

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY OF THAXTED PARISH HELD ON
THURSDAY 22nd March 2018 AT 8.15PM IN THE DAY CENTRE**

Present:

Councillors: T. Frostick (Chairman), W. Brazier, A. Frater, A. Howells, V. Knight, D. Morgan, Judy Miller (from 8.21pm), Jon Spencer, Ian Stewart, Antoinette Wattebot.

Also present: M. Collins (Deputy Clerk)
20 members of the public

18/1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Parish Cllr R. Williams, County Cllr. Simon Walsh, who had another meeting and Dena Ludford, Parish Clerk.

18/2. THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 23 MARCH 2017.

The Minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

A member of the public asked why minutes were not provided at this meeting. The Clerk and Vice Chairman replied that the minutes were on the Council website and it was considered wise to avoid large amounts of printing and paper.

18/3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON THE YEAR

The chairman read his report on the year from April 2017 to March 2018. This report is attached as (Appendix A)

18/4. TWO QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING.

Q1 What is the current status of the proposed Monk Street development and why is it being considered given the other large developments within Thaxted? (sic)

[sic used in brackets after a copied word/words shows that the word/s are quoted exactly as it stands in the original,]

Answer: The Chairman stated that there are no up-dates. It is being considered it has been Council policy since 2003 to support small scale developments of this kind.

Q2. How can the PC has signed off the NPP given their public acknowledgement that they will disregard it in respect of certain developments yet uphold in with regard to others? This ambivalent attitude is inexplicable (sic)

Answer: This is not true. The process is still on-going. The Council will sign it off only when the process is complete. There have been changes made and the document is being rewritten and further changes could be made.

18/5 REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP.

Peter Neale presented his report which is attached as (Appendix B). This included the programme for the future steps.

A question was asked if the PC is a consultee. It was stated that the PC has been involved with the plan both as individuals and as a group and will be able to make comments when the next draft has been completed. The process was clearly outlined. It was also noted that the Steering group works at arm's length from the PC.

18/6 REPORT FROM COUNTY and DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

The Chairman added this item to the agenda.

(Note: This item was not included on the published agenda. U.D.Cllr Freeman asked why it was not included. The Chairman explained that it was missed off as some Cllrs were either not able to attend or had not indicated their availability. In the event Cllr Foley was able to attend. Subsequently a report from County Cllr Simon Walsh has also been received and is attached as (Appendix C)

UDC CLLR M FOLEY REPORT.

Cllr Foley expressed concerns brought to him by parishioners regarding the feeling that Stansted Airport's application for Expansion is being rushed through. This application could result in more planes and bigger planes. He reminded the meeting that comments should be directed to UDC. A consultation will be held in the Day Centre on 28th March which seems to be poorly advertised.

Council Tax has been increased. Martin described the "passing-down" process that is happening, as District Councils pass down the revenue raising to PCs while reducing their contribution to Parish Councils.

Local Plan contains a proposal for 10,000 homes in Easton, which will have a big impact on Thaxted. He mentioned the issue of using brownfield sites, including Carver Barracks, for new homes.

New Homes Bonus. On the other side Cllrs. receive a bonus from the new homes which was distributed by Martin last year to Thaxted Youth Club (£2,000), to RBL for the memorial plaque at the Guildhall, to Thaxted Society for the map on Waylett's window, to Thaxted PC for new planters. Next year there will be less available.

Question: Stansted Airport Road Show clarification of date. Date repeated. Discussion on the lack of publicity. Also noise issues were discussed.

Interjection from Cllr Brazier: He sought to clarify the position of the Council Tax increase by diligent book-keeping. This resulted in a question about the use of reserves and then a long discussion. Accounts can be view on the website and a copy of the budget will be given to the questioner.

UDC CLLR J FREEMAN was present but declined the invitation to speak at this point.

18/7 QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS

Q1. Why do we now not have a Newsletter once a quarter? When the Council was a Quality Council one was produced each quarter. This is considered as an important way of communicating.

Answer: There has not been time to spare to produce one.

