

MINUTES of the 126th Annual Assembly held in The Centre on Tuesday 18th May 2021 commencing at 7.00 pm.

Present: Parish Councillors - Cllr. S. Plater (Chairman, Tollesbury Parish Council),
Cllrs. Bell, Chambers (via Zoom), Clare, Hawes, Lankester, Lowther,
St Joseph and Rogers
County Councillor Durham
District Councillor Stephens
Michelle Curtis - Clerk to Parish Council
There were 13 members of the public present via zoom and 5 in person

1. Introduction

The Chairman made a statement to the Assembly explaining the nature of the meeting. It was a meeting of parishioners; by law, if the Chairman of the Parish Council was present, he must preside at the meeting; the role of the Parish Council was to facilitate the discussion; by convention, the Minutes of the Meeting was taken by the Clerk to the Parish Council.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, it was not possible to hold the Annual Assembly for 2020.

2. Minutes of the Annual Assembly on 12th April 2019

The Minutes of the 125th Annual Assembly held on 12th April 2019 were available to view on the Parish Council website.

3. Annual Report

The Chairman gave an update of the work carried out by the Parish Council over the past year.

Parish Councillors

Simon Plater (Chairman), Tom Lowther (Vice-Chairman), Mike Bell, Vikki Chambers, Roy Clare, Sarah Hawes, Roger Lankester, Sarah Legg, Jolene Rogers and Andrew St Joseph

County Councillor – Mark Durham

District Councillor – Maddie Thompson

District Councillor – Emma Stephens

2020 was a very different year for Tollesbury Parish Council. Due to the pandemic, all Parish Council meetings had to be held remotely. The Parish Council adapted to this change very quickly, ensuring there was no disruption to the running of the Parish Council.

Harry Nixon and Rob Cole resigned from their duties as Parish Councillors, and Roy Clare, Jolene Rogers and Sarah Hawes were co-opted on as Members.
There is a vacant seat on the Parish Council.

With effect from 6th July 2021, the Parish Council will change to having two meetings per month. The meeting for the core business of the Parish Council will be held on the first Tuesday of the month as current. A second meeting (third Tuesday of the month) will be for planning items and any emergency items only (except in December when it will include the precept.).

Tolls Vols was formed to assist residents during the pandemic. The Parish Council gave financial support to Tolls Vols for 15 months.

Thank you to:

Roy Clare for leading Tolls Vols

The Steering Group: Roy Clare, Emma Stephens, David Hillyer, Andrew Gilbert, Gemma Snow, Tom Lowther, Janet Russell and Michelle Curtis.

The Area Co-ordinators

The 130 volunteers stepped forward to help all the residents.

FACT for providing practical support with printing and delivering leaflets.

The local shops and businesses that continued to be available to the residents.

The Tailors Charity provided financial support to residents. The Charity also contributed to the School to provide funding for laptops for online learning at home.

Tolls Vols volunteers recently distributed to all households to advise that Tolls Vols were winding down.

Maldon District Council consulted the Parish Council on 42 Planning Applications during the year. In all cases, we were satisfied by the support received from Maldon District Council.

Improvement works at Woodrolfe Green, repositioning of entrance has been completed, and road scalping are due to be laid in the car park.

Maldon District Council also carried out repair works to the roadway at Woodrolfe Green leading to the sewage plant.

The Parish Council are seeking quotations for the recycling bins at Woodrolfe Green to be relocated to provide additional parking spaces.

The Parish Council launched their new website in March 2020.

Recreation Ground

The play equipment installation of a new aerial runway, roundabout, surfboard springer and safety surfacing was completed.

The Parish Council continues to support adult and junior football in the village.

Thank you to John Hill, Tollesbury FC, who obtained a grant from the FA for maintenance works to football pitches. John secured funding of £5,000, and groundworks have been carried out over the last few months.

Tollesbury Athletic and Tollesbury Juniors were successful with their grant applications to the FA for new portable goalposts. The Parish Council gave grants to both teams to assist with the shortfall in funds for the new goalposts. The new goals will save the Parish Council money in the long term as it will no longer be necessary to move goal sockets around.

A tree survey was carried out on all the trees at the Recreation Ground, and necessary works are planned to be carried out.

