be sorely missed by his fellow councillors. There will be a memorial on 28th March 2024 from 2 pm to 5 pm at George and Dragon, those who wish to pay their respect may attend.

87/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare an interest linked to any item on the agenda
Cllr Dix declared interest in item 96/23 g Berkhamsted Under 5's.

88/23 Public Participation is allowed 15 minutes

- a. Berkhamsted Under 5's (BU 5s) brief statement by Kathryn Sobczyk. The BU 5s scheme is held on Monday and Wednesday for two hours during term time at St Mary's Parish Rooms, Northchurch. The group sessions were initially funded by the Government under the Sure Start Scheme which was withdrawn. The group is run similarly to that of the mother and toddler group but specifically for vulnerable families referred to the Group by

Health Visitors. There are currently 15 families attending the group, 4 of whom are from Northchurch.

Since 2008 Children in Need has provided the funding, apart from the last two years when their applications have been turned down. The running costs are estimated at £10k per annum which includes the salary for the two qualified staff.

BU 5s has sufficient funds until Dec 2024, require funding to operate until December 2024. They are applying for other grants and funding, alongside their application to NPC, and in September 2024 they will access their success in securing long-term funding to enable them to continue into 2025.

- b. A member of the public (MoP) reported that on 10th February the signs for the agreed 20mph zone in Springwood were erected.

The large posts entering Mandelyns were corrected. Other large posts showing the 20mph zone were placed in odd places, i.e. facing the footpath from the recreation ground, and another four within the estate. These large signs were removed very shortly after being erected.

Repeater sign posts were also installed, including one in Merling Croft, but without the 20mph roundel fixed to them. As it would appear from the TSRGD, item 3.26 under 20mph zone it is unnecessary to have a repeater sign if the area involved provides its self-enforcing nature of the speed.

The MoP asked the Council to get the unused post removed.

Cllr Capozzi informed members that this will be relayed to Cllr Douris to resolve the issue.

- c. A MoP referred to the item on the agenda about the defib outside Tesco. There was an incident before Christmas where emergency services had to be called out, the emergency services stated the nearest defib was in St Mary's Church, however, the nearest defib would have been the one outside Tesco's, which was not registered. Cllr Somervail informed members that the battery and the pads have been replaced and the defib has now been registered on relevant sites.
- d. Berkhamsted Athletics attended the meeting to answer any questions the Council might have about them sharing the football pitch at the recreation ground with Berkhamsted Tornados. Cllr Somervail stated that there were three questions that NPC had, and some have been answered.
 - i. Berkhamsted Athletic would start next season in September 2024,
 - ii. Approximately one in three home games will be played on the recreation ground
 - iii. Berkhamsted Tornados will determine if the pitch is playable or not as they will have the control

89/23 MINUTES

- a. To approve the minutes of
 - i. To approve Full Council Minutes from 8th January 2024
 - ii. Extraordinary Meeting of the Council 29th January 2024Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Somervail Minutes of 8th January 2024 and EOM Minutes from 29th January 2024, as a correct record and, as such, be duly signed by the Chair. Unanimously agreed.
- b. Matters arising from previous meetings that are not included as agenda items below Berkhamsted Under 5's grant application presentation. As above the Berkhamsted Under 5s briefly explained what the charity does and for NPC to consider the grant application.

90/23 REPORT FROM BOROUGH/COUNTY COUNCILLORS

To receive a report from Borough/County Councillors

County Cllr Douris was unable to attend the meeting but had one item to report back on.

The Clerk reported that Cllr Douris has informed Cllr Somervail of the explanation from HCC Planning Officer regarding the development of 49/53 High Street Northchurch.

Cllr Pringle reported on the following:

LCWIP Report: The LCWIP is a joint plan by HCC and DBC that potentially attracts government funding in order to improve or create cycling and walking routes. For Northchurch it is proposed that the High Street, Bell Lane and New Road would form part of a wider cycling network across the Borough and beyond. I encouraged residents to participate and sought the views of elderly residents who do not have access to the IT required to respond, in order to reflect their views in my response.

I prepared a report in response to the consultation based on the evidence I have gathered over the years to demonstrate how much improvement is required for safe cycling and walking in Northchurch. I highlighted that pavements are too narrow and uneven for walking on the High Street and New Road. In particular, elderly residents feel frightened to walk to Tesco due to the lack of a crossing there; New Road is narrow with HGVs using it and cyclists often being clipped; the Dudswell junction is a hazard for cyclists as delivery vans will often execute a 3 point turn across the double white lines. It is to be hoped that funding could be made available that would help with road safety generally in Northchurch.

Many of the residents who do have access to IT found it impossible to use the link and gave up. I will give feedback on the accessibility of future consultations.

Community Garden at St Marys: I attended a public meeting of a group under the umbrella of Transition Town Berkhamsted who are planning to create a community garden on the corner of New Road. It was encouraging to see so many volunteers wanting to help. I advised that any applications for funding should be made via our grants process.

Hamberlyn's Lane: Despite past work by HCC to counteract flooding, following recent heavy rain, I was dismayed to see further gravel/shale runoff coming down the road, which creates a skid hazard for vehicles and is also likely to lead to blocked drains on the Tring Road.

