

**DRAFT MINUTES OF QUENDON & RICKLING PARISH COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.30 PM. BY ZOOM ONLINE.**

Present: Sally Kitcat – Chairman (SK)
Ted Crow – (TC)
Tom Duncan – (TDN)
Ele Stoneham (ES)
Tony Dear (TD)

District Councillor Neil Hargreaves – (NH)
Keith Williams – (KW) (Parish Clerk)

697. Declarations of Interest

None.

698. Apologies for Absence

Carrie Williams – (CW)
Katherine Nuthall- (KN)

699. Minutes of the last meeting held on 9th September 2020 (already circulated)

The minutes of the last meeting held on 9th September 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

700. Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting on 9th September 2020

- The new flooring to the Quendon Bowling Club pavilion has been fitted.
- A grant of £2000 has been made to the Bowling Club. [See list of payments under “Finance Report”].
- The new Facebook arrangement has been implemented.
- There have been 5 requests for hire of the apple press.

701. Public participation session

None

702. Finance

a. Accounts balances (already circulated).

Noted.

b. Invoices and payments for approval.

Approved.

[144/2020]

FINANCE REPORT for SEPTEMBER 2020

Balance b/f @ 31/08/2020 43287.79

Payments to be authorised for September 2020

Payee	Chq No	Amount	Reason
e-on	dd	58.30	Electricity for August 2020
Stuart Michael	online	5437.62	Professional advice
Regal Expoline	online	108.00	Line marking fluid
Parrs (Ted Crow)	online	111.72	Mobile sack holder
Defib Shop (Andrew Thomson)	online	123.60	Defib pads
Quendon Bowling Club	online	2000.00	Grant
123reg (Keith Williams)	online	14.39	Domain renewal
Defib Shop (Keith Williams)	online	306.00	Defib battery
Local Toilet Hire	online	124.80	Football pitch toilet
Keith Williams	online	441.82	Clerk salary for September 2020
HMRC (Keith Williams)	online	110.40	PAYE September 2020
Regal Expoline	online	140.40	Line marking fluid
Brian Blackwell	online	210.00	Grasscutting
Ted Crow	online	108.30	September expenses
Total Payments for September 2020		9295.35	
		33,992.44	
plus Football pitch income		260.00	
plus VAT rebate		1830.73	
plus UDC Precept (first instalment)		<u>6250.00</u>	
Balance at 30/09/2020		42333.17	

Please note: The payments to 123reg, Defib Shop and HMRC were made by the parish clerk and are being reimbursed.

[145/2020]

c. Approve authorisation of monthly payments on 1st of each month.

This was proposed as some payments were not being authorised until well into the following month, depending on the date of the monthly meeting. The proposal was approved. The Clerk will submit the list of payments for scrutiny by the end of each month, with authorisation (subject to any amendments) made on the 1st of the following month.

703. Correspondence

- Details of the Green Homes Grant has been circulated to councillors. Details can be found at <https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/pages/green-homes-grant>. The information is also available on the website.
- Brian Blackwell has asked if another grass cutting is required. The cut is not required as the budget has been reached.
- TC asked if the verges on the village green were the responsibility of the owner of the green, as at present the Parish Council pays for the cutting of these verges.
- There is funding of up to £500 available from the funds allocated by UDC to District Councillors, in this case NH.
- Essex is applying for High Risk Covid-19 status.
- There is a proposal for 168 new houses in Bentfield Green, Stansted. Although this is not in Quendon and Rickling, the Parish Council may wish to consider entering comments.

704. Broadband

TDN had been in contact with some residents of Vantor Road. It seems that most suppliers are not showing much interest in this area. County Broadband, who are based in the west of the county, had originally shown some interest but this was based on a previous post coding which they had assumed was closer to their area. This code has now been changed and it is thought that County Broadband may feel this is in fact outside their area.

705. B1383

a) Highways Survey

Nothing has been heard from Rissa Long. KN has been chasing.

b) Signpost outside Foxley 2

This has now been delivered and is expected to be erected next Monday 19th October.

c) VAS sign

The vehicle which the installer was due to use broke down and he was not able to attend, so the sign has not yet been installed

d) Quendon Trees

Nothing further has been heard.

[146/2020]

706. Bluebell Wood

New signs are being installed at all entrances directing visitors to the official footpaths. It does not look as if this will include all the current paths being used. The intention is to protect the bluebells. There is a suggestion that the owner of the wood could be asked to make some permissive paths.

707. Footpaths

A gentleman from the Ramblers Association has been clearing some paths.

708. Food Vans

There had been a complaint from a resident who lives close to the Village Hall regarding the smell emanating from the waffle van which was sited there at the end of September. The van is to be booked again but it will be situated at the cricket pavilion. It is hoped to book the van for Bonfire Night.

709. Defibrillators – Village Hall and School

The new battery and pads have been fitted. TD advised that the pads can also be used for children.

The school has asked for a donation towards the purchase of a defibrillator for the school. The council will discuss this matter again at a future date.

710. Parish Council Assets List

TC, TDN and TD are currently undergoing a complete re-appraisal of the Parish Council's assets. When this has been completed the list with valuations will be presented to the Parish Clerk to advise the council's insurers.

711. "Stonebond" donation for village hall

The donation has been requested to help upgrade the toilet facilities. A decision has been postponed to a later date.

