

# **COLD NORTON PARISH COUNCIL**

## **THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 5 MAY 2005, in the Committee Room of the Village Hall**

### **THOSE PRESENT:**

#### **Councillors:**

Mrs. A Allen  
Mr. J Archer  
Prof. L Barclay  
Mrs. S Garnham  
Mrs. G Gold  
Mr. P Wakeling

**In attendance:** Mrs. M Bryant (Parish Clerk)

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** had been received from Parish Councillor Mr. C Litscher and District Councillor Mr. L Cooper

### **APPOINTMENTS OF HOLDERS OF OFFICE**

#### **42. Election of Parish Council Chairman**

43. Mrs S Garnham was elected as Chairman, having been proposed by Mr. J Archer and seconded by Prof. L Barclay. Mrs. Garnham accordingly signed the Parish Council's Declarations of Office book and also her Written Undertaking. It was noted that the Parish Council chooses to continue with the Declarations of Office book, which dates from April 1909, but the Written Undertaking is now the statutory requirement.

#### **44. Election of Parish Council Vice Chairman**

Prof. Barclay was elected as Vice Chairman, having been proposed by Mr. Archer and seconded by Mr. Wakeling.

#### **45. Finance - Confirmation of Internal Auditor, and confirmation of signatories for Parish Council cheques**

46. The existing were all approved, viz: - The Council's Internal Auditor is A.S.A.P. Office Services (Mrs Therese Stokes); Signatories are Mrs Allen, Mr Barclay, and Mr Wakeling.

#### **47. APPOINTMENT OF GROUPS and REPRESENTATIVES**

##### **48. Planning Advisory Group**

The Parish Council agreed that, since the procedure for dealing with planning consultation has been changed, there is no longer a need for this Group. (*See Minute No. 267 of 6 November 2003 – "Review of the Parish Council's Policy for responses to planning consultations".*)

49. **Playing Field Representatives** - Mr Litscher and Mr Wakeling will continue (Clerk to check this with Mr. Litscher).

50. **Cowpiece Nature Reserve Representatives** - Mrs Allen and Mrs. Gold.

51. **Parish Council Representatives on Village Hall Management Committee** – Prof. Barclay and Mrs Garnham. To date the agreement had been that the Clerk will stand in when neither of Prof. Barclay nor Mrs. Garnham could attend. When the new Clerk is appointed, a check is to be made that this is still acceptable.

**ACTION CLERK**

52. **Parish Rights of Way Representative** - Mr Wakeling

53. **Parish Council Nominee on School Board of Governors** - Mrs Allen was confirmed as the current nominee.

Chairman .....

Date .....

# COLD NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

## ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 5 MAY 2005, in the Committee Room of the Village Hall – commencing immediately after the Annual General Meeting

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** had been received from Parish Councillor Mr. C Litscher and District Councillor Mr. L Cooper. The attendance list is the same as for the Annual General Meeting.

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING** of the Parish Council held on Thursday 7 April 2005 were approved as a correct record, and signed accordingly.

### FINANCE

**Payments** – the following invoices were approved for payment.

54. Mrs M Bryant – office expenses/supplies from 27 March 2005 to 29 April 2005: £87.25 (£76.11 net). Cheque No. 244. It was noted that this invoice included ££28.80 paid to Woodleys in Maldon for photocopying (because of problems with the Parish Council's photocopier).
55. Lorraine Capp – for deliveries of publicity leaflets for Annual Parish Meeting – £33.00 – as Minute No 204 of 7.10.04. Cheque No. 2253.
56. E-on Energy – April energy charge for street lighting: £21.12 (£20.11 net). Cheque No. 252.
57. Essex Association of Local Councils – annual subscription: £205.80. Cheque No. 245.
58. Impact Council accounts software – to renewal of annual telephone support, free examination of accounts, and free upgrades: £55.00. Cheque No. 246.
59. Essex Association of Local Councils – attendance at “The New Local Government Conditions of Service/Salary Scale Briefing”: £10.00. Cheque No. 247.
60. Allianz Cornhill – annual insurance premium: £910.00. Cheque No. 248. (The Clerk had reported that for the second year running this payment has exceeded budget – £814.26 had been the previous year, and £839 had been budgeted for this year. This increase is 11.76%.)
61. Winstonmead – 10 reams of 80 gsm copier paper @ £1.60/ream, plus 2 black cartridges at £16.99 net each. Total £58.72 (£48.98 net). Cheque No. 249. It was noted that 5 reams were used in payment to Essex Carpenters Ltd for printing need for the Annual Parish Meeting publicity sheets, since the Parish Council's photocopier had developed a fault.
62. Cold Norton Parochial Church Council – for refreshments served at Annual Parish Meeting: £25.00. Cheque No. 254.
63. Mr. Peter How – annual charge for gardening at Green Trees Avenue – grassed area to west of junction with Latchingdon Road: £30.00. Cheque No. 255.
64. Mr. K Harmer – inscription/painting of scroll: £35.00. Cheque No. 250.
65. **Approved for ordering** (i.e. no cheque made out yet) - 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.
66. **Parish Council's Photocopier** – the Parish Council noted that there are presently problems with this machine, and the Clerk had been advised that it is too old to be worthy of repair. It was agreed that consideration should be given to a replacement after the appointment of the new Clerk.
67. **Financial Statement**

