

FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the 1120th meeting held on 6th March 2024 at 6:30 pm in the URC Hall

Present: Councillors Graham Harvey (Chairman), Alec Fox, Richard Freeman, Hywel Jones, John Moore, Andrew Parker, Clive Perrins, Roy Ramm, Richard Silcock (Parish/District) and Youth Representative Molly Bennett (entered during the discussion of item 24/57) along with 4 members of the public. Also present was District Councillor John Evans. In attendance: Heather Read (Clerk) and Daniel Plunkett (Responsible Finance Officer - RFO).

24/45 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Penny Learmonth and Frances Marshall, County Councillor Martin Foley and Assistant Clerk Clare Schorah.

24/46 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Richard Silcock declared a pecuniary interest in Item 24/64 - Neighbourhood Plan Review and stated that he would not take part in the discussion of that item.

24/47 **Public Forum**

UDC Waste Collection Service – The PC noted that a scrutiny committee will be investigating how the recent failures in the UDC Waste Collection Service arose. The committee will also look to quantify extra costs incurred by the necessity of using other District Councils / outside contractors during that time.

24/48 **Minutes of Meeting 1119 held on 7th February 2024**

These Minutes were approved and were signed by the Chairman.

24/49 **Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 13th February 2024 and the Finance Committee Meeting held on 28th February 2024**

These Minutes were noted and would be formally approved at the next meetings of the respective committees.

24/50 **Matters Arising from the 7th February Council Meeting**

50.1 Public Toilets (Item 24/37) – The PC noted that the new metal doors and frames have been fitted. They look good and appear extremely robust.

50.2 Signage

i) Play Areas (Item 24/38.1) – The PC were advised that signs for all four play areas / the muga have been received. These cover ownership of the play areas, the rules re dogs and the what3words locations to aid emergency services. The Village Attendant is in the process of fitting them in the relevant areas.

ii) Defibrillator (Item 24/38.2) – The PC were advised that the Primary School had agreed to the erection of extra signage to help locate the defibrillator at the school. The sign has been received and as agreed with the school the Village Attendant will fix it onto the wall adjacent to the school gate.

50.3 The Chequers (Item 24/42.1) – The PC were advised that the Clerk had telephoned the landlord of The Chequers to inform him that the PC are continuing to receive complaints from residents about bins being left outside the front of the pub. The landlord stated that the bins could not be located at the back of the building as they would represent a fire hazard. The PC noted that he stated that if possible he would construct a wooden bin store to screen the bins from sight.

50.4 Car in Woodleys Car Park (Item 24/43.2) – The PC were advised that the car which has a flat tyre and has been in the car park since before Christmas has been reported as abandoned to Uttlesford District Council.

24/51 County Councillor Report

Members noted the report from County Councillor Martin Foley which contained information on council tax. ECC are looking to raise just over £40million during the 2024/25 tax year by increasing their portion of council tax by 4.99%. This is to address "significant financial pressures" facing the authority. Council tax will increase by £48.24 to £1015.02 for Band A residents, by £56.28 to £1184.19 for Band B residents, by £67.32 to £1353.36 for Band C residents and by £72.36 to £1522.53 for Band D residents. ECC is also hoping to generate £32million by reducing funding that it allocates to certain sectors.

24/52 District Councillors Report

Members noted the [report](#) from the District Councillors which contained information on: the Waste Collection Service and steps to be taken in future to avoid any repetition of the "single point of failure" which brought about the recent disruption to the service; council tax - UDC are increasing their proportion by 2.9% (the maximum permitted by the Government for local authorities without responsibility for social care); the setting of a balanced budget for 2024/25 and a recently announced consultation by the Department for Transport regarding night flights - this will be considered by UDC's Stansted Airport Advisory Panel.

24/53 Correspondence

Members noted the Correspondence received (see page 7) including the following:

53.1 Flitch Way – The PC were advised that concern continued to be expressed by residents regarding ongoing works damaging the Flitch Way. These were raised with ECC Highways who informed the PC that the order granting permission for works covers the six month period 1 December 2023 - 1 June 2024, although works could finish sooner. The contractors are expected to restore the Flitch Way to its original condition once the works are completed. The PC noted that the works are due to a big infrastructure upgrade to the power system that has been planned for approximately ten years.

Clerk's Note: Following the meeting, enquiries with UK Power Networks have confirmed that the work should be completed by 5th April 24.

53.2 The King's Portrait Scheme – The PC were advised that the Government is offering a free portrait of His Majesty King Charles III to all councils. The Clerk has applied for one to display in the PC's office.

