



Theydon Bois Parish Council

Parish Office, The Village Hall, Coppice Row,
Theydon Bois, Essex CM16 7ER

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Sally Crone
Responsible Financial Officer: Mr Greville Norman

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at The Village Hall at 8pm on Thursday 29th September, 2011

Councillors Present: Cllr Jones (Chair), Hannibal, Philip, Gooch, Sowerby, Berry, Purkiss, Vincent, Berry, Howard and Wood

Apologies: Councillor Hammond

Officers Present: Sally Crone (Parish Clerk), Greville Norman (RFO)

48. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Hammond.

Councillor Philip had given a prior apology for late arrival.

49. **Declarations of interest (existence and nature) with regard to items on the agenda. Members of the Council are subject to the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 (S.I.2007/1159) (The Revised Code)**

Councillor Jones explained that due to her husband being a Partner in the Firm of Foskett Marr Gadsby & Head LLP, she thought it appropriate to declare a personal interest in Agenda Item 11.3 by virtue of her husband's position. Councillor Jones also determined her interest to be prejudicial in accordance with advice received and left the room and took no part in the voting on this matter.

50. **Public participation session with regard to items on the Agenda**

With reference to Agenda item 10 concerning the Community and Youth Centre a resident noted that depending on the outcome of discussion on this point he may have something to raise under agenda item 14, the second public participation session.

51. **Correspondence – Clerk's Report**

The Clerk noted that it had been two months since the last council meeting (the meeting scheduled for 25th August having been cancelled). A full copy of her Clerk's Report had been circulated to all Councillors and was available from the Parish Office for any resident who may be interested. A copy of the Report is attached to these minutes. The Clerk drew particular attention to the following items:

- 51.1 Councillors Jones and Howard had met with representatives from the Limes Surgery to discuss some concerns raised by residents in connection with the operation of the Branch Surgery. A letter had now been received from the Managing Partner of the Limes addressing concerns about the website, installation of a post box for repeat prescriptions, publication of opening hours and frequency of surgeries.
- 51.2 EFDC had publicised the Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year Awards, where nominees for the former should have shown outstanding courage, done something of great benefit to a person or the community or shown extraordinary commitment, energy and effort in their field, the deadline for nominations being 25th November. Nominations for the latter should detail the achievements of the young person over the past year and show how they have contributed towards improving the life of others in their community, school or college. Nominees must be 11-18 years old and live in the Epping Forest district. The closing date for nominations is 6th January 2012 and the winner will receive a certificate and £100 cheque. Awards will be presented at the annual civic reception in March.
- 51.3 The Council had received a letter confirming the Planning Inspector's recent decision to dismiss the appeal that the access leading from Loughton Lane should be added to the definitive map as a byway open to all traffic.

52. To Discuss and approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 28th July, 2011

The draft Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 28th July, 2011 were approved and signed by the Chair.

53. Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was agreed that due to Councillor Philip's expected late arrival this item should be moved to a later point in the Agenda he being Chairman of the Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee.

54. Planning Committee

- 54.1 Councillor Gooch reported that since the Council Meeting held on 28th July the Planning Committee had reviewed sixteen applications and of these the Committee had objected to three applications. Councillor Gooch also noted that the planning application for the redevelopment of the Darlington's site had been approved; negotiating a significant community gain for the Village and the Parish Council had played a key role in securing that the community would receive benefit from this outcome.
- 54.2 Councillor Gooch reported that the Council intends to send representative to the proposed pre- hearing meeting discuss the forthcoming Planning Appeal for the proposed Commuter Car Park. The Council has been advised that the Appeal is to be decided by an Informal Hearing to be held on the 15th /16th November at the Civic Offices in Epping.

55. Highways and Environment Committee

- 55.1 Councillor Purkiss reported that a number of jobs have been undertaken since the last Council Meeting. In particular the Abridge Road (Viaduct to the M11) has been resurfaced, following consultation, and the crossroads at the junction of the Weind and Orchard Drive has been cut out and resurfaced. There is a drainage

problem with a leak adjacent to the new surface in the vicinity of the Golf Club in Piercing Hill but Thames Water has been notified. Work has been undertaken around the BT boxes (Coppice Row to Jacks Hill) and the long stretch of hedge (Golf Club side) of Piercing Hill has been cut. The verge on the opposite side of Piercing Hill will also be cut shortly.

