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**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL HIGHWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the HIGHWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 14th February 2024 in The Mountfitchet Exchange, Crafton Green, 72 Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex

**PRESENT** Cllr G Sell (Chair), Cllrs M Caton, A Khan, L Prior and co-opted

member K Playle

**ATTENDING** Mrs Ruth Clifford – Parish Clerk

Mrs Emma Philbrick – Deputy Clerk

County Councillor Ray Gooding

Cllr A Guney – via Zoom

Cllr J Kavanagh

1 member of the press – via Zoom

2 members of the public – via Zoom

**338 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jones – holiday and Cllr O’Brien - unwell. Apologies were also received from co-opted member Ray Woodcock.

**339 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -** None

**440 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH OCTOBER 2023**

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th October 2023 as a true and accurate account.

**441 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS**

217 Office to write to Cllr Tom Cunningham (Cabinet Member for Highways) - Email sent 03/11 – Still no reply – Office has now raised the issue with the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways

217 – Apply for two pedestrian crossing on High Lane – Application made to ULHP. However, this has been superseded by the decision from Planning for the development of 30 house on Land East of High Lane and the developer is required to provide the crossings.

217 – Cty Cllr Gooding to advise the date of the next Highways Panel meeting – No date was received by the office. However, the ULHP website shows that a meeting was scheduled in December 2023 but there are no minutes available on the website.

218 – Ask resident to contact Ray Woodcock about Zebra Crossing by Forest Hall School – Done

218 – Request a study by the Local Highways Panel – Application for zebra crossing on Forest Hall Road was submitted to the ULHP together with a letter of support from the Head at Forest Hall School.

219 – Working Group (Cycle & Bus Routes) to look at what the issues are and what needs to be done – Report attached highlighting that a meeting will be convened in March.

221 – Office to write to Paul Crick copying in Cllr Tom Cunningham – Sent on 03/11 but no reply from either. Office has now forwarded to Deputy Cabinet member in the hope of getting a response.

222 – Foresthall Park Parking Working Group to review and bring back to Sub- Committee – Report attached highlighting that a meeting will be convened in March.

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**442 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIR, CLLR GEOFFREY SELL**

Cllr Sell reported the following:

With regard to the UDC review of car parking, he had attended a meeting the previous evening when it was confirmed that the long stay parking is to stay in Crafton Green car park. They have been working with consultants as charges have not been changed for 8 or 9 years. Three options had been presented to them and they had chosen option 2 which has increases but that increase is not going to be as high as was recommended by the consultants. After further discussion around the increased use of Lower Street car park now that Peacocks is operating from there, it was agreed to send a formal request to Cllr Neil Hargreaves for UDC to carry out a configuration and capacity survey of that car park.

The Clerk had received a letter from UDC asking for comments by 29th February about vehicle charging points and whether the Parish Council thought there were enough in the village or where more could be placed. It was agreed to suggest that Lower Street Car Park should have some and if possible, these need to be fast charging. It was also agreed to suggest some be placed at the JET Petrol Station as they have some land not being used.

Both Katherine Playle and Cty Cllr Gooding arrived during this agenda item.

**443 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR RAY GOODING ON HIGHWAYS PROJECTS FOR STANSTED MOUNTFTICHET**

County Councillor Ray Gooding reported the following:

Affinity Water were always scheduled to close the junction of the B1383 with Forest Hall Road as part of the original licence, but to minimise disruption they left it open and are now operating traffic lights to complete this section of works. He doesn’t believe it’s causing any particular problems.

He has been in regular contact with Affinity Water trying to get them to accept liability for the damage done to the Walson Way verges during the closure of the B1383. Unfortunately, as this was not the official diversion route, there are no powers to make them do any work. The Clerk, Ruth Clifford, tabled some pictures which had been supplied to the meeting by Cllr Kavanagh which shows the verges had historically been neglected before the B1383 closure had taken place and it is something that Essex Highways had been asked about on many occasions.