53.3 Parking Issues in Mole Hill Green Road – The PC noted that a resident of Mole Hill Green Road had complained that cars from the Care in the Community Homes were parking on the verge and blocking the road. The Clerk advised that she had contacted the manager of the homes who assured her that the residents / staff do not park on the road although works vans had temporarily parked there recently which may have caused the issue being referred to. The homes manager advised that residents from other properties do sometimes park on either side of the road and that this is something she has no control over. It was agreed that the resident who raised the issue would be asked to take some photographs if the issue re occurred. This will help to establish who is responsible for blocking the road.

53.4 Development at Clifford Smith Drive – The PC were advised that Mulberry Homes had enquired if the PC were anticipating taking on the areas of open space and play at their new development at Clifford Smith Drive. The PC unanimously agreed that there was nothing in the S106 agreement stating that these areas were to come to the PC and they would therefore not be taking on responsibility for those areas.

53.5 Development on Station Road – The PC were advised that a request had been received from Mulberry Homes to connect sewers under land that will be owned by the PC once the development is completed. The PC agreed unanimously to give permission. It was noted that a clause in the deed of grant will be needed to ensure that the PC will not be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the sewers.

24/54 Finance

54.1 Payments – Members considered the list of payments on pages 8/9. Proposed by Cllr Alec Fox, seconded by Cllr Richard Freeman the payments list was unanimously approved.

54.2 Receipts – Members noted receipts of £430.31 consisting of: Felsted Rovers pitch hire £350; Eon Next MUGA electricity rebate £23.31; Allotment Rental £27; UDC donation for the replacement tree at the top of Jollyboys Lane North £25 and Felsted Focus Donation £5.

54.3 YTD Budget – The PC considered the estimated year end position (see page 10) and noted that there will be a deficit of approximately £20,000. The main items of extra spend vs budget are: £11,000 donations made to the Felsted Community Trust (it was noted that it is hoped that once in receipt of sufficient income the Trust may return the funds to the PC by way of matching donations); £4000 cleaning of the public toilets (which are now being cleaned to a high standard on a daily basis); £4000 on small equipment (litter bins, bench to commemorate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III plus storage cabinets for PC office / storage of the historic records); £1000 extra on the replacement of CCTV plus an additional £1000 on play equipment repairs. The PC noted that increases in staff pay scales / the 2023-24 Local Government Pay Award had been offset by higher than budgeted income which included several successful grant applications.

54.4 Nature Area – The PC were advised that £2940 had been spent on works to the Nature Area during the past year and noted that £137,000 remains from the S106 monies provided for the maintenance of the Nature Area. The PC were reminded that the S106 agreement stated that the funds have to be kept in a standard current account with a high street bank. Currently the funds are split between Metro and Barclays banks.

- 24/55 **UDC Green Waste Service 2024** – It was proposed by Cllr Richard Silcock, seconded by Cllr John Moore and unanimously agreed that the PC would continue to pay for this service at a cost of £85.50 per hour. The green waste skip will be at Bannister Green between 9 - 10am every Sunday morning from 17th March until 8th December 24 inclusive.
- 24/56 **Triennial Tree Survey** – Proposed by Cllr Hywel Jones, seconded by Cllr Alec Fox, it was unanimously agreed to accept the quote of £1300 plus vat from Place Services to carry out the parish triennial tree risk assessment. At the request of the United Reform Church (URC) trees in their burial ground that face onto Chelmsford Road will also be included in the survey. The PC unanimously agreed that in recognition of the URC permitting the burial of other denominations in their grounds the extra cost of £100 incurred by the addition of their trees will be born by the PC and not charged back to the URC.
- 24/57 **Grass Cutting Tenders: Parish / Churchyard** – The PC noted that only two tenders had been received back by the deadline. It was agreed that Cllrs Andrew Parker and Clive Perrins would seek additional tenders which will be brought to the PC meeting in April to be considered alongside the two already received.
- 24/58 **Allotment Plot Clearance** – The PC were advised that the Community Payback Team are to attend the allotments in the next few weeks. Their task will be to clear / level an overgrown plot plus strim an overgrown area to the right of the gates which could then form a new plot. The team will wear high visibility jackets and have a supervisor with them at all times. The PC noted that there is not a charge for this but that the Clerk will hire a portable toilet and ensure that there is a supply of bottled drinking water.
- 24/59 **Biodiversity Working Group** – The PC were advised that their grant application to UDC's Zero Carbon Community Fund for £3800 had been successful. This will be used to create three small wildflower meadows on Bannister Green, Watch House Green and Willows Green and to fund the purchase / installation of various habitat boxes around the parish. The PC noted that explanatory signage will be erected in each area.
- 24/60 **Nature Area** – The PC were advised that following their survey of the Nature Area last summer a detailed management report had now been received from Essex Ecology. A working party is taking place this month with the main aim of removing tree guards and litter picking. It was agreed that viewing how other places manage their public spaces could be helpful. A date for a visit to the Discovery Centre in Braintree is to be agreed.
- 24/61 **Traffic Survey Station Road** – The PC were advised that Cllrs Richard Freeman, Frances Marshall and John Moore had met with Sarah Tomlin from ECC Highways, County Cllr Martin Foley and representatives of Little Dunmow Parish Council. It was noted that representatives

