

NAZEING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council on Thursday 29th August 2019 at 7:30pm at the Scout Hut, Perry Hill, Middle Street, Nazeing.

Members present: Cllrs Clarke (Chairman of the Council), Benton, Billingham, Clarkson, Carter, Smith, Warwick.

Also present: Lorraine Ellis (Clerk), 3 members of the Public.

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Cllr Clarke welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Cllrs to introduce themselves.

2. Apologies for absence:

Cllrs Arnold, Frydrych, Joslin, Skipper, Stock. Not present: Shorter. Apologies noted from County Cllr Jackson.

3. Public participation:

Mr Bray to speak on items 5, 10 and 13.

4. Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Warwick is a Community Champion.

5. Review of Meetings Structure. S.Clarke

Cllr Clarke had called this meeting, in particular to consider any changes to the current meetings structure in order to manage Council business more effectively. Cllr Clarke had asked Cllr Clarkson, as time keeper for the meeting to allow three minutes per Cllr and this item to be no more than an hour in duration.

Cllr Clarke advised that information supporting the agenda was being received too late for Cllrs to read and assimilate prior to meetings. Cllr Clarke covered the Council's current meetings & structure which is one Planning meeting on the second Thursday of the month and one Full Council meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month, with planning applications included on the agenda. Meetings often overrun the two hours with items routinely rescheduled on to a future meeting. No other meetings are scheduled but there are committee members for other functions. On the 22/08/19, the Council voted to continue to have meetings at the Scout Hut so meetings cannot start until 8pm. Cllr Clarke suggested that an additional planning meeting could be introduced each month as the proportion of planning business for the Council is 75% of the Council's meeting time. Cllr Clarke also advised that Terms of Reference for the committees have not been reviewed since 2014.

Cllr Clarkson said that the review of the Standing Orders will help with the review of the Terms of Reference and also help with the introduction of timing for the Cllrs.

Cllr Smith says that Full Council meetings should not have planning items on the agenda.

Cllr Warwick suggested grouping similar types of planning application items together and also for Cllrs to have looked at the applications before the meeting.

Cllr Carter advised that there used to be a lot of Council meetings back in 2014, there were separate meetings for Finance, Amenities etc.

Cllr Benton said there are planning application which are for "small" changes and also those for "large developments" - the Council should be spending more time discussing the large developments and not be spending time on the smaller planning applications.

Cllr Billingham advised that there are time restrictions on when the Council has to respond to Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) with their comments on the planning applications.

Mr Bray advised that originally paper copies of the planning applications would be available at the meeting. He was concerned that there could be three Council meetings a month.

Cllr Billingham advised that if there was only one planning meeting a month, the meeting could be quite long, depending on how many planning applications needed to be considered.

Cllr Benton suggested that there may not be enough planning applications for a separate meeting and also that it may be better for Cllrs to be more concise about each application.

Cllr Carter asked Cllr Clarke if she had looked at the cost analysis of having an extra meeting a month, Cllr Clarke replied that she hadn't carried out a detailed cost analysis but a calculation based on a meeting with 20 planning applications needing two hours would be no different for two meetings with 10 items each.

Cllr Warwick asked about how much time of the Clerks time is taken up in her working week with responding to EFDC with planning application decisions and are there bespoke responses? Cllr Clarke did not know, however, meetings that last beyond two hours are likely to become unproductive.

Cllr Clarkson suggested introducing an additional Extraordinary meeting when there were too many items rather than having extra planning meetings.

Cllr Billingham suggested that it is better to have the meeting dates known in advance rather than having an Extraordinary meeting on an ad hoc basis as Cllrs may not be able to attend at short notice.

Cllr Billingham has looked at possible dates with having two Planning meetings on second and fourth Thursday of the month and the Full Council meeting on the first or third of the month. Cllr Billingham handed out the two schedule of dates of the proposed three meetings per month.

The Clerk advised that with proposal of meetings effectively almost every week, it would be difficult for her to take annual leave with an agenda, meeting and minutes being required almost every week. Also, with the previous format of Planning meeting on second Thursday and Planning meeting followed by Full Council meeting on fourth Thursday, it was combined to reduce duplication at both meetings and to ultimately save time. Cllrs also may have forgotten that a Planning meeting was cancelled in

August so there were more planning matters on the last Full Council meeting than normal.