Councillor Purkiss also reported that he had recently had a positive meeting with County Councillor (and Portfolio Holder) Tracey Chapman. Matched funding Highways initiatives had been discussed particularly the Parish Council's desire to refurbish further sections of Orchard Drive to complete that project.

55.2 Councillor Vincent reported that he and Councillor Jones had recently attended a very positive meeting with Highways Officers from Essex County Council concerning the long outstanding enquiries about 'yellow lining' and parking restrictions with particular reference to Purlieu Way and Theydon Park Road. The following had been discussed and agreed:

- Theydon Park Road, in the lay-by opposite the junction with Blackacre Road and from outside number 67 to the commencement of the unmade section of this road: Removal of all signs relating to waiting restrictions currently in force and removal of existing yellow lines (to be burnt off)
- Purlieu Road at the junction with Dukes Avenue: Existing double yellow lines protecting the junction to be extended by a further 5 meters
- Hornbeam Road from the junction with Loughton Lane to the T junction leading to the residential section of Hornbeam Road: Installation of a 10 meter double yellow lines to protect the junction with Loughton Lane and 1 hour parking restriction, single yellow lines to either side of this short access road
- Any necessary legislation in respect to these alterations will, in due course, be retrospectively obtained by Highways and that any other traffic management issues, which we understood to have been previously reported to Highways, will be re-presented once the new referral process is in place at EFDC

55.3 Councillor Purkiss reported that the Council had confirmed interest in the County Council Winter Salt Bag Scheme and that the Council would shortly be taking delivery of its free allocation of 25 kg sacks of salt. The Scheme would be discussed by the Highways and Environment Committee in greater detail at their forthcoming Committee Meeting to be held on 5th October

56. Community Liaison Committee

56.1 Councillor Sowerby reported that the Theydon Seniors afternoon tea event held on Friday 23rd September had been successful and that the Loughton Ladies Choir had promised to come back and entertain again next year

56.2 Councillor Sowerby also reported that the Community Liaison Committee are discussing the feasibility of a Village 'Street Party' in commemoration of the Queens Diamond Jubilee but before any plans are progressed enquiries will be made as to whether any other community events are being planned

- 56.3 Councillor Berry reported that plans for the proposed Christmas Market to be held on 1st December are proceeding and that there is a lot of interest from local shops and businesses. The Council has made application to Essex County Council for a Temporary Road Closure Order and the outcome is presently awaited. Letters have been sent to affected residents in The Heights, Buxton Road and Forest Drive and to date there has been no negative feedback (the closing date for any responses being 30th September.) A letter is to be sent to all the village shop-owners with the details of the event and asking them to join in the Council's festive 'Best Dressed Window Competition'. Once the Council has received approval of the Temporary Road Closure Application members of the Committee will visit all Shop-Keepers and other interested local businesses to seek their support for the event.

Given the plans for the Christmas Market there will be no 'Christmas Tree Lighting' event this year but members of the Village Association intend to decorate the tree at the Village Hall as usual.

Councillor Sowerby reported that the Committee thought favourably of donating proceeds to Macmillan Cancer Support, although the local branch of the Alzheimer's Association was another alternative. This would be discussed and agreed by the Committee and appropriate arrangements would then be made with the chosen Charity and for a Street Collection Licence.

Resolved:

That the Council agrees to delegate organisation of the proposed Christmas Community Market and all related matters to the Community Liaison Committee

Proposed by: Councillor Vincent.

Seconded by: Councillor Jones

Carried unanimously

- 56.4 Councillor Jones reminded all Councillors that the Service of Remembrance will be held on 13th November at St. Mary's Church and that she would be laying a Poppy Wreath on behalf of the Parish Council. Councillor Hannibal will read the names of the fallen.
- 56.5 Councillor Jones offered congratulations to Caroline Law who has recently been appointed Treasurer and District Coordinator of the newly established Neighbourhood Watch Steering Association and also to Bob Browning who has been appointed as a member of the Association.

57. Finance and General Purposes Committee

- 57.1 Agenda Item 6, The RFO's Report, having been postponed, was heard. The audit for 2010.11 had not been completed as at the date of the Report. On 7th September the Auditor had pointed out a possible error in the note relating to the outstanding PWLB debt. On 9 September the RFO had confirmed that an error had been made and that the balance of debt outstanding should have been £645,605.73 and not £637,712, as submitted. Since then nothing has been heard.