It was noted that the £1,000 grant cheque from the County Council – as Minute No. 13 – had been received and banked. Decision will be needed on how to spend this after appointment of the new clerk. There is a questionnaire to be completed when a decision made on how the money is to be spent.

The Precept of £21,000 was due to be paid into the Parish Council's bank account on 1st May.

The Parish Council's Accounts for year ended 31 March 2005 – the internal audit had been booked with ASAP Office Services on 17 May. These accounts will then be presented to the June Parish Council meeting. The annual Audit Return has been received from Lubbock Fine, and must be completed and returned by 30th June.

**ACTION CLERK**

**Balances at bank as at 31 March 2005** (being the latest statement received): -

Standard Life	£2,050.69
Abbey	£2,142.22
Standard Life Notice	£5,147.05
TOTAL AT YEAR END	<b><u>£9,399.96</u></b>

68. **Quarterly Grants Schedule**

The following list of applications were considered, that had been deferred from the April meeting: -

The Ramblers Association, County Mediation Ltd, The Teddy Charity, Saint FM, and Interact.

The Parish Council approved payment of £50 to Saint FM, and £20 to Interact. The Clerk is to check that County Mediation does still exist.

**ACTION CLERK**

69. **Outstanding invoices from Maldon District Council**

Further to Minute 423 of 3.3.05: - *"If invoices not received by year-end, the clerk is to confirm her earlier letter (that outstanding amounts will be written out of the Parish Council's accounts)": -*

The Clerk reported that 3 of the invoices listed had been received, and two had not been received. Therefore the letter had been sent accordingly, and the outstanding amounts had been written out of the Parish Council's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004, i.e.: -

Allotment Tenancy 2003	£100.00
Allotment Tenancy 2004	£100.00

**PLANNING**

70. **Maldon District Council Decisions**

A list of the decision received since the last Parish Council meeting had been distributed to members. The following is a summary of that list.

**AGR/MAL/05/00335 Cold Norton**  
Proposed storage barn for straw and hay  
Land Off Burnham Avenue Cold Norton Essex  
Blackwater Baling  
**PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED**

**FUL/MAL/05/00245 Cold Norton**  
Formation of dormers to provide room in roof space  
14 Howe Green Road Purleigh Essex CM3 6QA  
Mr P Baxter  
**APPROVED**

71. **Planning Application received by the Parish Council** – responses are to be sent as follows: -

**FUL/MAL/05/00356. Norton Hall St Stephens Road.** D Bardwell. Retention of timber fencing, walls and piers and construct new entrance.

Response: -

"Cold Norton Parish Council recommends that the District Council should REFUSE CONSENT for the above planning application, for the following reasons: -

- It is out of keeping, and the wall is visually intrusive when approaching the bend immediately to the west of the site.
- It is a suburban intrusion into an otherwise totally rural lane."

**FUL/MAL/05/00387. 29 The Fairways.** Mr & Mrs Scott. Conservatory

Recommendation: - Not harmful, approve.

72. **Letter from Dr. R. Ponty re The Spinney, Fambridge Road.**

A reply is to be sent to Dr Ponty to explain that, whilst there is sympathy that an elderly lady may benefit from having a bungalow built on this plot rather than living in a mobile home, the Parish Council's principle concern is that the plot is outside of the village development boundary and the proposed bungalow would remain in situ long after Dr Ponty's mother's need for it had ceased. Such development would then set a precedent for demands for further such development outside of the development boundary, and this is difficult to countenance. It would also be against established planning policies. Notwithstanding this statement, the Parish Council would of course consider

on its merits any subsequent planning application that may be brought forward.