from Flitch Green Parish Council were unable to attend the meeting. It was agreed that in view of the increasing volume of vehicles on the road caused by new developments in all three parishes a request for a traffic survey of Station Road covering the three parishes would be made to the Local Highways Panel. It is hoped that if agreed the survey will help inform possible road improvements. The PC were advised that in view of the volume of traffic generated by the school it had been requested that any survey is carried out in term time.

24/62 **Bury Farm Station Road Development** – The PC noted that there has been an unwelcome increase in speculation / misinformation on social media, in particular postings on Facebook, about perceived delays in the construction of the new health centre on the Bury Farm site. To date the PC has not commented on these postings but they agreed that it is unfair to the PC, The Felsted Community Trust (FCT) and the developer, Mulberry Homes, to allow the misinformation to continue. The PC agreed that the following statement will be made public:
The health centre is a critical and integral element of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (FNP). The John Tasker House (JTH) practice contributed to the consultation on the FNP and the ICB's predecessor organisation, the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (WECCG) were fully aware of and engaged in the proposals for the development, agreed it fitted with the Group's strategic plan and welcomed the development. The WECCG's support was in the full knowledge that the new health centre would be wholly owned by the FCT. The published minutes of their meetings included reference to the health centre being included in the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan and gave welcomed certainty to its early delivery when neither the JTH practice nor the WECCG did not wish to or were unable to fund a new facility.

The funding for the development comes as a developer's contribution to the people of Felsted through the Felsted Community Trust - this is known as a S106 agreement. This was agreed by Uttlesford District Council when the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan was passed and when the specific planning consent was granted in 2020.

It is very important to recognise that neither the WECCG nor the ICB have ever been part of the S106 agreement that delivered the new health centre premises, indeed the NHS is not mentioned at all in the S106.

The NHS/ICB has no legal claim to ownership of the health centre whatsoever: it will belong solely to the people of Felsted through the FCT.

The delay in construction commencing has been entirely due to unfounded claims by ICB on the ownership of the premises and its unwillingness or inability to agree specifications and rent.

In an attempt to move the development on, the PC and FCT has sought and received the support of our member of parliament the Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP.

On the 25th March the FCT and our specialist architect and surveyor have an all parties on-line meeting with the ICB and the John Tasker House practice to agree the technical specification of the premises.

Whatever the outcome of that meeting the FCT will now work with Mulberry Homes to build a modern state of the art centre capable of delivering primary health care. It is hoped and expected that the ICB will fund the lease to the JTH practice for the benefit of the people of Felsted.

Funds received as rent by the FCT have been factored into the maintenance of other assets in Felsted by UDC and the balance will be used for community projects in the parish.

24/63 **Felsted Community Trust** – The PC were advised that Cllr Graham Harvey had chased Nat West bank again. It is hoped that the bank account will be open soon.

24/64 **Neighbourhood Plan Review**

64.1 Consultations – The PC noted that well attended drop in consultation sessions were held at the Memorial Hall on Friday 15th March / Saturday 16th March 24.

64.2 Survey – The PC expressed their gratitude to Sue Powell and her daughters who delivered the housing needs survey to the whole parish. It was noted that all responses will go back to the RCCE.

24/65 **Chairmans Matters**

Annual Parish Assembly – The PC were advised that confirmation of the attendance of Essex Police's Rural Engagement Team at the Annual Parish Assembly on Thursday 18th April 24 is awaited.

24/66 **Clerk's Matters**

66.1 Playbark – The PC noted that following an order to Giffords for playbark last summer they were subsequently unable to fulfill the delivery and refunded the monies paid (minute 23/214.2). A local supplier (PW May Contracting) has recently commenced supplying loose playbark at a much lower cost than Giffords. An order for 30 cubic metres has been placed at a cost of £750. This will be delivered at the end of April and spread by JCM Services prior to both the next Rospa report and the school summer holidays.

66.2 Memorial – The PC were advised that the Memorial located outside of the Memorial Hall is in need of a clean. Cllr Graham Harvey is arranging for this to take place in May / June.