57.2 The RFO had reminded all Committees and the Parish Clerk to consider their revised budgets for 2011.12 and budget requests for 2012.13 and in particular (a) any non-recurring/ project-related budgets for both 2011.12 and 2012.13 and (b) any recurring budgets where the provision for 2011.12 is now considered to be either insufficient or excessive. There are meetings of the F&GP Committee scheduled for 12 October and 23 November. The RFO hopes to be able to report on the half-year results for 2011.12 to the 12 October meeting and a first draft of the budget at the 23 November meeting. He will circulate the half-year results with the original budgets for 2011.12 to all Council members for use in their various Committees. The precept must be set by the end of January.

57.3 Councillor Philip noted that Council payments since the meeting on 28th July were listed in Appendix 3, with the powers under which payment decisions were made listed underneath. Councillor Philip reported that payments were of £53,375 to date, there were no questions raised.

Resolved:

To approve the payments as listed in Appendix 3

Proposed by: Councillor Philip

Seconded by: Councillor Jones

Carried Unanimously

57.4 Councillor Philip reported that a request had been received from the British Legion for a donation in lieu of the provision of a poppy wreath for Remembrance Day, and that this has been the custom of the Parish Council. The Clerk noted that the Council had made a donation of £100 in 2010

Resolved:

To make a donation of £100 to the Royal British Legion in respect of the provision of a poppy wreath to be laid by the Chairman of the Council at the War Memorial during the Remembrance Day Service 2011

Proposed by: Councillor Philip

Seconded by: Councillor Jones

Agreed unanimously

58. Community and Youth Centre

58.1 The Clerk had circulated a Report on Agenda Item 10 within her Clerk's Report and had also referred Councillors to her earlier Report which had been circulated to all Councillors in readiness for the Council Meeting held on 30th June. Councillors also now had the benefit of the further advice from NALC following the referral of certain issues by the RFO. The Clerk had also received an up to date list of Trustees from Theydon Bois Community and Youth Trust (TBCAYT) and this had also been circulated to all Councillors.

Councillor Jones reported that the Board of TBCAYT was now fully formed as former Councillors Mr John Padfield and Mr John Eaton had taken up their appointments as the Council nominees to TBCAYT. Councillor Jones expressed the Council's thanks to all the TBCAYT members including the Council's newly appointed nominees for their time and energy and also reported that she and

Councillor Hannibal had recently met with the Council's nominee Trustees to provide them with the background information.

- 58.2 Councillor Jones reminded the Council that the letter (dated 6th May) received from TBCAYT seeking a transfer of the freehold had been discussed at length during the Council meeting held on 30th July. However pending the RFO receiving further advice and being satisfied as to same it had not been possible for the matter to be concluded. This being the first Council meeting after the RFO had received said relevant advice (which had been circulated to all Councillors) it was now necessary to consider the matter further. Discussions ensued and the Clerk reminded Council Members of their previous decision as to the ownership structure which had followed the provision of expert advice from Bates Wells and Braithwaite and various options had then been considered. This decision had been made at the Council Meeting held on 29th April 2010 all Councillors having been provided with a copy of the Advice Note from BWB beforehand

Proposed:

For the time being to continue following option A in relation to the arrangements for the land and property as set out in the Advice Note received from Bates Wells Braithwaite until such time as, following discussion, there is another proposal raised and approved. Also that the Clerk should note a future meeting should be arranged between Trustees and Council Members

**Proposed by: Councillor Philip
Seconded by: Councillor Hannibal**

All in favour save for Councillors Purkiss, Vincent and Gooch who abstained. Councillor Purkiss wished to note that he thought there was insufficient discussion prior to the proposal being made. Councillor Jones pointed out that it had been open to Councillor Purkiss to vote against the motion.

- 58.3 It was noted that all Councillors had received a copy of correspondence between the Clerk and the Trust relating to insurance arrangements and no comments were made on this.
- 58.4 Councillor Jones reported that following the Council decision at the Meeting held in May concerns had been expressed as to the style of the proposed fencing and revised estimates are now awaited for an alternative design. It had been necessary to seek an extension of time from one of the grant funders (Essex Environment Trust) which had now been agreed subject to sight of copies of the three revised estimates together with a revised timetable for the work and these matters were in hand.