**ACTION CLERK**

## **HIGHWAYS AND ROAD SAFETY**

### **73. Traffic calming**

A letter had been received from Stow Maries Parish Council that had been copied to members – enclosing correspondence with County Councillor Highways Portfolio Holder Mr. Rodney Bass, stating that a reduced speed limit would be implemented in Stow Maries without traffic calming measures, which decision had disappointed Stow Maries Parish Council.

In support of the County Council's decision, Mr. Bass's letter had stated, "*The measures used in East Hanningfield have been effective in reducing speeds by only 2mph. ... Similar traffic restriction measures used in Howe Green have generated accidents at the priority working features. Reports on 4 recorded personal injury accidents from January 2002 to December 2004 mention the road narrowings as a contributing factor. This figure does not include the near misses and non-injury accidents. Any obstacle placed within the highway increases the risk of an accident...*"

Being aware that the Parish Council had considered traffic calming proposals in Cold Norton, the Clerk had enquired with the East Hanningfield Parish Council's Clerk about the comments made about East Hanningfield by Mr. Bass. This e-mailed correspondence had been copied to members, and indicated that safety had much improved at the pinch point by the school, and that "*that is a definite hit!*). However, the e-mail also confirmed that drivers do not always respond to the priority arrows correctly.

The Clerk had noted to the Parish Council that parish councils have a power to contribute financially to traffic calming schemes (Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s.30).

### **74. Traffic Management Strategy for Essex**

The following report from the Clerk was noted, of discussions with Rosemary Wilkins, who is closely involved with the Traffic Management Strategy for Essex (further to Minute No. 23 of 7.04.05): -

**County Routes** – the road through Cold Norton and Stow Maries is a PR2 (Priority 2) route. Contrary to the aims of the Strategy, Ms Wilkins had confirmed that it will probably be difficult to upgrade all of the PR1 routes within the next 20 years (e.g. the B1010 and B1012), let alone considering the PR2 routes such as Latchingdon Road. She also confirmed that the County Council has a flexibility of approach when considering traffic calming for PR2 routes, and that some already do have traffic calming (e.g. in Braintree). She said that the definitions and criteria of the different types of routes will be given in more detail within the review of the Traffic Management Strategy, which will be done before the end of this calendar year, and that the Parish Council will receive a consultation copy of this. Definitions of PR2 and PR1 routes contained in the review will include possibilities for traffic calming.

### **75. Mini motor bikes and quad bikes**

The following e-mailed question from the Clerk to Mayland Parish Council was considered: -

*"Do any of your parishes suffer from people riding unlicensed bikes around your village and on your public open spaces. This is something we suffer from in Mayland and perhaps if it is a problem throughout the area we could join together and get something done about it.?"*

Response – there has not been such a problem in Cold Norton. Response is to be passed on.

**ACTION CLERK**

### **76. Zebra crossing**

As is already known by the Parish Council, County Council had confirmed this is approved – "*design is well advanced and works are programmed to start early in the new financial year*". But on 25 April 2005 the Clerk had heard that, despite an earlier County Council press report confirming as above, County Council officers are still working on ways to bring the 85th percentile speed down below the lowest speed defined by Government guidelines as being unsafe for zebra crossing – i.e. below 35 mph (in Cold Norton it was measured as 38 to 39 mph). For this purpose they are investigating use of permanent "vehicle activated signs" (i.e. that flash when drivers approach too fast).

As reported to the Annual Parish Meeting on 3 May, Mr. Archer had spoken to Mr. Ciaburro, regarding the zebra crossing, (Head of Highways and Transportation at the County Council), who had confirmed that the zebra crossing will go in between July and August this year, with VAS equipment to reduce the speeds as above. The VAS will then be removed, and then later permanently re-installed if necessary.

77. **Rettendon Turnpike**

The Clerk is to write to County Council Highways 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 is also to be 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 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).

**ACTION CLERK**

78. **Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils** – a meeting with Essex County Council and Police at the Parish Assembly of Mundon on Tuesday 17th May (brought forward from the Parish Council's April meeting – Minute No. 21) – noted.

79. **Drains** – Mr. Archer reported that he had received a complaint from a motor-cyclist about a drain at the edge of the road, that had caused damage to his vehicle near to Palepit Farm. The Clerk noted that there is also a raised drain cover in the middle of Latchingdon Road, near to the old Post Office. Essex County Council is to be notified.

**ACTION CLERK**

80. **Footway east of the railway bridge** – is still a problem regarding width and encroaching vegetation (further to Minute No. 431(2) of 3 March 2005). Therefore the Clerk was asked to pursue action.