Q2. Green Waste collection. The questioner could not find a minute giving formal approval to the 2018 service by UDC. When was the decision made and why is it not in any minutes?

Answer: It was accepted as part of the budget process. It will be ratified at the April meeting.

Q3. What are the NP costings?

Answer: Grants of £10,000 from UDC and £9,000 from a body called "Locality".

Q4. Has the suggestion to develop the coach park been removed from the NP.

Answer: It never was a proposal to develop the Coach Park, only to maybe provide access through it for development at Claypits.

Q5. Regarding land adjacent to Molecular site, can it be explained exactly where that is and why it was sold and what will happen to the money raised.

Answer: The land is part of a footpath that was gifted to the PC. A 2 meter wide path and a close-boarded fence will be installed £30,000 plus legal costs which has to go into the capital fund ready for future capital spend. At present the Council has no plans for the use of the money.

Q6. Jubilee bus-shelter. What has happened to it? Where is the plaque that was on the wall? The transfer does not seem to have been minuted, none of these sales seem to have been minuted.

Answer: The plaque has been moved to the wall adjacent. The land was part of the land transfer. The minute will be found and forwarded to the Questioner.

Q7. I was told the plaque had been rescued, where is it.

Answer: repeatedly from the floor. "It's on the wall"

Q8. In response to the call for sites. Warners Field was considered unsuitable for development. How can the Council reconcile this with its view when supporting the application for the proposed development? It seems the only change was that a piece of land known as "Welly Boot Wood" will be gifted to the Council.

Answer: The land is used by the school for educational purposes. The scheme ensured that the access would only be from the Bardfield Road and that Copthall Lane would become traffic free. It was felt that the scheme was more useful. Councillors have changed and the council takes a case by case basis as presented. At the time the Call for Sites were discussed there was no proposed scheme and it was industrial land and might have remained so. The vice Chairman undertook to add the matter of consistency to the next Planning Meeting Agenda.

Q9. Were the new Councillors opposed to the original position where caused the change.?

Answer: Councillors voted on the basis of the application on the table on the day.

Q10. How many Councillors are there on the Council and what constitutes a quorum.

Answer: 11 Councillors, Full Council Meeting quorum is 7, and for a committee 3.

Q11. Are you proposing to close off Copthall Lane?

Answer. No. There is the potential to make it pedestrianized. There would be no need for vehicles to go passed the last house.

Q12. What is happening to double yellow lines in the town? Could for a start they be re-instated?

Answers. Various both serious and frivolous.

Q13. Are there any plans to re-lay the B184, is it something we just must put up with?

Answer. It is in the hands of the County Council. There are no plans at present.

A discussion ensued on the problems of pot-holes.

District Councillor Freeman reported on the current situation of the flooding on the B184 at Monk Street and the footbridge at the end of Watling Lane.

An appeal was made for the Speed-watch sign to be returned.

Q14. Is there any up-date on Monk Street flooding?

Answer. This has just been answered!

The subject of pot-holes and other highways matters were re-visited.

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.36pm.

Chairman Signature

Date: 28th March 2019

Appendix A

Chairmans Report Thaxted Annual Parish Report 2018

Good evening and welcome to the our Thaxted Annual Parish Meeting tonight, I will give a brief report on the previous Council year and then I will answer the two written questions we have been notified in advance of as per the agenda and then read a letter from the Thaxted Society.

We will then have a report from Peter Chairman of the Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan working group. Then I will allow simple questions from the floor and answer if they are a general council question or to direct them to the relevant committee Chairman's where relevant.

April.

The council launched its new website and received some nice comments about this.

Lt Maypole and Chelmer House planning applications were both being opposed by the NP and TPC Flooding at Burns way was reported to Knight Developments who still owned this site; the clerk continues to communicate with the relevant parties to get this land transferred to the Parish council. The NP questionnaires were sent out and 30% return was achieved this is considered very good.

The Village green issue with the Rec was being worked on by Cllr Knight and the Clerk and this issue now rests with Hunts Charity to work on.

The Council did discuss renting some more land at Hunts Farm to assist the Cricket Club, but all felt this was too soon to do.

