

Minutes of the meeting of Weeley Parish Council held on 19 December 2022

Present: Cllrs C. Hamilton (Chair), M. Brown, T. Spong, D. Botterell, J. Beady, L. Fitzpatrick and G. Foster. Also in attendance were TDC Cllr P. Harris, K Harkin Parish Clerk and 12 members of the public.

PART A

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Cllr Green.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting:** The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November were proposed by Cllr Botterell, seconded by Cllr Spong and approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Botterell advised that he had an interest in agenda item 12a.
4. **Clerk's Report:** The Clerk briefly summarised his report, which is attached as Appendix A. Cllr Hamilton advised that she has virtually finished her review of the Council's Emergency Plan and would be circulating it for comment in the near future. She also advised that the relocation of the gateway sign at the boundary of Little Clacton is scheduled to be completed by the end of December.

The Clerk reported that he had received a 'Subject Access Request' previously known as Freedom of Information request.

5. **Public Participation:** The Clerk confirmed that he has recently received the draft licence relating to the rewilding of the open space at Second Avenue but that it is yet to be signed.
6. **Tendring District and Essex County Councils:** TDC Cllr Harris apologised for arriving late explaining that he was caught in a traffic jam on the A12.

Cllr Harris reported that TDC Environmental Services have agreed to install the additional dog and litter bins that WPC requested. Unfortunately TDC has confirmed that WPC would be required to pay for bins, their installation and ongoing servicing.

He had attended and was impressed by the Village Christmas tree lights event. He went on to say that in his role as Chairman of TDC he had come to realise the sheer quantity of voluntary work that goes on unnoticed much of the time. He congratulated volunteers across the district.

7. **Correspondence:** Cllr Hamilton read out a thank you letter she had received from Mrs Alexander regarding the memorial for her son.

All other relevant correspondence had been circulated to Councillors.

8. **Review of Council Policies:** The Clerk explained that it has become apparent that the Parish Council needs to adopt a number of key policies. He confirmed that he had circulated the draft documents to members. When adopted, these will be published on the Council's website.
 - 8.1 Privacy Notice: Proposed by Cllr Hamilton, seconded by Cllr Botterell and carried.
 - 8.2 Publication Scheme: Proposed by Cllr Hamilton, seconded by Cllr Spong and carried.
 - 8.3 Complaints Procedure: Proposed by Cllr Botterell, seconded by Cllr Spong and carried.

9. **The Coronation of the King:** Cllr Hamilton reminded members that when the Council cancelled its 'party in the park' event to commemorate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, it was suggested that a similar event is organised to mark the King's Coronation.

After some discussion it was agreed to organise an event on the playing field with a large marquee, food vans, music and activities on Monday 8 May 2023 from 1–4pm.

10. **May Monthly Meeting:** The Clerk explained that it would be necessary to change the date of the May 2023 meeting. It was agreed change the date of the meeting to 7.30pm on Monday 15 May 2023.
11. **Planning Applications:** The planning applications set out in Appendix B were proposed by Cllr Hamilton, seconded by Cllr Spong and unanimously agreed.
12. **Finance and Budget:**
- a) The monthly payments as set out in the table in Appendix C were proposed by Cllr Hamilton, seconded by Cllr Botterell. **RESOLVED:** Agreed.
 - b) The Clerk provided a summary explanation of his report for Quarter 3 (attached as Appendix D) and the annual budget and precept for 2023/24. It was proposed by Cllr Hamilton, seconded by Cllr Botterell. **RESOLVED:** To approve the annual budget 2023/24 and precept.
13. **Weeley Parish Council Reports:**
- a) Street Lighting: No outages reported this month. The power has been reconnected to the streetlight that was dismantled by a UKPN contractor.
 - b) Tree Warden: Nothing to report this month.
 - c) Playing Field: The autumnal rain appears to have cured the cracks caused by the dry weather.
 - d) Children's Play Area: Cllr Brown reported that the problem with the adult swings appears to have rectified itself probably due to recent rainfall.
14. **Other Reports:**
- a) Highways and Footpaths. Cllr Beady read out her report, which is attached as Appendix E.
 - b) TDALC. LCPC's Special Constable was the guest speaker at TDALC's last meeting. He provides a valuable service to Lt Clacton. Another plea was made for a volunteer in Weeley for this valuable role.
 - c) Rural Policing. In November 27 crimes were reported in Weeley.
 - d) Speedwatch. Cllr Beady read out her report, which is attached as Appendix F.
 - e) Weeley Residents Ass. (WRA): The WRA report attached as Appendix G was read out by a WRA representative.
 - f) Weeley in Bloom: Bloomers have cleared bramble at Reed Pond. They will now plant roses at the QEII memorial bench. 103kg of rubbish was collected by litter pickers. WiB now plans to repeat this initiative every 10 weeks. A suitable piece of oak for the soldier carving has been identified
 - g) Petanque Rink: The Petanque report attached as Appendix H was summarised by a representative.
15. **Public Participation:**
- a) Cllr Harris confirmed that he raised the matter of the building in Gutteridge Hall Lane and its usage.
 - b) Cllr Brown agreed to fill one of the salt grit bins.
16. **Exclusion of the Public:** In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, Part A of the meeting closed at this point and the Chairman thanked the

members of public in attendance and invited them to leave prior to the commencement of Part B of the meeting.

PART B

17. Proposed New Children’s Play Area:

Councillors considered the three quotations received for the supply and installation of a new Children’s Play Area to replace the current one on the Playing Field. Cllr Botterell and the Clerk provided some clarification. The Clerk was asked to pay close attention to the content of the associated signage.

Proposed Cllr Botterell, seconded Cllr Spong and **RESOLVED:** That subject to securing the necessary Section 106 funding from TDC to accept the quotation submitted by Playdale Playgrounds Ltd at a total cost of £159,731.91.

Close of Meeting.

APPENDIX A

Clerks Report – 19 December 2022

Topic	Action/issue	Who	Notes	Status
Children’s Play Area Refurbishment	Consider options for the renewal of the facility.	DB and KG	Awaiting to select the preferred proposal on 19 December 2022	Ongoing
Defibrillator	Replace pads (routine mtncé régime).	KPH	Supplier finally identified	O/S
Emergency Plan	2021 annual update.	Cllr H	Cllr Hamilton reported that she has just about completed the review and will circulate the Plan for comments.	Ongoing
Litter Bins	Reassessment of provision.	Cllr H and KPH	Survey review complete. Awaiting discussions with TDC Cllr Talbot.	Ongoing
Scout Hut	Prepare a new lease.	KPH	Thompson Smith & Puxon Solicitors has been asked to prepare a new lease.	Ongoing.
Weeley bypass	Determine options for the avenue of poplars		Await a proposal from ECC Place Services about how many and what species trees to plant.	Ongoing
Bus Shelter, Clacton Rd	Replace roof	KPH	Awaiting a quotation for this work.	Ongoing
Weeley Heath Gateway sign	Relocate the new sign as it represents a safety hazard	Dan L	Highways has agreed to relocate the sign.	Ongoing

1. A ‘Subject to Access’ (previously known as a Freedom of Information request) has been received. The Clerk is gathering the necessary information.
2. It has become apparent that the Council needs to review its raft of policies.
3. The TDC Licence to undertake the proposed wilding project at Second Avenue has been received.
4. All the streetlights have now been converted to the more energy efficient LED type.

APPENDIX B

Planning Applications for month to 19 December 2022

Application No.	Details	Address	Comment / Resolution
22/01901/FUL HH	Proposed single storey rear extension for private use.	Helebrand Clacton Road Weeley	No comment or objection.
22/01862/FUL	Part retrospective proposed change of use of land for the creation of 1 no. Gypsy/Traveller Pitches, comprising the siting of 1 mobile home and 1 touring caravan alongside the formation of hardstanding and erection of dayroom.	Land Adj to Heathfield Clacton Road Weeley Heath	Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Spong and RESOLVED : To object to the application. The Clerk was asked to prepare a letter of objection including all the issues raised. This can be viewed on the TDC Planning Portal.
22/01931/TPO	Oak T1 to trim basic branches that are becoming a hazard to peoples' safety and also damage to our vehicles.	43 Mill Lane Weeley Heath Essex	No comment or objection.
22/01952/CO UNOT	PROPOSAL: Prior Approval Application under Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the conversion of a former agricultural storage building into 1no. one-bed dwelling.	Oakdene Wenlock Road Weeley	No comment or objection.
22/01993/FUL HH	Proposed new front garden wall 1.8m high with automatic sliding gate.	Soller Spinney Gutteridge Hall Lane Weeley	Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Spong and RESOLVED : To object to the application on the grounds that the 'industrial style' design is not in keeping with its rural location.

Planning Determinations

Application No.	Detail	Address
22/01602/LBC Approval - Listed Building Consent 25.11.2022 Delegated Decision	Proposed demolition and reinstatement of damaged garden wall and external repairs to main house following damaged caused by crashed vehicle. Damage repair to west elevation of main house and re-render to make good finish.	Tocketts Thorpe Road Weeley, Essex CO16 9JJ
22/01733/TPO Refusal - Full 30.11.2022 Delegated Decision	To fell Cherry Tree T28 which is leaning towards a neighbouring property.	Land adjacent Hillside House on the corner of Church Lane and Clacton Road Weeley, CO16 9DN