Cllr Clarke noted that items have been carried over since April and whilst there was no Full Council meeting in July this year, there was a Full Council meeting in August.

Cllr Smith said that when the Council had a Planning meeting followed by a Full Council meeting this appeared to be a good idea. However, other Cllrs said there are more planning applications now than there used to be.

Cllr Warwick said the Council is losing focus on what it is discussing at meetings and believes the Council needs to have a proper structure for its meetings.

Cllr Benton asked about notice for meetings and apologies, also that Cllrs should be better prepared for the meetings. Cllr Benton was advised that three days' notice is required for the meetings and ideally apologies given as soon as possible.

Cllr Clarke proposed the two options as per Cllr Billingham's circulated schedule of dates of the proposed three meetings per month (two proposals).

Cllr Smith proposed an Extraordinary meeting as & when required.

Cllrs Carter and Warwick proposed improved time keeping and a better structure.

The options:

Option 1 – first Thursday Full Council meeting

and Planning meetings on second and fourth Thursday

Option 2 – third Thursday Full Council meeting

and Planning meetings on second and fourth Thursday

Option 3 – meetings to remain as they are currently

and have an Extraordinary meeting when needed with minimal notice

Option 4 – meetings to remain as they are currently

and introduce a timing structure, with Cllrs prepared for meetings.

Cllr Clarke proposed option 1, Cllr Benton seconded the proposal. Cllrs Clarke and Benton voted in favour of the proposal, with Cllrs Billingham, Clarkson, Carter, Smith and Warwick voting against the proposal.

Cllr Billingham proposed option 2, there was no seconder, so the proposal was defeated.

Cllr Smith decided to withdraw her proposal for option 3.

Cllr Warwick proposed option 4, Cllr Carter seconded the proposal. Cllrs Clarkson, Carter, Smith and Warwick voted in favour of the proposal and Cllrs Benton, Billingham and Clarke abstained. It was resolved that meetings are to remain as they are currently and introduce a timing structure, with Cllrs prepared for meetings. Cllr Clarkson will liaise with both Chairmen regarding this proposal. **Action Cllr Clarkson.**

It was agreed to review the proposal in three months after its introduction.

6. Training.

a) Planning and Code of Conduct training. Cllr Clarke said that the Council should be investing in training which would support Cllrs in making informed decisions. Cllr Clarke advised that Essex Association Local Councils have no further Planning or Code of Conduct training to the end of the year. She could approach Epping Forest District Council to enquire if they can provide Planning and Code of Conduct training, alternatively, Cllr Billingham has offered to prepare a planning presentation. Cllrs present expressed positive support for these options. **Action Cllr Clarke.**

b) Essex County Council are funding Adult Mental Health First Aid Training. Cllr Warwick will advertise the training on the Community noticeboard and co-ordinate any responses, to ascertain if there is sufficient interest to run a course at Nazeing. **Action Cllr Warwick.**

7. Committee Membership:

a) It was resolved that no changes are required to the Finance committee.

b) Cllr Clarke proposed Cllr Warwick to join the Personnel Committee, Cllr Smith seconded the proposal. All Cllrs were in favour of the proposal. It was resolved that Cllr Warwick is a member of the Personnel Committee.

Cllr Clarke proposed Cllr Clarkson to join the Personnel Committee, Cllr Smith seconded the proposal. All Cllrs were in favour of the proposal. It was resolved that Cllr Clarkson is a member of the Personnel Committee.

8. External Liaison:

Appointment of the recently co-opted Councillors to serve on or liaise with various external bodies was considered as follows:

a) Following Cllr Skipper's request to the Clerk, it was resolved to remove her as a contact for the Nazeingberries Association and it was noted that no new Cllrs wanted to be appointed to liaise with the Association.

b) It was noted that no new Cllrs wanted to be appointed to liaise with the Police Consultative Committee/Local Police. Mr Compton (a resident) has offered to take any issues from the Council to a police meeting that he has recently started to attend.

c) It was noted that no new Cllrs wanted to be appointed to liaise with Flood warden and Emergency Response.

d) It was noted that no new Cllrs wanted to be appointed to liaise with Lea Valley Regional Park Authority.

e) It was resolved that Cllr Warwick wanted to be appointed to liaise with Local schools.

f) It was noted that no new Cllrs wanted to be appointed to liaise with Nazeing Community Champions.