24/67 **Planning Applications and Decisions**

67.1 Applications to be Considered at the next Planning Meeting

UTT/24/0411/FUL - Princes Halfyards Stebbing Road

Proposed demolition of stables/outbuildings. Construction of 2 no. dwellings and conversion of barn 4 to an annexe to Plot 2.

67.2 Decisions Received Since Previous Council Meeting

UTT/23/3086/HHF - Post Office House Hartford End

Proposed garden store, and improved vehicular access.

Permission Granted - 5th February 2024

UTT/23/0930/FUL - Bury Chase Cottage And The Bury Chase

Proposed resurfacing and small extension to existing staff car parking area, independent private access, landscaping, change of use from school garden to private garden, improvements to existing access with associated operational development.

Permission Granted - 6th February 2024

UTT/23/2904/HHF - Alvignac Watch House Green

Proposed oak and timber clad cart lodge.

Permission Granted - 9th February 2024

UTT/23/2802/FUL - The Swan Hotel Station Road

Section 73A Retrospective application for works to the garden including decking and a pergola

Permission Refused - 20th February 2024 'Due to lack of information submitted about the impact of development on neighbouring properties to ensure that the development would not have a materially adverse effect on the reasonable occupation and enjoyment of residential property or cause disturbance to nearby properties.'

UTT/23/3007/OP - Land East Of Watch House Green

Outline application with all matters reserved except access for the construction of 5 no. detached dwellings and garages using existing access off the Braintree Road

Application Withdrawn

UTT/23/2759/HHF - Springmead Stebbing Road

Proposed Annexe

Permission Granted - 1st March 2024

67.3 Other Planning Business

The PC were advised that a recent planning application for 50 houses at Hartford End had been made direct to the Planning Inspectorate bypassing UDC. The application was refused with the refusal making significant and repeated references to the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (FNP). The PC agreed that it was reassuring that the FNP still carried significant weight.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Next Meetings:

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Next Highways Committee Meeting: | Wednesday 13th March online at 5pm |
| Next Planning Committee Meeting: | Tuesday 19th March online at 6pm |
| Next Council Meeting: | Wednesday 3rd April in the URC Hall at 6.30pm |

..... 3 April 2024
Chairman

Correspondence List – March 2024

<p>1. UDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Waste Collection Updates b) Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Questionnaire (circ to PC 13/2 - completed by Clerk 20/2)) c) Reply to FOI request re costs sought and granted in appeal hearings similar to Rumblebees (circ to PC 20/2) d) New street development on land at Sunnybrook Farm – Name confirmed as Foxglove Place e) New postal vote handling procedures (circ to PC 23/3)
<p>2. ECC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Response to Query re Ongoing Works / Damage to Flitch Way (see also correspondence item 6a) b) Travel Essex online survey re public opinion of the bus services in Essex. Survey open from Monday 4/3 – 17/3 (circ to PC 29/2)
<p>3. EALC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Weekly News e-Bulletins b) The King's Portrait Scheme c) Training Availability (circ to PC 12/2) d) Protecting Public Right of Way & The Role of the Local Council Training Course to be held via zoom on 13th November 2024.(circ to PC 4/3)
<p>4. Chelmsford CVS – Enquiry re Activities / Support Groups for Men (circ to PC 20/02)</p>
<p>5. London Stansted Airport Community Survey 2024 (completed by Cllr JM)</p>
<p>6. Resident Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Flitch Way Concerns x 2 (see correspondence item 2a) b) Parking Issues in Mole Hill Green Road
<p>7. RCCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Essex Warbler March Edition (circ to PC 29/2) b) Membership Event - Thursday 14th of March (circ to PC 29/2)
<p>8. CPRE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) February Campaigns Update (circ to PC 12/2) b) Spring Talk: Local Nature Partnerships (circ to PC 14/2)
<p>9. Mulberry Homes – Areas of Open Space and Play - Clifford Smith Drive Site</p>
<p>10. Harrison Clark Rigerbys Solicitors (re Mulberry Homes) - adoption of the sewers servicing the Mulberry development on Station Road.</p>