Springwood estate Residents have contacted me concerned about parking in the estate, as they had been informed that this was a DBC responsibility. I explained the strict limits to parking enforcement by DBC and that enforcement of dangerous parking was a police responsibility. I have contacted the local police Neighbourhood team who have said they will patrol the area to check that there is no dangerous parking. Also, they are willing to attend a future NPC meeting to explain their role and what residents can do if there is an ongoing problem.

Residents were also disappointed that the long-awaited double yellow lines do not extend far enough to resolve the issue of dangerous parking near the corner. Some of the residents need parking bays and residents have raised this with the County Councillor. He has asked residents to choose between parking bays or yellow lines.

91/23 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a. Coach Education Week. To view the full programme, [click here](#)
- b. Minutes from DEF 8th Feb 2024, [click here](#) to view
- c. Dacorum Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, [click here](#) for more information
- d. Consultation on the Proposal to Change the Age Range of Maple Grove Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, [click here](#) for more information

- e. Berkhamsted Common Walk cattle grazing programme April 2024 (there will be a member on the 8th April Full Council meeting to update on the cattle grazing)
- f. Cllr Capozzi to update members on O2 Mast at the upper allotment –Cllr Capozzi informed members that NPC has a ten-year lease with the O2.
- g. Cllr Capozzi to update members that SRT will be responsible for the electricity on the previous site known as Sunnyside Nursery
SRT will occupy what used to be Sunnyside Nursery space and will be responsible for the electricity, the rent will be negotiated, as well as a twenty-five-year lease between NPC and SRT.

92/23 CLERKS REPORT

- a. DBC Members News (Council members only)
- b. To advertise for two councillors – The Clerk informed members that the necessary forms will be completed to advertise for two casual vacancies. Cllr Pringle will share the information with St Mary's School. Notices will also be sent to Westfield and Bridgewater Schools.
- c. Internal Audit 10th April 2024 – The Clerk informed members that the Internal Audit has been booked in for 10h April 2024.

93/23 ROAD SAFETY

Nothing to report, please see item 88/23 b on the Road Safety issue.

94/23 OPEN SPACE

- a. Recreation Ground update – please see item 88/23 d on Berkhamsted Tornadoes. Cllr Capozzi stated that under the Financial and General Purposes item 96/23 e, there is an item for approval of removing the stump from the rec ground, once this has been done, the area can either be turfed or seeded. After a meeting with SRT on 6th March Matt mentioned that a thin layer of the resin might seal the path which he will provide a quote for before carrying out the work.
- b. Cllr Somervail to update on the defib outside of Tesco and purchase of defib pads
Cllr Somervail reported that a MoP reported that the defib outside Tesco was not working, Cllr Somervail ordered a new battery and pads in January 2024. Cllr Somervail will ensure all the relevant sites are updated with the positioning of the defib and will monitor the defib monthly.

95/23 ALLOTMENT

- a. Cllr Capozzi to update on works at the Allotments
 - The floor bolt on the new gate is not aligned with the hole after the gate was been installed, the Clerk has informed Willows Forge,
 - The rubbish and scrap metal have been removed from plot 77 apart from the few items at the back of the plot,
 - Plots 78 and 41b have new tenants.
 - A proposal will be available at the next meeting which will be shared with the Northchurch Allotment Association on the possibility of installing water units
 - To encourage the use of water butts, NPC is looking into the option of contributing 50% of the costs for the purchase of the water butts which can be ordered through SRT's supplier.

96/23 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

- a. Cllr Capozzi proposes to accept the YTD Summary for February 2024
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Somervail to approve the YTD Summary for February 2024. Unanimously agreed.
- b. Cllr Capozzi proposes to discuss and agree on a donation to Hannah Marie Dance Academy

Cllr Abercromby asked how many of the children attending the competition in July are from Northchurch.

Cllr Capozzi proposed to withdraw the motion due to a lack of information on the grant application. Unanimously agreed.

- c. Cllr Capozzi proposes to adopt a Budget Virement Policy 2024
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Dix to adopt the Budget Virement Policy 2024. Unanimously agreed.
- d. Cllr Capozzi proposes to move Budget (virement) from EMR to Nominal Expenditure
Cllr Capozzi proposed to withdraw the motion as virement is not needed, unanimously agreed.
- e. Cllr Capozzi proposes to review the quotations received for the removal of the tree stump on the recreation ground and agree on whom to award the work to
Resolved proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Somervail to accept the quote received from Herts Tree surgeon to carry out the removal of the tree stump on the recreation ground. Unanimously agreed.
- f. Cllr Capozzi proposes to add Cllr Abercromby to all NPC bank mandates
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi, seconded by Cllr Pocock to add Cllr Abercromby on all NPC bank mandates.
- g. Cllr Capozzi proposes to discuss and agree on a donation to Berkhamsted Under 5s
Resolved, proposed by Cllr Capozzi seconded by Cllr Pringle to award £1383 to Berkhamsted Under 5's. Unanimously agreed.

97/23 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Hannah Marie Dance Academy
- b. Berkhamsted Graze talk.
- c. Upper allotment water units report

98/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 8 April 2024 at 7.00 pm Social Centre Bell Lane Northchurch HP4 3 RD

The meeting concluded at 19.57.