59. Cemetery Committee

- 59.1 Councillor Purkiss reported that the Council's income from the Cemetery was ahead of budget. The Committee had been discussing the renewal of plot leases given that the earliest 50 year leases would start to become due for renewal shortly.
- 59.2 Councillor Purkiss reported that a position had been decided upon for the Bray family Memorial Bench purchased in memory of former resident Kenny Bray. He also reported that the northern boundary hedge was due to be cut shortly.

- 59.3 Councillor Purkiss reported that a revised offer had recently been received from the Woodland Trust offering to sell an amended parcel of land adjoining the existing Cemetery. The Clerk's Report had provided Councillors with an update on the matter and with the relevant information

Resolved:

That the Council accepts the revised offer for the purchase of additional land to extend the Cemetery at a price of £10,000 and all as set out in the letter from the Woodland Trust dated 23rd August 2011. It was agreed that subject to planning permission being granted for change of use of the additional land to proceed with the purchase of the land. It was also agreed that the drafting and submission of the said planning application be delegated to Councillors Jones, Hammond and the Clerk.

Councillor Jones having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the next aspect of the Agenda Item she left the room and took no part in either the discussions or voting on the matter.

Resolved:

That the Council accepts the estimate of Foskett Marr Gadsby & Head LLP (as previously circulated) and agrees to instruct the said firm to act for the Council in the purchase

Proposed by: Councillor Purkiss

Seconded by: Councillor Hannibal

Carried Unanimously

60. Reports from Representatives

- 60.1 Health - Councillor Howard reported that there had been a positive outcome following the earlier meeting with the Managing Partner of the Limes concerning operational matters at the Branch Surgery. In particular website information had been improved. It was also noted that online test results and repeat prescriptions were now available, and that a service of text message appointment reminders was also available. Councillor Howard also reported that the over 65's flu vaccine was now available. Councillor Howard expressed the view that with the demise of the West Essex PCT the preferred bidder for the provider of community services such as the elderly and community nursing appears to be the South Essex Partnership Trust, based in Basildon and that an opportunity had been lost to lace all elderly services under one umbrella for example the local acute unit at PAH with its links to St Margaret's Hospital. Concerns about the proposal for PAH to make savings of some £39m were also noted.
- 60.2 Councillor Purkiss reported that he had recently attended a Meeting of the Local Council Liaison Committee and that various matters had been discussed including the proposed National Planning Policy Framework and the proposed Locality Boards.
- 60.3 Councillor Wood reported that the local 541 Bus now runs directly to PAH. The next Meeting of the Passenger Transport Representatives was due to take place in November and there may be further news after that.

61. Any other Urgent Business for report (without decision)

- 61.1 Councillor Purkiss reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and that he wished to query the reference made by the Chairman of that Committee to the overspending of the Allotments budget. Councillor Philip explained that he had intended refer to a concern that if spending continued at current rates then the relevant budget would be overspent and may require review by the Highways and Environment Committee.
- 61.2 Councillor Philip reported that the EFDC Planning Scrutiny Panel were due to meet on 3rd October to discuss the draft National Planning Policy Framework and that this meeting would be open to the public
- 61.3 Councillor Howard raised the possibility of an application to the ECC Big Society Fund, in relation to the upgrade of the village CCTV system. The Clerk noted that the deadline for submission of Expressions of Interest to the Fund was 31st October and for full applications 30th November. Councillor Vincent noted that the Council was waiting for quotes for the project. Research will be undertaken prior to the October Council Meeting as to the feasibility of such a bid.

62. Public Participation session – Open forum for members of the public to voice their views or make suggestions on any other Council Business or matters of local importance

- 62.1 A resident noted that PCT nurses were independent of Macmillan Cancer Support and urged the Council to check that any cheque written to donate charitable funds raised at the Christmas market would reach the intended recipient.
- 62.2 Caroline Law of the Neighbourhood Watch ('NHW') steering group reported that they were promoting the NHW throughout the district in the pockets that were without a NHW group. She also reported that once the group had been voted in there would be funds of up to £750 available for the Epping Forest District. However due to other budget cuts, apart from some stickers and other promotional items, the only source of information was to be the internet, explaining NHW's apparent lack of promotion.
- 62.3 A resident questioned whether the phrasing "Community Centre and all land" included the Scout Hut and received confirmation.