9. Connecting with the Community.

a) To remind Cllrs to provide biographies information to Cllr Warwick for the Parish Council information booklet. It is understood that five biographies are outstanding. Cllrs to provide details by 14/09/19, otherwise the leaflet will not have their biographies information. **Action Cllrs Frydrych, Joslin, Shorter, Skipper & Stock.** Prior to the meeting, Cllr Skipper had asked for an example of what was required for the biography. Cllr Warwick will send the biography template to Cllr Skipper and answer any questions she may have. **Action Cllr Warwick.**

b) Parish Noticeboards. Cllr Clarke covered the six noticeboards - Parade, Bumbles Green, Betts Lane, New Nazeing Road nr Glassworks, Old Nazeing Road nr The Crown and North Street. Cllrs Clarke, Smith & Warwick offered to assess each noticeboard and make a proposal to the Council. **Action Cllrs Clarke, Smith & Warwick.**

10. Parking on Langley Green. MS

There is an issue of parking on Langley Green, which is spoiling the grass beside the footway.

Mr Bray (resident) advised that a resident had spoken to him about the parking problems on Langley Green.

Cllr Smith asked if it was possible to put railings on Langley Green? Cllr Benton suggested bollards. Cllr Warwick advised that the Council needs to know who owns the land before anything can be considered or implemented. Cllr Clarke believes this piece of land is owned by Essex County Council.

Cllr Warwick will take some photographs of the issue and the Clerk can contact County Cllr Jackson in terms of the best way forward, whether railings or bollards could be installed? **Action Cllr Warwick & the Clerk.**

11. Review Standing Orders. S.Billingham

The Standing Orders have been reviewed, updated by the working group and circulated to Cllrs before the meeting.

Cllr Warwick asked for clarity on definitions of subcommittee, advisory committee and working group.

Cllr Billingham would like to thank Cllr Joslin for his comments. All his comments are taken into account already but there are three areas which will be amended accordingly and an amendment will also be made to section 5j (the business to be include at the annual council meeting).

The Clerk advised that Cllr Skipper had looked at the proposed changes to the Standing Orders alongside Cllr Joslin's references & suggestions and she agreed with his comments totally.

The document will be amended and circulated with a view to being formally adopted at the next Full Council meeting. **Action Cllr Billingham.**

12. Review Financial Regulations.

The Financial Regulations have been updated by the Clerk to include the changes as recommended by the internal auditor, and circulated before the meeting.

The changes are to amend the description from "Annual Return" to "Annual Governance and Accountability Return" and amend the contract limit to £25,000, which is in line with model Financial Regulations and the change in legislation.

It was proposed to accept the changes made to the Financial Regulations as recommended by the internal auditor and in addition, Cllr Carter has offered to review the Financial Regulations initially by herself and she will then determine if a review by a working group is required. All were in favour. It was resolved approve the changes to the Financial Regulations, as recommended by the internal auditor.

The model Financial Regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations to be sent to Cllr Carter, to enable her to conduct an initial review. **Action Cllr Carter.**

13. Absence of the Parish Clerk.

To consider any necessary contingency arrangements for the Council to have in place when the Parish Clerk is absent from work.

Mr Bray (resident) said that the Council is fortunate to have Lorraine Ellis as their Clerk. In the past, Daphne Borton (a previous Chairman of the Council) had covered the absence of the Clerk.

Cllr Clarke advised that when the Clerk was away for two weeks, she believed the Council was quite vulnerable and that there was no access to the Council’s office or laptop. A meeting of the Personnel Committee was to be convened at which this could be considered. A date is to be decided. **Action Cllr Clarke.**

Cllr Warwick offered to assist the Clerk to set up an automated “out of office” response on the Council email. **Action Cllr Warwick & the Clerk.**

14. Website Refurbishment

The Parish Council website has recently undergone a refurbishment.

Cllr Warwick had sent several comments about all sections on the website to the Clerk. Cllr Carter had also sent some comments to the Clerk.

It was agreed that Cllr Warwick and the Clerk will review the “new look” website, identify any necessary amendments and request changes to Amanda Palumbo (Website Design & Maintenance). **Action Cllr Warwick & the Clerk.**

Closed 9:55pm

Signed by the Chairman:

Date: