

COLD NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 JUNE 2005, in the Committee Room of the Village Hall

THOSE PRESENT:

Councillors:

Mrs. A Allen
Mr. J Archer
Mrs. S Garnham (Chairman)
Mrs. G Gold
Mr. P Wakeling

In attendance: Mrs. M Bryant (Parish Clerk) and Mrs. Maria Dyer (new Parish Clerk)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE had been received from Prof. Barclay and Mr. C Litscher, and also from Mr. P Wakeling, who did attend but whose arrival had been delayed.

98. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND THE ORDINARY MEETING** of the Parish Council held on Thursday 5 May 2005 – approved and signed accordingly.

FINANCE

Payments – the following invoices were approved, and cheques signed accordingly.

99. Mrs M Bryant – office expenses/supplies from 29 April 2005 to 17 May 2005: £15.62 (£14.06 net). It was noted that no call charges had been included. These will be added on next time. Cheque No. 256.

ACTION CLERK

100. WPP Architects – for provision of plans for Annual Parish Meeting – 6 no. colour prints @ £2.50, BH time 0.5hr x £45/hr £22.50, postage £2.15: Total £39.65 net, £46.59 gross. Cheque No. 257.

101. Bradley Faulkner – grass cutting as circled on enclosed quote: Total £145 net, £170.38 gross. Cheque No. 258.

102. E-on Energy – street lighting energy during May (only payable if direct debit not sorted). Cheque No. 259.

103. Mrs. M Bryant – paid to Newsquest (Essex) Ltd – for press advertisement for Village Caretaker: £65.21 (£55.50 net). Cheque No. 260.

104. BT – Village Hall phone, bill dated 12 May 2005: £36.54 (£31.10 net). Cheque No. 261.

105. As Minute 65 of 5.5.05 – “*Approved for ordering ... from ACRE – for their Information Sheet No. 4, on the subject of ‘Funding from Charitable Trusts for Village Halls and Community Centres’ as Minute No. 4 of 17.4.05. The cost will be £4.00 + £1.00 p & p.*” Cheque No. 262.

106. **Audit Return and Accounts for year ending 31 March 2005**

Mrs. Bryant reported that the Internal Auditor had wanted to have one more creditor added to the list, plus one prepayment, which made a difference to the Annual Return that had been provided to members. Therefore a new form is needed from the External Auditor, which will need to be approved at the July meeting.

ACTION CLERK

107. **Gratuity accumulated to M J Bryant**

A letter from the Internal Auditor had been copied to Members, confirming the accumulation of Mrs. Bryant's gratuity, to be the same figure as shown under “Earmarked Reserves” on the balance sheet on the Parish Council's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2005. For further accountability, the following had also been copied to Members: - Copy of the clerk's letter to Internal Auditor dated 18 May 2005, plus the original spreadsheet (mentioned under [D] in that letter). These papers are appended to the file copy of these minutes, for added accountability prior to Mrs. Bryant's retirement.

108. **Financial Statement**

Cash at Bank as at 30 April 2005: -

Abbey	£23,464.27 (Precept had just been added – was then transferred across)
Standard Life instant	£2,050.69
Standard Life Notice	£5,147.05
Total	<u>£30,662.22</u>

109. **Annual Review of Parish Council's Risk Assessment** (as required by Audit Regulations)

The Parish Council's Risk Assessment had been copied to members. The Parish Council noted this document, and confirmed that the proposals contained therein meet the need for Risk Assessment. Areas of potential risk to be monitored and consequent action are as follows:

- Contracts – Council and clerk to check wording carefully.
- Contracts – consider including penalties for late completion.
- Contracts – consider including wording regarding safety of site whilst works are in progress, and fencing off to prevent access.
- Contracts – consider wording to indicate that the completed project must not only be fit for purpose, but also must not pose any safety problems to users or bystanders
- All capital expenditure – in particular close checking of specifications and guarantees. For larger contracts, professional advisers and/or project management should be used (as had been done for the provision of stairs/loft storage for the Village Hall). The Parish Council agreed that, for larger contracts involving a significant sum of capital expenditure, the Parish Council should each time consider areas of risk as they relate to such individual contracts, and one or two councillors should be nominated to investigate each project separately, and advise the Council accordingly on action to be taken to minimise risk.
- Insurance Schedule – reviewed by the Council annually.
- Play equipment – regular inspections (annual inspection also provides written risk assessment).
- Annual budgeting for Precept – contingency sum built in.
- Land in front of Village Hall – note problem with white asbestos in this land – this is well documented in the Parish Council's file entitled "ASBESTOS in land in front of Village Hall". In the long term, the affected area should be closely monitored to ensure that there is no change, i.e. that there is no white asbestos apparent on the surface. HSE advice is that contractors should assure the Parish Council in writing by way of a method statement of the appropriate control measures they will take.

110. **Training for new Clerk**

Details of training sessions (including costs) had been copied to members and to Mrs. Dyer, who will come back to the Parish Council when she has finalised which she wishes to/is able to attend.

111. **New Clerk – confirmation of salary/allowance for use of home as an office, and other conditions, e.g. relating to the overlap period between outgoing and incoming clerk.**

The Parish Council confirmed that: -

- Mrs. Maria Dyer's employment as the new Clerk/RFO to the Parish Council commences on 1st June 2005.
- The outgoing Clerk, Mrs. Mary Bryant, will also be employed throughout June, for the purposes of training and handover.
- Both Mrs. Dyer and Mrs. Bryant will receive their respective full pay for that month.
- Starting salary for Mrs. Dyer will be on SCP18.
- From 15 June all correspondence, e-mails, phone calls and faxes will be directed to Mrs. Dyer.
- Expenses - It was noted that historically (i.e. prior to Mrs. Bryant's employment), the clerk has received cost of line rental as well as cost of phone calls as part of her expenses. It would therefore make no difference to the cost to the Parish Council if a separate telephone line were paid for by the Parish Council for Parish Council business. Mrs. Dyer will consider this.
- The allowance paid to the clerk for use of home as an office/personal computer will remain the same.

Mrs. Bryant finishes her employment at the end of June, but will be available later in July to help with the preparations/reports for the July meeting, and will attend that meeting if necessary. She stated that she is also happy to give help or advice subsequent to that.

112. **Contract of Employment for the new Clerk**

Mrs. Bryant had noted that her contract is very out of date, and that a new model contract for parish clerks has recently been agreed between NALC and SLCC. She was asked to provide the Chairman with an electronic copy of this, so that it can be adapted for the new clerk.

ACTION CLERK

113. **VILLAGE CARETAKER** – consideration of applications

Five applications had been received. It was agreed that they should all be invited to attend for interview – Mrs. Garnham and Mr. Litscher agreed to carry out the interviews.

ACTION CLERK/Mrs. GARNHAM/ Mr. LITSCHER

It was noted that the successful applicant needs to arrange public liability insurance (Mrs. Bryant can supply details). Those who had enquired had been advised that this has been a self-employed job. For confirmation of this, members had been provided with a checklist that the clerk had completed for the Village Caretaker's work.

PLANNING

114. **Maldon District Council Decisions**

A detailed list had been copied to members, which is summarised below.

TPO/MAL/05/00330 Cold Norton
Fell Oak tree
19 Station Crescent Cold Norton Essex CM3 6HY
Graham Cornell. **REFUSED**

FUL/MAL/05/00264 Cold Norton
Change of use of unit for ancillary storage in connection with the operations of the adjacent unit for sales and distribution of electronic components
Great Canney Farm Hackmans Lane Purleigh Maldon
Blackwater Property Development Ltd. **APPROVED**

115. **Planning Applications received by the Parish Council** – The following were considered, and responses were as indicated: -

- **FUL/MAL/05/00468. Directa Ltd, Latchingdon Road.** Directa (UK) Ltd. Single storey extension for kitchen. Weekly List dated 13.5.05.

Plans not available at the meeting – to be considered at another meeting.

ACTION CLERK

- **FUL/MAL/05/00471. St Andrews Station Road.** Mr & Mrs A Ashworth. Reconstruction of existing boundary wall and gateways to Station Road frontage. Weekly List dated 13.5.05

Plans not available - to be considered at another meeting.

ACTION CLERK

- **FUL/MAL/05/00525. Norton Hall Farm,** St Stephens Road. D Bardwell. Erect stables/live stock building with food store. Weekly List dated 19.5.05.

“Cold Norton Parish Council considers that the proposed development contained in the above application would not be harmful, and recommends that Maldon District Council should approve the application. However, the Parish Council asks that you note its following points: -

- *This rural site is very sensitive visually, and so the materials used should be approved accordingly.*
- *There is concern that the proposed roof is “composite profiled sheeting”: - tiles or slates would be more appropriate.*
- *The proposed development should not look like an industrial building – it should have the appearance of a traditional barn.*
- *There is concern about any proliferation of development here. This proposed development appears to be of an agricultural nature, and the Parish Council is resolute in its view that no future residential development of this area should be permitted.”*

- **AGRPN/MAL/05/00534. Land Off Burnham Avenue.** Blackwater Baling. Submission of details relating to the siting, design and external appearance of a storage barn for straw and hay. Weekly List dated 19.5.05. Plans not available.

Response: The revised location was approved, but the Parish Council requested that the District Council considers and approves the materials, which should be of a visually rural appearance.

ADDENDUM: - Due to new information, this application was reconsidered at a meeting held on Monday 6 June, and the final response was sent from that meeting.

- **FUL/MAL/05/00501. 1 Newport Avenue.** N Brown. Replacement dwelling.

“Cold Norton Parish Council objects to the proposals contained in the above planning application, and recommends that the District Council should REFUSE CONSENT. Reasons are as follows: -

- *The proposed development is outside of the development boundary.*
- *The proposed building would be a significantly increased mass over the existing property.*
- *The proposed development would be intrusive (particularly since there are only bungalows in that area).”*

116. **Victoria Road buffer strip:** - A copy letter dated 30.05.05, which had been sent to the Ombudsman by D A & K Wellum of Victoria Road had been copied to members and was noted, with the comment that the Parish Council is now unable to take further action on this matter.

117. It was reported that a **new stable building** had been observed – a brick-built structure – visible from a Cold Norton right of way but may just be in the parish of Purleigh. A planning consent for it had not been noticed, and therefore this enquiry is to be made. The building is visible when walking Footpath 20 – green lane, second field.

ACTION CLERK

HIGHWAYS AND ROAD SAFETY

118. **Drain Covers in Latchingdon Road**

From the May meeting, the following reports had been passed to Mr. Venables of County Council:

- A complaint from a motorcyclist that a drain at the edge of the road had caused damage to his vehicle near to Palepit Farm.
- There is a raised drain cover in the middle of Latchingdon Road, near to Nos. 14-16 Latchingdon Road.

Mr. Venables had confirmed that he will chase this up and will report back

119. **Footway to Country Produce/Post Office** – to note report

As required, the clerk had written to Mr. D Carter of Palepit Farm to ask whether he can cut back vegetation and hedgerow on his land adjacent to the footway west of Country Produce, and she had also spoken to Mr. Tony Brennan similarly. (This is for Mr. Portello’s land adjacent to Latchingdon Road near to Station Road, which is used by Mr. Brennan). It was noted that Mr. Brennan had kindly done this clearance – a letter of thanks is to be sent.

ACTION CLERK

Information had been e-mailed to Mr. Rob Venables of County Council for info. Mr. Venables had replied *“Should be done this financial year. I know that’s the same story as last financial year, but I might try and get it done at the same side as the resurfacing.”* (i.e. the resurfacing mentioned in Minute No. 118 above).

From a later conversation with Mr. Venables, it had transpired that the resurfacing would have to be done by September (because if much after that, then the temperatures go down too low for the surfacing material). This would be too late to be effective for cutting back of hedges along that narrow footway, albeit Mr. Venables had said that, except for safety reasons, County Council will not cut back hedges until after the nesting season, which he says can run from February to September. The clerk had commented that County Council has cut back this footway during that period in the past.

However, on 1st June Mrs. Bryant had walked the path to check the width. She had found that there are two areas of hedgerow encroachment – one is outside No 71 (Chantilly) Latchingdon Road, and the other is on the footway to the immediate east of the right of way by the bridge (De Laches’ land). Accordingly she had written to both landowners, and had copied the letters to Mr. Venables.

120. **Palepit junction – better signage**

Mrs. Bryant had pursued a reply to her letter sent soon after the April meeting, which had asked for clarification of what are their proposals for “better warning signs”. This refers to the Parish Council’s concern about danger caused by the lack of visibility when vehicles exit from Stephens Road onto Fambridge Road. Also the Parish Council had suggested that County Council could investigate better management of the sight plays at that junction by keeping the vegetation cut back as far as possible.”

Mr. Ager (County Council) had replied that he had asked Mr. Venables to look at the hedges, and that his suggestion of improvement to the signing is purely to provide better new signs (perhaps with yellow or grey

backing boards and a distance) for the St Stephens Road Junction, and providing give way signing in St Stephens Road.”

Noted. Monitor County Council action on this.

ACTION CLERK

121. **Rettendon Turnpike**

Further to Minute No 77 of 5 May 2005 meeting: -

Mrs. Bryant had written to County Council to seek confirmation that the traffic lights at the Rettendon Roundabout will remain off permanently (this having brought about a great improvement in traffic flows). It had also been noted that the second set of traffic lights, on the road towards Wickford from that roundabout serve very little purpose, except in the rush hour, and therefore the Parish Council had suggested that a vehicle activation scheme could be used for these lights (i.e. the slip road from the A130 to the left turn towards the Turnpike).

Mr. Venables had replied that this is not in the Maldon area – he is trying to track down who makes the decisions on this (it falls under the Chelmsford District). He will pass on the details when available. Monitor receipt of response.

ACTION CLERK

122. **Annual Highways Liaison meeting**

Further to Minute No 81 of 5 May 2005: - The Annual Highways Liaison meeting is to be organised after 7th July. Mrs. Allen, Mr. Archer, Prof. Barclay, and new clerk Mrs. Dyer will attend. Liaise with Prof. Barclay and Mr. Venables.

ACTION CLERK

123. **Pedestrian Crossing**

Mr. Archer reported that the zebra crossing will be started on 4 July 2005.

Addendum – A Public Notice was subsequently received from County Council indicating the location of crossing:

“The centre of the crossing will be at a point approximately 48 metres east of its junction with Cherry Blossom Lane. Anyone who wishes to make representations on the above proposal as detailed should send them to the undersigned by 01 July 2005. Philip Thomson, Head of Law and Administration, County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1LX.”

124. **Surface Water at the south end of Hagg Hill**

There is surface water in this location, near to the pumping station. Members felt that the water is too much to be just water coming from the adjacent fields. This is to be discussed with Anglian Water/County Council.

ACTION CLERK

VILLAGE HALL - REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

125. Mrs. Dyer reported on the last Village Hall Management Committee meeting, saying that most discussions had been on the subject of fundraising. Appointing a Village Hall Clerk is an outstanding task. A contract had been mentioned, which Mrs. Dyer felt should not be needed if self-employed. Maintenance issues had been discussed, but there had been nothing major. Next Village Hall Management Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 8 June.

Mrs. Allen noted that Anglia TV have publicised an offer of £50,000 community grant funding. Enquiries are to be made.

ACTION CLERK

126. **Village Hall project**

Date of the next Village Hall Project meeting was agreed as Thursday 14th July. Appropriate arrangements are to be made.

As required (Minute No. 4) a second copy of Keith Derry's book “The Key to Successful Fundraising for Church and Community Projects” had been purchased. It was available at the meeting and was passed to Mrs. Garnham.

ACTION CLERK

127. **VANDALISM/POLICE MATTERS**

It was reported that the seat by the rose garden at the church has been vandalised. Mr. Cornell is to be asked to repair it.

ACTION CLERK

128. **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Archer was asked about recycling, and he replied that the new scheme (with blue boxes for paper, cardboard and tins, as well as the black boxes for paper) is going very well. However he confirmed that the revenue received does not cover the cost, and that plastic bottles cannot be recycled at present because of their size – they can be taken to the South Woodham Ferrers recycling depot.

OPEN SPACES

129. **Cowpiece Nature Reserve**

It had been reported that, as requested, advice had been sought from the Essex Wildlife Trust. A meeting on site can be arranged with their Head Warden - Neil Bedford on 01621 862972. It was agreed that this meeting should be arranged for after 22nd July, and that Mrs. Gold, Mrs. Allen and (if available) any newly appointed Village Caretaker should attend.

ACTION CLERK

Mrs. Allen reported that she and her husband had kept the newly planted oak tree watered, and that the pond is full. They had also removed litter, which evidences the fact that the area is being used. Mrs. Allen reported that the bird boxes are in a bad state, and asked about the possibility of bat boxes. It was agreed to ask about this at the site meeting with the Essex Wildlife Trust.

130. **Playing Field**

Mr. M Allen had inspected the play equipment on 10th May and on 19th May, and reported no problems. One shackle on the baby swings is a different colour, but on close inspection this had proved to be perfectly good.

131. **Village Caretaker work**

Mr. Cornell is to be asked if he could put wire netting over the footbridge.

ACTION CLERK

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

132. **Footpath along the disused railway line**

Mrs. Bryant gave a brief report on the very recent Public Inquiry. It was noted that the Inspector's report will not be received for at least a month. A letter of thanks is to be sent to County Council Legal Officer Ms Mary Morris.

ACTION CLERK

133. The following **report from Mr. Chris Brown, County Council** was noted.

Footpath 26 – Re: report from Mr. Wakeling that, in the location near to North Fambridge Hall Wood, the bridge over the ditch is in need of repair, and that the hedge badly needs cutting back. Mr. Brown had responded that he had submitted an order to contractors to repair/upgrade the bridge from a 2-plank to a 3-plank with an upper/lower handrail to one side of the bridge, cut back the entrance to the path and also replace the plastic fingerpost with a wooden one and have it pointing in the right direction (towards Barn Farm). On 19 May – Mr. Brown had confirmed that this bridge had been done. Mr. Wakeling commented that an excellent job had been done – with a new finger post, new bridge, and vegetation cut back.

Footpath 14 - Re report from Mrs. Garnham about a **fallen mature ash tree** on the footpath that runs from Latchingdon Road (near to De Laches) towards the church – was causing danger because it had fallen across the path

Mr. Brown reported on 19 May that the tree had been felled and had been stacked to one side awaiting collection. The clerk was asked to write to Mr. Brown to thank him for his prompt response.

ACTION CLERK

Footpath 24 - Mr. Brown had also noted that this right of way diagonally across the field is not marked at present. Mr. Archer reported that Mr. Lancaster is about to action this.

Footpath 20 – off Crown Road – re problem with effluent – Mr. Brown had reported that he had met up with Mr. Tony Brennan who rents the field (as the owner is uncontactable). He will be replacing the structures in this field

(removing the stiles and replacing with pedestrian self closing gates where appropriate). He has also spoken with the Environment Agency who in turn is speaking with Environmental Health at Maldon District Council.