63. Matters excluding Public and Press:

Persuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act it is resolved that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item of business:

Staff Matters: Minute Secretary - Update

Parish Council Meeting 29th September, 2011 Clerks Report

Agenda Item 4 Clerk's Correspondence

I would like to report the following items of correspondence which are available in a folder on the desk to the rear of the hall for anyone who wishes to read them after the meeting:

1. Draft (unapproved) minutes of the Highways and Environment Committee Meeting held on 14th July, 2011 (previously circulated to all Councillors)
2. Draft (unapproved) minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 28th July (previously circulated to all Councillors)
3. Draft (unapproved) minutes of the Community Liaison Committee Meeting held on 2nd June 2011 (previously circulated to all Councillors)
4. Draft (unapproved) minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting held on 11th August, 2011 (previously circulated to all Councillors)
5. Essex County Council's ' Making the Links' Bulletins for August, September and October 2011
6. Essex Association of Local Council's (EALC) Monthly Updates for July, August and September
7. EALC Briefing on National Planning Policy Framework and draft responses to consultation
8. Essex Police Reform – The Future of Operational Policing in Essex
9. Briefing paper from Chief Constable of Essex, Jim Barker-McCardle regarding the future of Police Station front counter services
10. Briefing from Chief Superintendent Glenn Caton re 'Pathfinder' process
11. Invitation to Epping Forest CAB AGM on 6th October 2011
12. Invitation to Voluntary Action Epping Forest AGM on Tuesday 4th October 2011
13. Essex Watch/Neighbourhood Watch Bulletin re new Epping Forest Neighbourhood Watch Committee note Caroline Law has been appointed Treasurer and District Coordinator and resident Bob Browning is a member of the Committee
14. National Association Briefing on the Future of the Standards Board received via EALC

15. Invitation from Essex County Council to participate in 2011/12 Winter Salt Bag Scheme. Reply from Council confirming intention to participate to be discussed at forthcoming Highways and Environment Committee Meeting
16. Invitation to Epping Forest District Museum 30 Year Anniversary Celebration to be held on 7th October from 7pm until 9pm
17. Invitation to Epping Forest District Branch of EALC to be held on 5th October at 8pm
18. Agenda for Local Council's Liaison Committee Meeting to be held on 3rd November at 7.30pm at the Civic Offices
19. Letter requesting donation from Essex Air Ambulance
20. Letter from Essex County Council Highways with apology for delay in responding to the issues raised on outstanding TRO issues and offering a meeting (see later agenda item)
21. Letter from The Limes Medical Centre dated 4th August with update on addressing concerns raised by the Parish Council
22. EFDC Citizen of the Year Awards 2012- Invitation of nominations to be submitted by 25.11.2011
23. Letter from Councillor Sheila Jackman (Chairman of Epping Forest branch of the Epping Forest Branch of EALC) urging Parishes to become involved in the Branch activities.
24. Launch of RCCE Community Volunteers Scheme. Deadline 7.10.2011
25. City of London's Forest Focus Magazine for autumn 2011 with articles on the Deer Sanctuary and Purlieu Bank of relevance to Theydon Bois
26. Letter from Essex County Council confirming the Planning Inspector's decision to dismiss the appeal against ECC's original decision not to grant an application that the access leading from Loughton Lane up past the Youth Club to the Cricket Club should be added to the definitive map as a byway open to all traffic.

Agenda Item 5 Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 28.7.2011

The draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 28th July have already been circulated. The August Meeting was cancelled.

Agenda Item 6 Finance and General Purposes Committee

Greville has already circulated his report and the list of payments for approval. With reference to Agenda Item 6.4, for your reference the Council made a donation of £100 to the Royal British Legion last year.

Agenda Item 10 Community and Youth Centre

10.1 I have received an email from Roger Timms with the up to date list of TBCAYT Trustees – a copy is attached.

10.2 You have of course already seen this letter from the Trust but I am attaching a further copy for ease of reference. You will recall that it was discussed at the Council Meeting held on 30th June but that the relevant Agenda Items on transferring ownership of the building or granting a lease and if so the terms of that lease were postponed pending receipt of further advice from NALC on accounting concerns raised by the RFO. That advice has subsequently been received and has been circulated. You are asked to consider the request to transfer the building to the Trust as outlined in the Trust's letter but not upon any leasing arrangement at this meeting. I circulated a comprehensive report for the June Meeting and I would refer you to that for the points which I raised on the matter.

As Clerk I am very keen and concerned that the long term ownership of the Community Centre be resolved and strongly recommend that a clear way forward is agreed upon at this meeting.