May/June

It was resolved unanimously to re-elect me as Chairman and Victoria as Vice chairman for another year, the council also elect the various committees and Chairman's.

Cllr Centala ceased to be a councillor after failing to attend for six consecutive months which left a vacancy.

The council agreed new insurance terms and agreed to open a bank account with Lloyds Bank

July

The Council co-opted and welcomed Alison Howells to the council as there was no call for an election. The path from Thatcher's grange and the land at The Mead was discussed and the Clerk was asked to liaise with others to see if this could be registered as a community asset, which the Council very much supported. This was later rejected by UDC on grounds it had not been currently used by the community for 5 years or more.

A group called Wild Thaxted has since been formed to try and look after Thaxted wild spaces and the Council wishes them well and hope they will work with the Council in their endeavours.

The war memorial was progressing, and an update was given.

Various planning applications were discussed and commented on such as a proposal to build a house at the fork at the top of Bardfield Road fortunately UDC supported our objection and so did the planning inspector.

I outlined a long-term plan and reported the toilets and car parks will need serious investment as well as the School room at CHG.

The Clerk had been to meetings and reported on a scheme to recruit Special Police Constables

August

The Council formed a response to the local plan consultation and the Clerk compiled all the relevant work and submitted this to UDC.

The Council remembered the late Eileen Walsh a stalwart of the parish and past Clerk, UDC and Parish Councillor and Parish Council Chairman.

Cllr Sweeny and Perks both left the council which left two vacancies

The Council agreed to the sale of a small piece of scrub land in Park Street Car Park and to a scrubby area behind Molecular Products old site.

Appendix A

The Capital raised from these 2 sales will be invested and held for any future capital projects the Council may decide upon in the future as it cannot be used to subsidise the precept. (Unlike governments who can sell of the family silver to prop up bad ideas or wars)

Sept

The Council had agreed to meet Thaxted Surgery to discuss its proposed extension.

Hastoe Housing acting as agent for a Land Owner in Monk Street asked to meet the Council about a possible small-scale development in Monk Street and to offer a visit to a passivhus housing scheme. The council unanimously agreed to support such a scheme for Monk Street in line with the Councils position since around 2003.

Cllr Williams reported that he had carried out detailed checks on the bank accounts and invoices and said everything was in good order.

Beech Tree Garden was discussed and works agreed to this area would be done and a resident had drawn up a works plan

The idea of new cast iron planters was considered, and Cllr Howells is working on this project and it is hoped one or two may be purchased this year.

The Committee looked at its current grounds contractor and decided to split the contract and award different parts to different contractors and this has proved to work well.

The Clarence House committee agreed to purchase the new gate and carry out extensive local repairs to the flint work walls at the Garden and I applied to UDC for a grant to cover half the cost which I was successful in obtaining.

Oct

Several residents had been misinformed and asked way and if the Council was selling off the Coach Park which was simply not true and were assured this was not the case.

Another planning application for Lt Maypole was again discussed and the Council unanimously objected to this and agreed to work with others.

The Highways committee discussed speeding and parking again and agreed to ask for speed surveys on roads in to the Town (this has been done and we await the results)

A new section of path was talked about at Sampford Road and Cllr Freeman confirmed this was approved by the Highways panel and would go ahead.

Its great news this has been done and completed

Nov

The Council welcomed Judy Miller to the Council

Parking in Stoney Lane was discussed, and it was resolved to see if the residents scheme could be removed and no parking be allowed in this ancient lane

The Finance Committee discussed the idea of some form of enforcement regarding parking in its car parks and several ideas were discussed and the Clerk was asked to contact NEPP for ideas.

Several grants were awarded –

Citizens advice Bureau unspecified amount to support the service

AGREED to: £150 under LGA 1972 s.142

II. Thaxted garden & Craft Show unspecified amount

AGREED to: £300 under Open Spaces Act 1906 s14

III. Thaxted PCC church trust £300 for car park resurfacing

AGREED to: £250 under LGA 1972 s.137

IV. Thaxted Church Trust £300 for a new and upgraded lighting system for the church. Please Note: f £250 under LGA 1972 s.137

Appendix A

Dec

The Council welcomed Jon Spencer to the Council making the council complete with 11 members. The council engaged the services of a town handy man for a couple of hours on a Friday afternoon to give the Town a spruce up for the weekends, the clerk worked hard and has secured external funding to cover this work.