**ACTION CLERK**

81. **Highways Schedule**

This had been updated for the Annual Parish Meeting, and therefore a copy was distributed to members at the Parish Council's May meeting also. The Clerk was asked to organise the Annual Highways Liaison meeting.

**ACTION CLERK**

82. **VILLAGE HALL - REPORT FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES** – Mrs. Garnham reported that, despite the recent indisposal of the Village Hall Chairman, all of the Village Hall maintenance is continuing as usual. The Parish Council was pleased to note that at its AGM the Village Hall Management Committee members had agreed to continue.

83. **Village Hall project**

Mr Wakeling reported on his presentation to the Annual Parish Meeting, noting that the financial implications had drawn no comments from the floor. The Clerk was asked to arrange another meeting of the Village Hall Project Group, in order to regroup the membership of the committee prior to the next stage. This meeting is to take place prior to the proposed "Race Night" (25 June).

**ACTION CLERK**

The Clerk's report to members is quoted below (further to Minute No. 25[8] – County Council grant application enquiries required): –

"Clare Thrower at County Council is now returned from leave. She has not only said that they were eventually able to get legal advice to confirm that the Village Hall Management Committee does not need to prove security of tenure via a lease, but also she confirmed that she has the first stage of a grant application form sent to her by Marion Manning in 2003, which I did on behalf of the V.H.M.C. (I still have it on computer file). Miss Thrower has told me that, now this is done, we need to let them have the outstanding requirements (e.g. planning consent, estimates) as and when we receive them, and the fuller application can go to Committee at any stage, so long as there is still money left: - she says that there is no funding budgeted for this year, but that there is some left over from the previous year. However...

Further to Minute No 25(7) – to quote from an e-mail that I sent to Bill Haward, re viability of applying to smaller funders before lottery funding: -

*'...my Council's view had been that I should leave the smaller applications until after we know about the lottery funding success (or otherwise). I was in two minds about this, and so I believe were you. I consulted with Keith Derry, who wrote the book about grant funding. I put this question to him.*

*His advice was quite uncompromising - he said that there would be no point trying to get small pots of grant funding, because (1) the smaller grant funders want to know where the bulk of money is coming from and often won't fund without that, and (2) it would take far too long to make up any kind of useful amount with smaller grant funders. He said that, once we have a major amount from the lottery, then the rest "will fall into place". In other words, he is in complete agreement with my Council's view that we should wait until we have done the lottery fund application before we tackle the smaller funders.'* "

The Parish Council noted this report, and confirmed that Village Hall grant funding applications will have to await the launch of the new lottery fund, which will not be until June at the earliest.

84. **VANDALISM/POLICE MATTERS** – there was nothing to report.
85. **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT** – District Councillor Mr. Archer said that he had nothing to add to his report given 2 days previously to the Annual Parish Meeting.

#### **OPEN SPACES**

86. **Cowpiece Nature Reserve**

The Parish Council was grateful for Mrs. Allen's confirmation that her husband "*doesn't mind keeping an eye on the Nature Reserve and doing some odd jobs as needed, but he doesn't want a commitment*" (i.e. in the present absence of a Village Caretaker).

Prof. Barclay thanked those who had attended on the Saturday prior to the official opening of the Nature Reserve (on 28<sup>th</sup> April), to tidy up and dig the hole for the tree that was planted in honour of Mr. Paul. A class from Cold Norton School had attended the opening ceremony, with their head teacher (Mrs. Church) and deputy head teacher (Mrs. Hayward). The Clerk reported that Mrs. Allen had given a good speech, drawing upon the history of the site, and had expressed the Parish Council's thanks and gratitude to Mr. Alec Paul for all his sterling work in this area and had also thanked Councillor Charles Litscher for his generosity in providing the new sign. Mrs. Church had spoken of the fact that the thread of history brings together the past, the present, and the future, in that this area has been enjoyed by generations in the past, these children now can enjoy it, and also their children into future generations can do so as well. Mrs. Hayward had confirmed that the school will be using the area as an education resource.

It was noted that some wire netting may be needed to prevent slips on the newly installed footbridge. (Noted as a task for new Village Caretaker.)

**ACTION CLERK**

87. **Playing Field**

Due to the rather late start to grass cutting this year, the cut grass had been over two inches long, and therefore the grass cutter had suggested that the grass should be collected, at an additional cost of £100. In line with Standing Order No. 29, Delegated Authority was confirmed by the Chairman to agree that the grass should be collected on this occasion, if the Clerk considered it necessary. She had sought further advice on this from Councillor Charles Litscher (as P.C. Playing Field rep), who had confirmed that the work should be done. However, since this decision had been taken on the basis of an urgent need for a decision between meetings, and since 2 weeks had elapsed since the Clerk had authorised the grass cutter to do the work, but it had not been done, the Clerk had faxed the grass cutter on Friday 29 April to say that he should now await a decision on this from full Council at its impending meeting. The Clerk noted at the meeting that, despite her fax, the grass had been cut the day before, and there now appeared to be no problem of grass in need of collection. She had received no response to her fax.