Unpaid List – March 2024

	Date ▾	Num ▾	Memo ▾	Open Balance ▾
A & J Lighting Solutions				
	09/02/2024	38046	Replacement Sox lamp and photocell - 6 Causeway End Road	208.80
	15/02/2024	38058	Annual Maintenance visit, 9x replacement 35w sox lamps, 6x replacement photocells, 3x replacemen...	1,070.82
	28/02/2024	38072	Replace Light fittings with LED - 9019 Jollyboys Lane North & 9050 Gransmore Green	933.60
Total A & J Lighting Solutions				2,213.22
Astragraphic Design Ltd				
	27/02/2024	604	Monthly charge for Adobe Software Creative Cloud Suite	51.98
Total Astragraphic Design Ltd				51.98
British Gas - BGL465975				
	28/02/2024	6996073	MUGA Electricity for period 28/01/24 to 28/02/24 - Account BGL465975, MPAN 1030072525215, Meter ...	30.58
Total British Gas - BGL465975				30.58
EDF - Pavillion - 671 178 252 359				
	14/02/2024	E78252359007	Pavillion Electricity - period 28/12/23 to 13/02/24 - Meter # D11W560535 - MPAN 1012485770570	201.92
Total EDF - Pavillion - 671 178 252 359				201.92
Fisher Michael				
	01/03/2024	7549	Payroll administration - Aug 2023 to Feb 2024 - £20 per month	168.00
Total Fisher Michael				168.00
JCM Services				
	17/02/2024	1822	Plant 44x trees, plant 40x hedge whips, install posts and wraps	3,336.00
Total JCM Services				3,336.00
Julie Smith				
	29/02/2024	Feb24	Cleaning and Maintenance of Playing Field Toilets - Feb24	350.00
Total Julie Smith				350.00
Lee Heron				
	28/02/2024	Feb24	Unlocking car park 1 - Feb24	60.00
Total Lee Heron				60.00
M&B Printers				
	16/02/2024	17211	Signage - MUGA safety sign, Defib sign, 4x new MUGA safety signs, 5x play area safety signs	402.00
Total M&B Printers				402.00

MHG Engineering				
	29/02/2024	2024/13	Replacement of 2x doors on public toilets with metal doors, including frames and fittings	3,096.00
Total MHG Engineering				3,096.00
Officials - Clare Schorah - Asst Clerk				
	28/02/2024	Feb24 - Exp	Asst Clerk Expenses - Feb24 - mobile phone monthly contract, mileage	10.50
	28/02/2024	Feb24 - Salary	Asst Clerk salary - Feb24	969.90
Total Officials - Clare Schorah - Asst Clerk				980.40
Officials - Daniel Plunkett - RFO				
	28/02/2024	Feb24 - Exp	RFO Expenses - Feb 2024 - Milegage	4.50
	28/02/2024	Feb24 - Salary	RFO salary - Feb24	439.23
Total Officials - Daniel Plunkett - RFO				443.73
Officials - Heather Read - Clerk				
	28/02/2024	Feb24 - Exp	Clerk's expenses - Feb 2024- Zoom subscription, Google Suite & computer support package, monthl..	141.61
	28/02/2024	Feb24 - Salary	Clerk's salary - Feb24	1,874.68
Total Officials - Heather Read - Clerk				2,016.29
Officials - NEST Pensions				
	28/02/2024	Feb24 - CS	Pension Contribution - C Schorah - Feb24	32.81
	28/02/2024	Feb24 - HR	Pension Contribution - H Read - Feb24	126.88
Total Officials - NEST Pensions				159.69
P W May				
	20/02/2024	4592	Playbark top up	750.00
Total P W May				750.00
Robert Barnard				
	28/02/2024	Allotment Fence	Assisting Barney in repairs to allotment fencing	100.00
Total Robert Barnard				100.00
S P Barnard				
	28/02/2024	Feb24	Village attendant - Feb24	903.00
Total S P Barnard				903.00
Three Mobile				
	23/02/2024	104807450005	Monthly Sim card charge for CCTV	6.00
Total Three Mobile				6.00
TOTAL				15,268.81

YTD Budget Comparison to 21 February 2024

	Budget 2022-23		Actual 2022-23		Year End Estimate		YE Estimate - Budget	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Opening Balance		55,161		55,161		55,161		
INCOME								
Precept	113,950		113,950		113,950		0	
Allotments Rents	1,700		2,078		2,200		500	
Playing field rent	500		1,070		1,070		570	
Grants	0		1,772		1,772		1,772	
Sundry other receipts	0		1,597		1,597		1,597	
Magazine advertising & donations	2,150		3,725		4,171		2,021	
Total Income		118,300		124,192		124,760		6,460
EXPENSES								
Salary and Expenses		42,013		39,580		48,453		6,439
Street Lighting		12,799		7,897		10,736		-2,064
Administration		12,511		11,942		13,295		783
Maintenance, repairs and upkeep		32,210		41,566		45,947		13,737
Projects		7,950		3,386		5,865		-2,085
Sundry		5,257		15,083		15,112		9,855
Total Expenses		112,742		119,453		139,408		26,666
Closing Balance		60,719		59,900		40,513		-20,206