

WOOLMER GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held 8 January 2008

Prior to the meeting The Hon. Henry Lytton Cobbold, accompanied by Mr Peter Lowe of Chas Lowe Builders Merchants and Cllr John Bantick, Chairman of Knebworth Parish Council, presented proposals for relocating Chas Lowe Builders Merchants to Woolmer Green on the land between Entech House and Monread Lodge. He said the plan would enable the business to maintain links with Knebworth and relieve traffic congestion in the village. The old site would be used to build a new community centre, hopefully including the doctors' surgery and preventing its move to Stevenage. He believed there would be great benefits to businesses and residents in both Knebworth and Woolmer Green. Councillors were able to make suggestions and ask questions. The Council opted to reserve comment on the proposals until the plans had been submitted to Welwyn Hatfield Council.

Present: Cllr Mrs J Watson (Chair), Cllr N Collingridge (Vice Chair), Cllr H Bryant, Cllr S Day, Cllr A Gribble, Cllr M Burge.

In attendance: Mr A. Edmonds (Clerk), Mrs J. Pearce (Deputy Clerk), members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence: None.

- 2. Minutes of Council Meeting on 11th December 2007:** The minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record. To ensure the final minutes are completed within a reasonable time The Clerk and the Chairman will draw up a procedure for Councillors to follow.

Action: Cllr Watson and Clerk

- 3. Meetings attended by Councillors:** Cllr Watson had attended the Chairman's Christmas Reception at Welwyn Parish Council and read a lesson at the Christmas Service in St. Michael's Church. Cllrs Watson and Collingridge also met with Mike Beckham (Roads) and Richard Aston and Ian Harrison (Planning) at WHC and, together with the Clerk, met with Paul Davis and Phil Dell (Herts Highways).

Cllr. Watson reported that WHC Standards Committee is in need of members. It was agreed that Cllr. Watson attends until April 2008. Cllrs were asked to consider joining the Committee.

- 4. Correspondence:** Cllr Watson reported that the Parish Council sent out 25 Christmas cards and received 12.
- 5. HAPTC:** Cllr Burge & Gribble are to attend a Councillor's Workshop on 5 March 2008. Cllr Watson thought the Workshop would benefit all Cllrs and they should consider attending.
- 6. Planning: (Cllr Bryant)**
- 61 Garden Road: The change of use from public amenity land to residential has been approved. A decision on the application for development was awaited.
 - 4 Oak Road: No decision to report.
 - 27 New Road: Application refused.
 - Marshalls MOT Status: No consultation is to be held on this.
 - Application 2007/1844 9 Wolvesmere: Conversion of garage to an habitable room. No objection.
 - Application 2007/1840 59 London Road: Erection of care home with respite care and ancillary services following demolition of existing building. The Council submitted online comments on the application saying that, despite issues Planning have with scale, they support the application as the care home would be an appropriate use of the site. The Council asked for the application to be called in for consideration at the Planning Committee where the Parish Council would appreciate being able to give its views.
 - Application 2007/1990 59a London Road: Change of use of agricultural land to form storage area with a heavy vehicle turning area. Cllr Collingridge declared an interest. Cllrs objected as the site is designated green belt. **Action: Cllr Bryant**
 - Cllr Bryant proposed that the Council should submit comments in support of applications as well as objections. Cllrs agreed. **Action: Cllr Bryant**
 - The Clerk distributed a leaflet on Government changes to planning enforcement policy.

- 7. Hall: (Cllr Watson)**

- a. Hall Floor: A quote has been accepted. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk will liaise to identify convenient week for the work to be carried out. **Action: Clerk & Deputy Clerk**
 - b. Heating: Waiting for the contractor to carry out the work.
 - c. Insulation: Cllr Day is looking into the possibility of a grant application. **Action: Cllr Day**
 - d. Tiling: Awaiting a second quote. **Action: Cllr Watson**
 - e. Cost of Rubbish Removal: The Council wish to query the increased cost of rubbish removal. **Action: Clerk**
 - f. Recent Party: The hirers did not finish clearing up until well after 1am and the toilets were left in a disgusting state. Cllrs agreed the hirer should pay £100 from their damage deposit. A letter of explanation will be sent. **Action: Cllr Watson**
8. **Finance:** (Cllr. Bryant)
- a. Payments and Accounts for December: These had been circulated and were agreed.
 - b. Budget 2008/09: The Budget is ready for submission. Cllrs were worried about the lack of income from the football pitch and suggested that the precept be increased from £18,000 to £19,000 to maintain reserves. This was agreed by a majority vote. **Action: Clerk**
 - c. Parishioner's Letter: This had been circulated and was approved.
 - d. Pond Fund: It was suggested that the Pond Fund be wound up and incorporated in the Councils Accounts This will be published in the next newsletter. **Action: Cllr Watson**
 - e. Staff Pay Increase: The 0.5% additional NALC approved backdated pay increase for staff was approved.
9. **Environment & Transport:** (Cllr Collingridge)
- a. Mardleybury Road Speed Limit: Herts Highways have put forward a recommendation that the speed limit be reduced. District Cllrs will be asked for their support.
 - b. Footpath Map, Board & Leaflets: Deferred until next meeting.
 - c. Experimental Traffic Orders: Mike Beckham, WHC, stated that Parking Restrictions areas had been revised in 2005 and that Woolmer Green was now within the agency area. The Council has now requested Parking Restrictions in New Road, at the entrance from B197 and the bend by The Fox, and next to The Red Lion in Wolvesmere. However, there are a very large number of requests for such action across the Borough and the earliest that the proposals for Woolmer Green will be considered is March, 2008. A decision at that time to support the proposals would result in them going forward to be considered for acceptance onto the work plan in September, 2008, for completion during the following year.
 - d. War Memorial: Three quotes are to be obtained for cleaning the War Memorial. **Action: Cllr Day**
10. **Publicity:** (Cllr Collingridge)
- a. Website: Cllrs expressed thanks to Cllr Collingridge for his continued work on the website.
11. **Grounds:** (Cllr Gribble)
- a. Playground Inspection: The next inspection will be carried out by Cllr Watson.
 - b. Registration of Council Land: The Clerk reported that the Deed of Exchange had been received but contained errors. It had been returned to the Solicitor for correction.
 - c. Pond: Deferred until next meeting.
12. **Annual Parish Meeting:** It was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on 8 April with guest speakers Mr Brian King and Mr Gary Fenton.
13. **Village of the Year Competition:** Woolmer Green will be entered into the Village of the Year Competition. **Action: Cllr Burge**
14. **Councillors' Surgery:** Cllr Watson attended the Cllrs' Surgery in the hall. She had learnt that £170K was available for village projects to the 17 Wards in the Borough Council. Woolmer Green and Oaklands form Welwyn North Ward. She was told that only £2K would be allocated to the Welwyn North Ward. The Clerk was asked to query why the relevant percentage was not being allocated to Woolmer Green. **Action: Clerk**
15. **Carols round the Pond:** £140 was raised for the churchyard.
16. **AOB**

- a. Hall Car Park Fence: A quote will be obtained to repair the car park perimeter fence.
Action: Clerk
 - b. Cllr Bryant informed the council that there are dead trees in Garden Road that need replacing.
Action: Clerk
17. Next Meeting: Tuesday 12 February 2008 starting at 7.30pm.

JRP 9.1.08