Jan

The loss of a government funded grant of £6-8000 depending on claimant numbers over 2 years from Uttlesford to cover the local council tax support was vigorously fought but UDC decided any way they would not pay this anymore meaning the Parish Council had reluctantly to raise the precept to stand still and maintain services.

So, if anyone asks why the precept has gone up I will direct them to the Uttlesford Councillors to explain why UDC would not continue with this grant to assist Parish councils with this new burden.

Several residents from Monk Street asked questions regarding any proposed development proposals. The chairman explained that going back a good number of years over previous councils and Chairmen and that all had supported some form of small scale development on a site in Monk Street subject to it being small scale and beneficial to Thaxted as a whole.

The Council agreed its budget and precept for 2018/19

Two speculative planning applications were discussed and objected to these being Land at Dunmow Road and Land at Claypits Villas.

Feb

The Council agreed that the Thaxted Society can use the office address as a temporary arrangement. The council reviewed the polling arrangements and concluded that Bolford Street Hall was a good place to cast one's vote.

March

The Guildhall was feeling unwell and the council meeting had to be rearranged at short notice.

Various planning applications were discussed.

We have just received communication from Countryside Homes that they are about to submit an application for 100 houses on land at Sampford Road and that they have requested a meeting with the Parish Council before submitting the application.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for all they do to make Thaxted special, to the Clerk Dena who unfortunately could not be here tonight, to Mike for being our ever-efficient Deputy Unpaid Clerk. I would also like to thank our staff, Celina, Alan and Mary for all they do for the Council

Terry Frostick
Chairman
Thaxted Parish Council

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 22 MARCH 2018

The Steering Group have now been working on the Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan for over two years and are on target for completion in the summer of this year.

During the two years a draft plan has evolved, this has primarily been developed by community involvement from comments and discussions at several public exhibitions, a Housing Needs Survey and residential and business questionnaires circulated to all residents and businesses in the village. In addition we have commissioned specialist reports from Liz Lake Associates Chartered Landscape Architects and Heritage Consultants-Grover Lewis to provide professional evidence to support the Draft Plan.

Over the last two months we have carried out the pre-submission consultation stage of the Plan's development which involved seeking comments on our draft plan not only from all residents of Thaxted but also various Statutory bodies and other interested parties. We have received responses from about 40 responses residents one of which included a petition with well over 100 signatures on the subject of the coachpark in Bardfield Road. Corporate responses have been received from Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England, Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council, Savills representing Countryside's interests in a Sampford Road site and Linden Homes regarding a site adjacent to their development at Meadow Gardens off Wedow Road.

The Steering Group will comment on all of the consultation responses and where appropriate changes will be made to the Draft Plan. Details of our responses to comments and changes to be made to the Draft Plan will be, when completed, in a document on the Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan website entitled "Consultation Statement"

Uttlesford District Council in their comments to the draft Plan pre-submission consultation have raised issues with the Draft Plan Format, policy wording and are requesting further details/clarifications on the proposed site allocations. We have met with the Planning Officers this morning and have agreed changes to Draft Plan 11 upon receipt of further information from them we will forward Draft Plan 12 to them together with our Consultation Statement for their formal consultation.

The final stages of the Plan are:-

Uttlesford District Council will organise a further consultation period of six weeks where Statutory Bodies other interested parties and all residents of Thaxted will be asked to comment on the Draft Plan 12.

A public examiner will be appointed to examine the Draft Plan and when the examiner is satisfied it complies with all necessary legislation it will go to referendum to all Thaxted residents.

We would also note that the Steering Group are objecting to all planning applications in Thaxted where the proposals are contrary to the draft Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Stansted Airport Expansion.

There is concern from residents and some councillors that the application to expand Stansted Airport is being rushed through.

Stansted Airport/Manchester Airports Group, are seeking to build extra taxiways and aircraft stands and to increase the passenger throughput at Stansted to **43 million** passengers per annum (mppa). By comparison, Stansted handled **25.9** mppa last year. They have already authority to go to 35million.