Cllr Gooding accepted this but said it would be good to get Affinity Water to make a contribution towards the costs of repairs the damaged verges. Katherine Playle pointed out that Church Road was also a mess with many dangerous potholes due to the increase in traffic. Cllr Gooding confirmed that this was on a schedule for resurfacing.

Cllr Sell reminded the meeting that there is a pot of S106 money specifically for Foresthall Park and could this not be used as it would benefit the community. Cllr Gooding advised that it would be better to find a way to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement rather than repair them for it to happen again. It was highlighted that most people do not do it through choice and that most people have to when the road becomes gridlocked due to large vehicles and buses on the route. Someone has to give way in these situations and people have no choice but to mount the pavement/verges.

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After further discussion it was agreed that the Parish Council would put forward a scheme to the Local Highways Panel for a viability study to take place. Cllr Caton requested that a similar study also be undertaken for Mountfitchet Green as they

have the same issues. It was agreed that these should be done as two separate applications rather than one large one. Draft applications will be drawn up by the office and sent to Cllr Gooding for his comments prior to submission. It was stressed that it should be made clear to residents that this will not happen quickly and also that we would be happy to make a contribution but not pay for the whole scheme. It was questioned how much is left in the S106 Foresthall Park Highway fund and the Clerk advised that she is still not getting any response to this despite chasing for 9 + months. Cllr Gooding confirmed he had spoken to Cllr Cunningham, and he is willing to attend a meeting and he will chase him to get a date in the diary preferably in the next quarter. Cllr Prior asked if there could be a temporary ban on parking along routes such as Walson Way when licences are granted for major works? Cllr Gooding confirmed that he had pushed hard for this when the B1383 was being closed and there are legal restrictions preventing this as it is not part of the works so can’t be done.

A question was asked with regard to One Network and whether highways officers use this interactive tool to consider knock on effects on traffic when granting permits for roadworks, particularly involving major routes. Cllr Gooding stated that Essex has so far this year received over 124,000 permit requests. He would personally find it very time consuming to review all of the ones he is sent in a timely manner. However, he does endeavour to submit his comments on the ones he considers potentially contentious. After further discussion, members stressed to Cllr Gooding that he is our voice and should intervene more in these applications.

It was also reported that the crossing application had gone in for Forest Hall Road and that a PV2 assessment would now be taking place. This is where they measure the degree of conflict between pedestrian and vehicles over a period of several hours. If it doesn’t meet the necessary levels then it will not be pursued. The assessment is carried out by people physically standing there and counting.

**444 TO APPOINT A MEMBER OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE TO REVIEW LICENCES GRANTED FOR ROADWORKS AND CONSIDER ANY IMPACT THEY WILL HAVE ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK**

The Clerk advised that the office thought it might be useful for a member of the sub- Committee to study the licences that have been granted to see if it would have any major impact for residents and if so to highlight this to Cllr Gooding to see if anything could be done before the work actually takes place. Some members weren’t keen on this idea, and no one would agree to take this on. It was commented that this was the responsibility of Essex Highways so Cllr Gooding should be doing it. He did point out that he could not do this for every licence as it would be too time consuming and that he would find it helpful if a member of the Committee would do it. The Clerk pointed out that in general there are not many applications that have a huge impact on the village as a whole and Cllr Caton agreed that after the recent experience, which was carnage, anything to mitigate such experiences should be done. With no volunteers, it was agreed to ask Cllr O’Brien if he would be willing to take this on for a trial period to see if it made a difference. If he is unable to do this then it would not be pursued.

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**445 TO DECIDE WHETHER TO RESUBMIT OUR REQUEST TO ESSEX HIGHWAYS TO REMOVE THE CHICANES ON CHURCH ROAD**

The Clerk gave the background to our previous attempts to get the chicanes moved and replaced with a scheme which the Parish Council drew up for speed cushions instead. Many ‘excuses’ were given as to why speed cushions would not be allowed

on Church Road. No further updates have been received as referred to already and

the Clerk was authorised to resubmit a formal request to replace the chicanes with a scheme to calm the traffic and reduce speeds on Church Road.

Cllr Khan asked if a different scheme would help solve the drain issues. Cllr Gooding said it would help alleviate it but not fix it completely as one of the problems is the drainage underground which is a bigger issue and not the responsibility of Essex Highways.