The Clerk had also reported that she had spoken with Richard Playle, who had cut the meadow at the end of the last season. Last year he had charged £40 for cutting and collection (relatively low charge because he was able to use the hay). However, the cut grass on this recent occasion was not long enough for him to collect it. However, the Parish Council noted that he had recommended July/August time for cutting the meadow and collection of grass.

**ACTION CLERK**

It was noted that regular checks of play equipment are needed. In the absence of a Village Caretaker to carry out this task at present, Mrs. Allen volunteered her husband, and Mrs. Gold also said that she could carry out checks. A checklist is to be provided to both Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Gold.

**ACTION CLERK**

88. **Football pitch**

A letter from Peter Wakeling, enquiring about use of the football pitch, had been distributed to members and was considered. (Mr. Wakeling declared an interest.)

The Parish Council requested that a reply to Peter Wakeling be sent, as the following copy text of letter subsequently sent: -

"The Parish Council was very pleased to hear of your interest in using our football pitch. Members were impressed to hear of the efforts you have put into this project, and would of course wish to encourage your group as much as possible. The Parish Council has approved of your group's use of the pitch, but you will need to note the comments below (which include answers to your questions): -

- The Parish Council would make no charge for your use of the football pitch for your first season. They would however ask that you make good any damage to the surface that occurs as a result of your group's use of the pitch. The possibility of any charge will be reviewed at a later date.
- The playing field grass is cut usually at least fortnightly. (If you feel that the grass needs cutting, then please contact me.)
- Your group would need to come to the pitch changed and ready to play, since there are no changing rooms available.
- As regards the drainage, this has always worked well – indeed sometimes too well in that, during dry summer months, it has become too dry and ruts have been caused. Work has now been done to rectify this, and we think the problem has been cured, but it is up to your group to decide whether conditions are good enough.
- You need to note that there is another group of footballers – younger than your group – that play on the pitch on a Saturday morning, and therefore the pitch is not available at that time.
- If you need the use of a white lining machine, please let me know and I will ensure that it is available.”

**89. Village Caretaker work**

The Clerk reported that, as requested at the April meeting, she had spoken to grass cutter Bradley Faulkner to ask about cost of (e.g.) general gardening work, as used to be done by Mr. Paul. Mr. Faulkner had said that for work on an as and when basis (e.g. Nature Reserve) – he would prefer to quote per job, because it would depend on whether it has to be done by hand or whether it could be done by machine. He says that (e.g.) the cutting back of the hedges on the playing field he can do by machine, and this would cost £80 to £100.

It was proposed and agreed that an advertisement should be placed in the press for a Village Caretaker. The Clerk was authorised to spend up to £50 on this.

**ACTION CLERK**

**PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

90. **Footpath along the disused railway line** – It was noted that the Public Inquiry will be held from Tuesday 24 May.
91. **NEW CLERK** - Prof. Barclay reported that there had been three applicants for this vacancy, and that interviews were to be arranged shortly.
92. **COLD NORTON'S WEBSITE** – It was noted that there are a few updates awaited, and that a new travel link is required, but is not possible at present because there is an error on the County Council's Journey Planner link, which they are trying to correct.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

93. Maldon District Community Safety Partnership – training event – Youth Facilities funding 2005/6 – to be copied to Mrs. Chris Edwards. Mrs. Garnham noted that police funding is also available.

**ACTION CLERK**

94. Essex Playing Fields & Children's Play Association – Best Kept Playing Field Competition. An entry is to be made.

**ACTION CLERK**

95. **TRAFALGAR WEEKEND** – 21st 23rd October 2005

Mrs. Garnham reported that in principle the Village Hall Committee is keen to contribute over the Trafalgar Weekend.

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

The Parish Council joined Prof. Barclay in congratulating Mr. J Archer on his chairmanship of Maldon District Council for the past two years.

97. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Parish Council agreed a request that monthly meetings should be scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month instead of the first Thursday in future. Scheduled or provisionally scheduled to end of calendar year: - Wednesday 1 June, Wednesday 13 July, Wednesday 31 August, Wednesday 7 September, Wednesday 5 October, Wednesday 2 November, and Wednesday 7 December.