If the application were approved, it would mean a 66% increase in passengers and bigger planes - more noise, more pollution for Thaxted.

There is call that the Stansted Airport Expansion plans should be determined nationally rather than locally.

Some Councillors see potential gain for its local agenda from the application, even though this would be at the expense of towns like Thaxted which it is meant to serve. There would be both an increase aircraft noise and air pollution, also pressures on the road and rail networks.

If you would like to comment on this Stansted Airport Planning Application make your voice known by writing to UDC. If you wish to object or agree please say in your own words why you object or agree. This will carry far more weight than the electronically-generated standard emails which the owners of Stansted Airport are using to persuade people from outside this area, staff, customers and suppliers to flood UDC with posts supporting the application often from London, Manchester and beyond.

Council Tax

The overall tax increase this year will be 5%

The UDC element will be plus 3%

The Local Plan

As you will know 10,000 homes in Easton Park is being looked at in the local plan.

I think Easton Park is a poor choice of location for a new town given its proximity to Stansted airport (the impact it will have on Thaxted)

I think we need to take a stand against urban sprawl and work to protect our precious countryside and heritage.

Cllrs New Homes Bonus Grants

My New Homes Bonus Grants this year have been to Thaxted Youth Club £2k for projects there (the major part this year) - which does so much for the towns youth , Thaxted PC to help with cost towards British Legion Notice Board and Planters £1k, and various projects in other parts of my ward including Little Easton, Great Easton and Lindsell.

The amount available this year starting April is much reduced.

Martin Foley
07968 520520

Appendix C

County Councillor's Annual Report 2018

County Council £300m budget spending plan

A record programme of more than £300 million will be invested in roads, schools, new homes and supporting the economy across Essex, as part of the County Council's budget proposals for 2018/19. The continued reduction in central Government funding, which will disappear completely by 2020, combined with increasing demand for services, increases in inflation, business rates and National Living Wage payments, mean the Council is proposing to increase Council Tax for only the third time in the last eight years.

This will rise by 2% through the Government's social care precept, which will be ring-fenced to adult social care, and 2.99% to support the delivery of vital services such as highways, public transport, libraries and recycling centres.

The proposed rise means a £1.12 per week increase for the average Band D property.

The Council has delivered over £350m of savings in the last four years by generating income and reducing costs.

In the last year, the Council created 2,500 new places in Essex schools, 92% of which are rated good or outstanding, and supported the creation of 11,370 apprenticeships.

It also repaired more than 5,000 potholes, resurfaced more than 400 miles of road, while bringing superfast broadband to another 100,000 homes in the county.

Waste reduction remains a challenge, and a number of schemes will be promoted this year to encourage more reuse and recycling. Uttlesford residents remain one of the best performers for recycling. To help achieve greater reduction, the County will be supporting more food waste collections, more composting, clothes recycling and encouraging people to take small electricals for disposal at many of the County Libraries.

Local Highways Panel

This continues to be oversubscribed, with far more projects than the budget allows. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure a top-up this year, so we are working on a much reduced budget of some £240,000. Schemes are being considered for Ashdon, including junction sign and line improvements and speed surveys on the village approaches.

My role

I continue to be Cabinet member for Environment and Waste, and it is proving to be a busy portfolio. There are proposals for a second nuclear power station at Bradwell and I have oversight of that on the County's behalf. I am also responsible for supporting work to reduce flooding and work very closely with Environment Agency colleagues to get funding for a whole range of programmes, not just inland but also in protecting the coastline. I have received visits from the Flood Minister, Therese Coffey, and the Chief executive of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan. These visits raise the profile of work done in Essex and our Flood Team is recognised as being one of the best in the country.

Other work covers our Outdoor Education Centres and Country Parks. Both are investing significantly in order to improve income which will be reinvested in further improvements.

Our joint agency work on fly tipping is beginning to show dividends, with the net closing on a number of suspects. My next piece of work is to reduce general littering which is proving to be a blight across the county.

Simon Walsh March 2018