Woodup Pool

Due to COVID and issues with the Sluice Gate and Flap, the pool was closed for 2020. Repairs to the Sluice Gate and Flap have now been completed, and it is anticipated that the pool will open to the public on 26th June 2021, providing all lockdown restrictions have been lifted.

The total cost of the repair works was £11,592 inclusive of VAT, of which Cllr Durham, from the Locality Fund, allocated £1,700 towards the repairs.

Woodrolfe Hard

The Committee has been focusing on improvement works to the Hard, providing better access for the users.

4. Financial Report

Accounts for 2019/20 audited with no adverse comments.

Following an inspection from the Internal Auditor, the Accounts for 2020/21 have been approved. The Clerk will submit the Annual Return to the External Auditor in due course.

The Parish Council set the precept for 2021/22 at £89,902. Compared to the 2020/21 precept, this was an increase of £4,698 (5.5%); this is due to inflationary pressure, increase in grounds maintenance costs, and project works. This equated to a rise of £7.52 per household (based on a Band D property). This increase is partially due to the decreased Council Tax Base (1013.2 in 2020/21 against 981.3 in 2021/22).

5. Other Village Matters

Residents raised the following items in advance of the meeting:

Parking in the village

The Parish Council received an email from a resident regarding parking issues at Woodup Pool.

The Chairman reported that parking in the village is an issue. The Clerk has been in touch with the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) to discuss the possibility of extending the yellow lines in the village. Due to Covid, the meeting has been delayed, and the Clerk will arrange for the meeting to be rescheduled.

The Parish Council pays for the Community Protection Officers (CPOs) patrols who have the power to deal with parking restrictions. The CPOs carry out additional patrols during the school summer holidays.

Cllr Bell advised that we started working with the CPOs for dog fouling, and because their powers increased, we now pay them for other services.

Cllr Durham advised that parking is an active topic across other Parishes. Increasing yellow lines will not stop people visiting Tollesbury but will displace the cars elsewhere in the village. This issue needs to be discussed further with the SEPP. Cllr Durham also suggested that they contact District Councillor Callie Mayes as she liaises with the SEPP.

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council are in the early stages of looking for new parking in the village.

Cllr Stephens stated that general road safety in the village is a concern, and if you remove parked cars from around the School, this could create a new issue. Cllr Stephens suggested that a survey of the road from Palmers Garage to the School was carried out.

Cllr Durham suggested that the Parish Council applies to the Local Highways Panel (LHP) for traffic calming measures.

Waterworks Road

A resident had sent an email regarding the issues in Waterworks Road. Waterworks Road is a private road, and any works to the road are the homeowners' responsibility. The resident suggested that blocking the junction with Station Road to allow pedestrian access at one end with vehicular access from Thurstable Road would help address the issue. The resident advised that they had previously applied to the LHP, and ECC advised them to apply for temporary closure.

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council sympathises with the residents, but this is a Highways issue, and the Parish Council has no powers to deal with such an issue. However, in March, the Parish Council did apply to the LHP regarding Waterworks Road.

Cllr Durham advised that the LHP will consider the application in June 2021.

Cllr Stephens agreed to take this forward and will contact the resident directly.

Planning Applications

Residents had expressed concern regarding the new planning application at the Bus Depot. The Parish Council recommended approval of the original application in 2017 for a mix of 2 and 3 bedroom houses, and this met the needs as identified in the Village Housing Needs Survey. The Go-Ahead Group have sold the land to a Developer, and they have submitted a new planning application for 1 x 2 bedroom, 3 x 3 bedroom and 6 x 4 bedroom properties. The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had recommended refusal of the application as it is contrary to the Local Development Plan (LDP) policy H2 and Policy D1, items B, C and D.

The Chairman suggested that if Parishioners are not happy with the proposal, they should register their objections directly with the Maldon District Council (MDC).

MDC are reviewing their LDP currently, and there are lots of changes to the planning laws. Due to the land supply being significantly less than five years, it leaves the Parishes unprotected.

There are lots of rumours around the village with regards to planning on other sites. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council had not had any conversations with any developers, and it is currently all rumours.

Climate Change

Several volunteers have recently set up the Tollesbury Climate Crisis Partnership. The group held their first meeting in April via Zoom, and the group would like to get as many residents involved as possible to look at the implications of the climate crisis approaching the parish.