APPENDIX C

CHEQUES/PAYMENTS FOR AUTHORISATION: December 2022

Invoice Date	Invoice No.	Cheque No.	Payee	Service	NET £	VAT £	GROSS £
03/12/22	IN05484004	DD	NPower	Electricity Consumption	402.76	20.14	422.90
06/12/22	INV-0189	103257	Goldacre Contracting	Grass Cut (10 th cut)	415.00	83.00	498.00
06/12/22	5346516149	103258	EALC	Election Briefing	45.00	9.00	54.00
06/12/22	5346542879	103258	EALC	Election Briefing	45.00	9.00	54.00

08/12/22	SI-19594	103259	AD Mitchell Ltd	40 LED street light conversions	9,000.00	1,800.00	10,800.00
01/12/22	SI-19598	103259	AD Mitchell Ltd	20 LED street light conversions	3,150.00	630.00	3,780.00
14/12/22	SI-19617	103259	AD Mitchell	Replace brackets & fuse boxes	826.00	165.20	991.20
28/11/22		103260	C Hamilton	Memorial plaque	122.21	0	122.21
16/12/22		103260	C Hamilton	Xmas Meeting Refreshments	67.99	0	67.99
28/11/22	17214	103261	TT&SS Ltd	Connect Xmas Tree Lights	90.00	18.00	108.00
16/11/22	INVGB10000 08771	103262	A Barnes	Teak Sealer	49.50	10.00	59.50
19/12/22	Grant	103263	St Andrew's Church	Donation for churchyard upkeep	750.00	0	750.00
31/12/22		103264	K Harkin	December salary	661.84	0	661.84
19/12/22		103264	K Harkin	Office Expenses (Nov & Dec) & Mileage	69.86	0	69.86
				TOTALS	15,695.16	2,744.34	18,439.50

Bank balances as at 02 December 2022; current account **£44,734.52**; deposit account **£82,330.34**.

APPENDIX D

BUDGET REPORT (QUARTER 3) and PRECEPT PROPOSAL FOR 2023/2024

	22/23 Annual Budget £	Q3 Predicted £	EOY Estimate £	2023/24 Proposed £	Commentary
Admin	14,110	9,550	12,200	14,790	
Capital	5,000	0	3,300	5,000	
Grants	1,270	1,150	1,250	1,280	
Grounds Maintenance	6,100	6,340	6,340	6,500	
Lighting	10,790	23,900	25,590	6,250	
Parish Maintenance	4,100	2,060	3,660	4,200	
Parks	3,500	1,270	1,270	3,150	
TOTAL	44,870	44,270	50,210	45,170	

Quarter 3: The financial statement for the third quarter shows that the Council has virtually spent its 2022/23 annual budget. The third quarter report includes expenditure of £15,500 for the conversion of the streetlights to LED lights. This is significantly lower than the indicative cost and eventual quotation provided by the Council streetlighting contractor. It was always the plan to use Council reserves for this project. If you discount this expenditure then the third quarter report is close to profile.

Administration: Expenditure for this budget heading is normally predictable throughout the year. The salary budget for the Clerk will be overspent due to the pay increase recently awarded. Most of the other administrative budgets will be within budget. The Council had allocated an additional amount for training this year in expectation of new Councillors and a new Clerk but much of this budget remains unspent. The professional fees budget remains underspent but it is judged prudent to allow for this in next year’s budget. An indicative allowance has been included in the 2023/24 budget to fund the costs of the local elections in May 2024.

Capital: Whilst the Council is planning to replace the Children’s Play Area, no allowance has been made in the budget as it is hoped that this project will be funded by S106 payments. A relatively small allocation has been included in the 2023/24 budget in case there are elements of the project that will not be funded by S106 monies.

Grants: An allowance has been made to allow continued grant funding of the bodies the Council has funded in recent years. A small additional sum has been included in this budget.

Grounds Maintenance (GM): It is estimated that the costs of grounds maintenance will exceed the budget by up to 4% by year end. This is mainly as a result of the additional costs of raising standards back to previous levels following a reduction in standards during the covid lockdowns. It is proposed to increase budgetary provision for GM to allow for continuing improvements.

Lighting: All the streetlights have now been converted to LED lights. By changing contractor, a significant financial saving on the conversion project has been achieved. In addition routine contract payments have been eliminated. It is hoped that the reduced energy usage will offset the additional unit costs of electricity.

Parish Maintenance: It is estimated that this budget will be underspent this year. Continued budgetary provision is being made to allow for increasing the number of dog and litter bins in the village.

Parks: Again, this budget is likely to be underspent this year. Provision is being made in the 2023/24 budget to allow maintenance work at Reed Pond and planting trees and shrubs.

Precept: The amount of precept the Council receives depends on the Tax Base. This is a calculation that uses the number of properties in a Parish. The formula includes consideration of the number of exempt properties and the number of homes where residents are entitled to claim benefits. The Tax Base for Weeley has followed an upward trajectory for the last few years largely due to the increase in the number of residential properties.