712. Strutt and Parker

Strutt & Parker wanted to present, at one of the PC meetings, their initial ideas but as we cannot meet in person at the moment, they suggested that they host a Zoom meeting. As the signal can be so intermittent in this area and a proportion of the village would be unable to access Zoom, the parish council declined. The council would like all the villagers to be present, as it is felt that all residents would all want to be fully informed about the threat of up to 180 houses being built on either end of the village. The Parish Council will definitely keep residents up to date if anything more is heard.

The Parish Council would like to stress that S & P have still not given any in depth details of their planned development.

[147/2020]

713. Parish Clerk's "Link " article

It has become clear that information regarding monthly meetings is being duplicated in the Chairman's report and the Clerk's article. It was therefore agreed that as the Chairman's report was considered the most important, this should be the only submission relating to matters from the monthly meetings. The November Clerk's article will therefore be the last.

714. County and District Councillor reports

Neil Hargreaves (District Councillor)

Report submitted – see Appendix 1.

Ray Gooding (County Councillor)

Report submitted – see Appendix 2.

715. Date of next meeting

11th November 2020.

716. Closure of meeting

There being no further items to be discussed, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.41.

[148/2020]

Appendix 1.

Report from District Councillor Neil Hargreaves

District Council Finances

UDC is forecasting £800k of losses from Covid-19, after taking into account of emergency funding from the government. This is a snapshot and may change if the pandemic becomes worse before vaccines become available, although as noted below we have set aside a further reserve for this. The good news is that the £300 million commercial investment programme has come on stream earlier than expected and is contributing significantly in this financial year.

All the investments are freehold land and buildings, with rental income from good quality tenants. As the investment programme is ahead of schedule and we have now filled the long-term financial hole, and have also covered the shortfall from the pandemic. As part of our revisiting of this year's budget to address the pandemic issues, UDC has been able to provide:

- £1m to support the council's climate change programme over the next three years
- £1.5m towards the Dunmow waste depot relocation project (out of the town centre)
- £1m into the Business Recovery Fund next year to support economic development
- £450,000 allocated over the next three years to support large-scale sports projects across the district
- £500,000 put into the Emergency Reserve to assist the council in delivering services in the event of a further lockdown or future emergency

There is also a £1m reserve against any shortfall in the commercial income, considered necessary as the council's dependence on it has increased

Ward Initiative Fund

This was put on hold because of the pandemic, but is now back on and there is £2000 available per councillor for good causes across the ward if anyone would like to ask, particularly organisations which may have been hit by the pandemic. As there is still a councillor vacancy, rather than lose the other £2000, UDC have agreed to add that to another fund which parish councils can apply to.

Unspent funds

Road projects are a County responsibility. However, UDC offers to pay a 50% share of the cost of works to benefit the District, up to £100,000 a year. The process is that the Highways Panel makes the spending decisions and Essex the send the invoice to UDC for the half share. However, in the last financial year Essex failed to claim any cash. Including this year's reserve there is now £200k unspent, which could fund £400k of safety and other projects.

This has significance for Quendon for funding for the work from the highway and parking review.

Government proposals to eliminate District Councils

Noted last time. There is now very strong opposition to this from most of the potential council participants, of all political colours.

Government proposed changes to the planning system and housing numbers

I responded to the first consultation, which was largely on numbers. UDC did a very thorough response. Among other criticisms UDC pointed out that the calculations only considered those buying houses. The rental market and social housing was ignored. Also that the income figures for Uttlesford are very much skewed by

the large number of low wage airport jobs, with 80% of staff not living in Uttlesford. And that mortgage affordability was being based on building society rules from the pre low interest era, of not borrowing above 2.5 times income

There is another consultation ending at the end of this month on changing the system so that there is automatic outline permission granted in most areas of the country. Local councils would have no say, apart from on detailed matters, and development would be in the hands of landowners and developers. This will be strongly opposed

Neil Hargreaves

Appendix 2.

County Councillors Report – 14th October 2020 Quendon & Rickling

I reported last month about the return to school after a significant break and all the impact that would have, and I am pleased to say that across the whole of Essex we now have approximately 92.5% of children returning to school. That compares extremely favourably with the national figure which is running at approximately 88%. To put this in context, at this time of year school attendance normally runs at about 95% due to seasonal colds and other short-term illnesses that are often present in school at the start of term. However, the one concern we have, and this is a national issue, is the number of parents who are withdrawing their children from school and electing to home educate them. Home education is no easy task and we have been advising parents that if they withdraw their child from the school role, they may not have the opportunity to take that place again if it has been filled by another child. Given the national nature of this problem the Education Select Committee chaired by Robert Halfon MP is investigating the matter and Essex County Council are presenting evidence to that committee. It is likely that they will recommend additional powers either to Local Authorities or Ofsted to visit families regularly and ensure that an adequate level of education is provided within the home.

One of the other matters that I should report is the issue of care home places within Essex. We have all read the difficulties that have emanated from the Covid-19 crisis and the fact that families are electing to look after their elderly relations at home. This is having a detrimental impact on the viability of many care homes and Essex County Council is endeavouring to support those that are suffering from financial difficulties.

The issue of Covid-19 and the lockdown associated with that is also having an impact on families throughout the county and we have seen much coverage in the media about the increases in domestic violence, much of which goes unseen in society. That is now, unfortunately, manifesting itself with an increase in referrals to our children and family services with, to date, a small but identifiable increase in the numbers of children that either have been or are on the edge of being taken into care. At Essex we have a policy of keeping children with their families wherever that is safe to do so but, this does mean that significant additional support is often required to help and assist those families through the troubled times.

Ray Gooding
Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Member for Stansted