10.3 Following the last meeting I received an email from Roy Newland as Chair of TBCAYT in relation to the concern which had been raised upon the suitability of the insurance arrangements for the Community and Youth Centre. A copy appears in my report.

10.4 At the Council Meeting in May it was resolved as follows:

Resolved:

That the Council do proceed with the first phase of the fencing project at the Community and Youth Centre in accordance with the estimate supplied by BPH Fencing dated 18th May, 2011. In making this resolution it is noted that:

- 1. The fencing project is to be completed on a phased basis owing to a complication which has arisen in connection with the boundary adjacent to a property in Red Oaks Mead;**
- 2. The cost of this first phase of the fencing project amounts to £6451.56;**
- 3. As the value of the work exceeds £1000 it is noted that the Council's Financial Standing Orders requires that three estimates be obtained. Three estimates were obtained for the purposes of the original grant applications and these have been previously circulated; and**
- 4. The cost of this project to be financed by the Grants offered by Essex Environment Trust (total grant £3980) and the Community Initiatives Fund (total grant £5000). The terms and conditions attached to the Grants having been noted.**

Proposed: Councillor Philip Seconded: Councillor Vincent Carried unanimously

However, after that decision was made concerns were expressed by members of the public with regard to the type of fencing to be used and Councillor Hammond presently awaits a revised estimate from the contractor for a less 'urban' style of fencing. It has been necessary to seek an extension of time from one of the funding bodies (Essex Environment Trust) which they have agreed to subject to sight of copies of the competitive quotes indicating the one the Council's wishes to accept together with a revised timetable for the work.

Agenda Item 11.3 Cemetery Committee

I attach latest exchange of correspondence with the Woodland Trust. I would remind you of the resolution which was passed at the Council Meeting held on 26th May as follows:

Resolution:

That the Council agrees to accept the offer of the purchase of additional land for an extension to the Cemetery as set out in the letter from the Woodland Trust dated 18th May 2011 and to proceed with the purchase of the land in principle subject to seeking confirmation from the kind donor of the purchase monies that his offer remains and subject to planning permission being granted for change of use of the land.

The Clerk will obtain three conveyancing estimates for the purchase and a planning application for change of use will be prepared and submitted, the advice of EFDC having been first obtained. The offer from the Woodland Trust as set out in their letter of 18th May will be acknowledged and confirmation obtained that the price of £10,000 is inclusive of the cost to divert the path. The offer of indemnity insurance in respect of the covenants relating to the title of the land was noted and it was agreed to accept said offer of insurance at the appropriate time.

That the Council will deal with the purchase of the land but that it is agreed to delegate to the Cemetery Committee all decisions in matters relating to the bringing into use of the extended area, including deciding upon whether the additional area should be consecrated or unconsecrated, whether the Council will offer green burials and obtaining estimates for hedging and fencing the boundaries.

Proposed by: Councillor Hammond

Seconded by: Councillor Vincent

Carried unanimously

You need to resolve to proceed with the purchase on the basis of this latest plan and offer of purchase as set out in the Woodland Trust's letter of 23rd August and to instruct solicitors to act for the Council in connection with the purchase.

I have in fact obtained one conveyancing estimate (rather than the three as previously agreed) from Mr John Worby at Foskett Marr Gadsby & Head LLP and my recommendation is that the Council instructs Mr Worby who has knowledge of the matter, the necessary expertise and the benefit of past dealings with the Council. The estimate is for £950 plus vat and disbursements which I consider to be very reasonable indeed. There is an additional matter involving the release of a restriction on the title for which there will be some additional legal fees and at present it is not

possible for an estimate to be obtained. In my opinion however it is unlikely however that the additional fees will exceed £400 plus vat.

I have had an exchange of correspondence with the kind donor of the purchase monies (who wishes to remain anonymous) and he has confirmed that the offer of £10000 still stands solely to purchase the land with the council to be responsible for all costs. The offer remains open for two years from 5.9.2011 as the Donor is keen to see the matter concluded as soon as is possible. I see no reason why the purchase should not in fact be completed within six months provided no legal or planning issues arise.

As previously advised there is a need to submit a planning application for change of use. I have had a preliminary discussion with a Planning Officer (Dominic Duffin) which was positive. I hope (time permitting) to prepare a draft planning application for approval tomorrow and this will follow. There will be a fee payable to the District Council of £335 but it is my understanding that a 50% exemption may be available to Parish Councils and I will confirm with a Planning Officer.

Sally Crone, Parish Clerk