Phil Manning has stepped forward as the coordinator for the group, and if people wish to get involved or they would like to keep updated with the group's work, they should email Phil. Residents can obtain Phil's contact details from the Parish Clerk.

Essex County Council (ECC) has formed the Essex Climate Action Commission.

New Website

The Chairman reported that in 2019, EssexInfo advised that they would no longer be

providing the free website to the Parish Council. Two companies gave presentations to the Parish Council, and Councillors unanimously agreed to proceed with Phelan Barker, who has also worked on websites for several authorities.

Phelan Barker has produced the new website, and there has been positive feedback from residents on the website.

Later in 2020, new legislation came into force with regards to accessibility. The Parish Council has approached Phelan Barker, who will be helping the Parish Council address these issues. The Parish Council aspires to reach the Website Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard in the future.

There is currently an accessibility statement on the Parish Council website

Some Parish Council members will meet with Phelan Barker to discuss the accessibility issues arising. Once Phelan Barker has updated the website regarding accessibility, Phelan Barker will update the accessibility statement accordingly.

The Chairman thanked Phelan Barker, who had carried out some work to the website free of charge.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman reported that through 2020 concerns were raised by MDC about the direction the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was taking. The Planning Consultant, the Clerk and himself had met with the Planning Officers, and we found we were dealing with new personnel, and the route of the NP, which had been previously agreed with Leonie Alpin from MDC, had changed.

The new officers wanted a more strategic view which they can support and uphold. The Chairman had discussed this with the Planning Consultant, and it was agreed to adjust the plan accordingly.

The Chairman advised that MDC had announced a new structure with their planning staff, which may mean dealing with new people again.

Due to the pandemic and the Planning Consultant being overrun with work, he has advised that he is taking a sabbatical.

The Chairman advised that he had finalised the drawings for the strategic plan and will send them to the Planning Consultant at the end of the month.

MDC is currently reviewing their LDP and has done a 'call for sites'.

The Chairman reported that the NP had allocated a site to provide 30 units as identified in the Housing Needs Survey. The two landowners of the site are happy with the NP proposal.

Cllr Stephens asked if the NP committee had considered any alternative access and whether the NP Committee had requested traffic surveys for the proposed site.

The Chairman reported that negotiations had been opened up for another potential access to the site.

The Chairman reported that the NP Committee hope to get the revised plan back to MDC for their screening. If agreed, it will then go to a statutory screening and then to Regulation 14. It then goes through Regulations 15, 16 and 17, then a Maldon Screening and Referendum. The more processes the NP goes through, the more weight the document gains.

A resident suggested that other schemes could be considered by the NP Committee, i.e. Community-Led Housing. The Chairman advised that the NP Committee considered alternative schemes in 2015, and at the time, the village did not have the appetite for such schemes.

Cllr Lankester expressed concern regarding the marine element of the NP as he felt this was very important.

The Chairman confirmed that the marine element was important for the village. Still, as previously agreed, once the NP had been 'made', the NP Committee would consider the maritime part at a later date. MDC suggested leaving the marine part until a later date, and the NP Committee agreed that it was essential to get the housing element side completed first.

Cllr Durham stated that the government intends to increase the number of houses, and it is important to push ahead and get the plan 'made'.

The Chairman advised that the NP is a long process, which may be very frustrating for some. The plan must be correct and robust.

6. Q & A Session

A resident asked for an update on the work being done by the Youth Working Group.

Cllr Rogers reported that the Working Group have been getting together a list of local businesses, and we are looking to assist young people with career selection. The next stage is to carry out surveys to see what they need.

The Chairman advised that before the pandemic, Cllr Chambers was working hard to open 'The Hangout' in the Pavilion for the youth to generate another connection with the village's youth.

Cllr Lankester drew attention to public safety, particular with the Sarah Everard incident. Have asked ladies around the village how people feel, and a number said that they did not feel safe. Do the Parish Council need to consider more street lighting and CCTV.

The Chairman reported that CCTV had been discussed on several occasions by the Parish Council, and Councillors felt CCTV was not feasible.

Cllr Durham advised an ANPR system would cost in the region of £200k.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.
The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40 pm.

Signed.....

Date:.....