**446 TO DECIDE WHETHER TO RESUBMIT OUR APPLICATION TO ULHP FOR GATEWAY MARKERS AT THE ENTRANCES TO THE VILLAGE**

The Clerk explained that this is something we have submitted an application for previously. This was unsuccessful previously, and no reply has ever been received to the application for Town Twinning signs. It was agreed to incorporate the two applications and request that any signs should require minimal maintenance.

**447 TO NOTE THE FOLLOWING ISSUES RAISED WITH ESSEX HIGHWAYS**

**a) RE-INSTATEMENT OF VERGES – WALSON WAY**

**b) REMOVAL OF TREE DEBRIS FOLLOWING STORMS – HIGH LANE, CAMBRIDGE ROAD AND FIVE ACRES**

**c) VARIOUS POTHOLES AROUND THE VILLAGE**

**d) STREETLIGHTS IN GILBEY CRESCENT**

The office has reported all of these issues to the various authorities.

Cllr Gooding advised he had been using his highways “buddy” for potholes as this was bringing quicker results. A lot of the repairs have been a temporary “make safe” and have then been placed on a schedule for permanent repair.

**448 TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON:**

**a) S106 PROJECTS SUBMITTED**

No information received from ECC S106 officer.

Cllr Sell suggested going straight to the leader of the Council as the longer the S106 money is unspent the lower the value of the money so this needs escalating. Cty Cllr Gooding said he would speak to the Deputy Cabinet member, who the Clerk has already emailed and had an acknowledgement from but had not heard anything since. It was agreed to give the Deputy until 7th March 2024 to respond before escalating higher.

Cllr Prior asked, as she has previously, for updates on the various highway issues facing the village to be put on the Parish Council website. The Clerk pointed out that a draft had been produced but this was with Cllr Gooding who wanted to word the piece on Grove Hill with the correct updates. If the Clerk resends the document, he will get this done.

Whilst on this topic, Cllr Gooding stated that the consultation on the project to remove HGV’s from Grove Hill and other routes within Stansted has not yet taken place. He believed that the change in cabinet member had not helped and undertook to keep the Parish Council informed of any progress.

**b) UTTLESFORD LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL PROJECTS SUBMITTED**

A report from the ULHP website which was circulated to members ahead of the meeting. It listed the schemes which had been requested and what status

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they were at. A few of them are in validation and Cllr Gooding explained that

this meant they are being assessed for viability and cost. He agreed to inform the Clerk of the date of the next meeting which is due to take place in March.

**c) NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS SUBMITTED**

The Clerk reported that none of the projects submitted to date have been approved by NEPP. The reason given is that the Parish Council did not achieve 75% support for any proposals during consultation periods. Prior to any further submissions being made, it was agreed to try to establish how this 75% policy had come about, when it would be reviewed and to what extent the public need to be consulted. Cllr Gooding suggested that the office write to the Chair of NEPP, Cllr Dan Land.

Meeting closed at 9.11pm

**ACTION POINTS**

442 Office to send formal request to Cllr Neil Hargreaves to carry out a configuration and capacity survey on Lower Street car park.

442 Respond to consultation re electric vehicle charging points.

443 Put forward a scheme to the LHP for a viability study on Foresthall Park.

443 Put forward a scheme to the LHP for a viability study on Mountfitchet Green.

443 Cllr Gooding to set a date for Cllr Cunningham to attend a meeting.

444 Ask Cllr O’Brien to look at licences granted.

445 Clerk to submit a formal request to replace the chicanes on Church Road.

446 Apply for village gateway markers.

448 Cllr Gooding to speak to Deputy Cabinet member.

448 Clerk to send draft Highways update to Cllr Gooding to finish the piece on Grove Hill.

448 Cllr Gooding to keep the Parish Council updated on progress of projects to remove HGV’s from Grove Hill and other routes in Stansted.

448 Cllr Gooding to advise the date of the next LHP meeting.

448 Write to the Chair of NEPP, Cllr Dan Land ref 75% support policy.