Year	Tax Base
2018/19	657.6
2019/20	681.0
2020/21	724.3
2021/22	773.5
2022/23	833.1
2023/24	874.9

Financial Reserves: The Council’s financial reserves at 31 March 2022 were £71,296. The Internal Audit Report 2021/22 included the comment. *“The Council has built a healthy level of reserves and it may be worth earmarking funds for specific project purposes moving*

forwards, whilst maintaining a prudent level of general reserves (say up to 12 months operating costs)".

Earmarked Reserves		
Based on the Auditors comment, a short list of projects has been prepared. The costs of the projects identified in this table are indicative only. There is no approval to undertake any of these projects at this time. Before any or all these projects proceed detailed costings would need to be obtained and formal approval given by WPC.		
		£
1.	Avenue of Trees on B1441	20,000
2.	Children's Play Area	5,000
3.	Improved Provision of Litter and Dog Bins throughout the Village	5,000
TOTAL		30,000

Precept Proposal: Councillors are acutely aware of the financial difficulties being experienced by many residents at this time. The Council is committed to making efficiencies in order to avoid the need to increase the Council tax burden unnecessarily. Set out in the table below is a summary of the 2022/23 Precept and the 2023/24 Precept proposal

	Precept 2022/23	Precept Proposal 2023/24
Precept required for the year	£50,170	£45,170
Tax Base	833.1	874.9
Council Tax	£60.22	£51.63
Tax Increase/Decrease on previous year	+0.9%	-14.3%

Recommendation

It is recommended that Weeley Parish Council submits a request for a Precept £45,170 for 2023/24, providing a per household (Band D equivalent) reduction of 14.3% from last year.

APPENDIX E

Highways Report

The speed sign in Bentley Road is still laying on its side with the 30mph still turned around to the opposite direction so inferring that the 60mph zone is actually 30mph and the 30mph zone is a 60mph limit. There were roadworks in Colchester Road in the last 2 weeks of November, being inquisitive I enquired what work they were carrying out, internet cables was the answer however when they had gone the drain had also been repaired. It looks to be a very good repair with all the edges sealed so there is hope that it will last longer than a year this time.

The kerb stones in Hilltop Crescent are now so bad and the worst part has 3 cones placed over them, despite the obvious danger this and others are to be repaired as part of the planned maintenance programme.

APPENDIX F

Speedwatch Report

In November we scheduled 11 speedwatch sessions, we actually held 5 the other 6 were all rained off which was no mean feat for the driest area in the country. In the 5 sessions we logged 91 speeding vehicles, 1 had no Tax, 1 had no MOT, there were 8 repeat offenders one for the 3rd time and the vehicle exceeding the speed limit of 30mph the most was travelling at 48mph. Weeley Community Speedwatchers also had a mention in the Essex Community Speedwatch newsletter.

APPENDIX G

Weeley Residents' Association Report for the PC December 2022

Our activities for 2022 concluded with our monthly visit to Hilltop Nursery for our coffee morning.

Looking forward to 2023 we are introducing two new activities. We have purchased a Table Tennis table, bats and balls and this will start in January. We are combining this monthly activity with cards and games by using the large Hall.

Our second new activity will be called WRA Sewing B. One of our ladies will be offering help and guidance to members who wish to do patchwork, quilting, dressmaking and similar handicraft items. Experienced and non-experienced members will be welcome. We are moving the Crafters group that meets monthly on a Wednesday from the small hall to the large hall as numbers have increased and more table space is needed. Crafters and Sewing B will share the large hall from 2-4 pm on the first Wednesday of each month.

On 21st January Andy Wilsher will be singing songs from Michael Bubl  and the Rat Pack. Tickets will be £15 and bookings are with Kevin. On 25th February we shall be holding a Race Night. The entry fee will be £5pp. Bookings with Kevin.

We are looking at theatre outings both locally and in London. We are assessing members' interest in Commitments at Ipswich in March and Sister Act in April. Then in London Aspects of Love from May.

We have several outings in the planning progress as venues haven't yet confirmed their costings for next year. We shall be including a visit to Windsor.

We have a variety of guest speakers arranged for afternoon meetings in the small hall, starting in February. Topics include the unidentified killer Jack the Ripper, A speaker from RNLI, A speaker from Essex and Herts Air Ambulance Trust, and several more. We have these monthly from February through to December.

APPENDIX H

Petanque Report

Good evening, everybody - as stated in my report last month, numbers are still good, despite the arctic conditions. As I said to the players last Friday, "you are either exceptionally keen or very mad! We had our Christmas dinner on the 1st December which everyone enjoyed and where we presented cups to the winners and trophies to the runners up of our competition.

I have put an insert into the Weeley Parish Magazine for next month telling people that we continue to play all through the winter, except when it is raining.