134. The following **report from Mr. Kevin Ascott** (Ramblers' Association representative) was noted.

He had reported that the waymarker has gone, to the north of the garden beside Footpath 12 (which meets up with Footpath 13 across the golf course). He had also pointed out that the stile entering the Footpath on to the golf course at the south end of St Stephens Road (Footpath 13) is damaged and is also covered in vegetation. He had suggested it would be better to have a "slip gate", which means that pedestrians have easy access but bicycles do not. This request is to be put to Mr. Brown of County Council.

ACTION CLERK

135. **Path from Ferris Avenue**

Re: proposed claim that this path (and its extension along Station Road and Ferris Avenue) is a right of way. Mrs. Bryant had reported that some residents had agreed to complete evidence forms, but there is a need to advertise for more residents to help in this way. (Members were able to suggest some names.)

County Council (Ms Morris) had advised that the claim cannot be considered until it is the turn for Maldon within the Review of the Definitive Map – possibly not until 2014, so when that time comes the Parish Council could then again advertise for more people to complete evidence forms.

At present the clerk also needs to write to landowners, for which purpose Mr. Venables (County Council) had been asked to provide a suitable map.

ACTION CLERK

136. **Footpath 16** - it was reported that the right of way from the Lower Burnham Road running northwards is again not walkable. This has been a perennial problem, and therefore the clerk was instructed to request that County Council take urgent action and, if necessary, invoice the farmer for the work.

ACTION CLERK

Mr. Wakeling reported that all the other Cold Norton rights of way are sprayed off and walkable.

137. **COLD NORTON'S WEBSITE**

Minute 15 of 3.4.03 was noted : "Hallam Consulting – supply and set-up 2 year's web site hosting: £56.38 (£47.98 net)". Accordingly a message had been left to ask Mr. Hallam whether he wishes to continue (and if so the Parish Council needs a quote).

There are a few updates still outstanding: - I & E account needs to have the pages reversed (last shows first), April report, and March minutes

The April minutes and the May report had only very recently been sent off for inclusion. The following also need to be sent for inclusion on website: - details of Parish Council appointments from this year's AGM, plus the contact details of new clerk.

ACTION CLERK

Mrs. Bryant had asked for a reply to her e-mail to Robin Wheatcroft of County Council re the County Council transport link that does not work properly.

CORRESPONDENCE

138. Letter re the Launch of the Crouch and Roach Estuary Management Plan. Noted.
139. Essex County Council – letter re. Appointment of School Governors – states that, with the right of local councils to nominate representatives to serve on primary school governing bodies now removed, people from the local community who previously served in this capacity may be interested in being appointed by Essex County Council as its representative. The appointments to governing bodies made by the County Council are chosen from the community served by each school and, any candidate put forward by a local council can be considered for appointment by the County Council. Persons nominated do not have to be a member of Cold Norton Parish Council. The letter went on to ask that if there are any Parish Council members who would like to be nominated for appointment (of if they can recommend anyone else) then they should inform the writer (Mr. Chris Orme, Governor Services Officer). Noted.
140. Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils – next meeting 15 June 2005 at 7.30 pm. Noted.
141. **TRAFALGAR WEEKEND** – 21st 23rd October 2005 – it was noted that timings etc have not yet been advised. Advice on this is to be pursued.

ACTION CLERK

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (*Members were reminded that no decisions may lawfully be made under this agenda item - however matters may be discussed which involve exchanges of information only.*)

142. **Public payphone**, corner of Howe Green Road – it was reported that BT have been notified that both the instrument and a pane of glass have been broken. This will be repaired as soon as possible. (For future reference for clerk: Tel 0800 661 610, ref. EA26215148.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Scheduled or provisionally scheduled to year-end: - Dates scheduled are: - Wednesday 20 July, Wednesday 31 August, Wednesday 7 September (*August or September date needs consideration of change – too close*), Wednesday 5 October, Wednesday 2 November, and Wednesday 7 December.

Chairman

Date