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An ORDINARY MEETING of the Parish Council on Tuesday 12th May 2015 followed the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council , commencing at 8.15pm.

PRESENT

Chairman Mrs Jill Buck, Councillors Paul Riddle and Neil Rogers, and the Clerk. 14 members of the public also attended.

Mrs Barbara Edwards and Mr Glen Parsell had been approached by Mrs Buck before this meeting and both had agreed to being co-opted members of the Council
Acceptance of Office and Disclosable Interest papers were completed by both.

APOLOGIES had been received from CC Dr Roger Beeching and there was no representative from the District Council.

MINUTES OF THE Ordinary Meeting held on 3rd March had been circulated and were now approved and signed.

MINUTES of the ANNUAL MEETING of the PARISH which followed were also confirmed as a true record and signed.

MATTERS ARISING from the Ordinary Meeting,

Village Archives. No further information to date.

Nether Street Railings. In hand with Ringways – (contact Raj Gourman)

Dog Bin. Cost of installation £75.00 which has been paid.

Twitchel Railings – Railings are now on order and the finances from CC Roger Beeching Community Fund has been cleared.

Bell Lane Garage Area. No owner has been established. No action.

Footpath B.180 – Levenage Lane to Daintrees has not been cleared after 8 months of first request to Ringways in September 2014, and subsequent reminders on October 2014, and 29th December and again in May ,the last one receiving a response suggesting an answer might be expected within two weeks.

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

7th July, 1st September, 3rd November, - 2016, 12th January, 1st March Ordinary and Annual Meeting of the Parish ,(7.15 pm and 8.00pm) 3rd May, (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and Ordinary meeting at (8.00pm and 8.15pm.)
All dates booked with Mrs Linda James and confirmed.

APPOINTMENT OF CLERK

Interviews had taken place of three candidates at the end of April to replace the current Clerk who has been in office for 43 years.

The position was offered and accepted by Mr Colin Marks, also Clerk to Great Horstead Parish Council. This change together with other help for which payment has to be made, has caused the Precept to be increased by £3,000 for 2015-16.

The increase in Clerks' pay is the result of Clerk holding Diplomas in Agenda setting, minute taking and simple finance now required under new Legislation and which Beryl Hollylee does not hold.

Mr Marks Contract dates from 1st June.

CORRESPONDENCE

Local Council Update, HAPTC literature, Various
HCC and Countryside Management Team promoting Hertfordshire Year of Walking -
passed to the Editor of the Parish Magazine.
Herts Building Preservation Trust – Much Hadham Forge Museum etc:
Adverts for New Notice Boards.

PLANNING

Decisions
3/15/0386/VAR Priory Farm. Removal of Condition 2 on the previous application ref:
3/12/1235/FP. Conditional Permission 27/04/15.

The Parish Councillors found the wording of the decision unclear.

PR To contact the Case Officer in the Planning Office for clarification.

NEW

3/15/0507/LBC Adams Farm. Alterations to layout and fenestration from previous
ref: 3/09/1344/LB to form 4 dwelling houses
Parish Council had no objection.
3/15/0526/HH 10 Hunsdon Road. Single Storey front extension.
Parish Council had no objection.

REPORTS

Parish Paths Partnership
New Waymark posts have been installed – 2 on Footpath 3 (Chapel-Hunsdon Road) and 1 on
Bridleway 4, Levenage Lane.
Railings for The Twitchel are on order and another enquiry as to when the 2nd Kissing Gate is
likely to be put in place on the Nether Street end of Footpath 7.

NR Playing Field
The recent Quiz Night was a great success making £1,100 profit – it all went very well.
A Barn Dance on the field is planned for 18th July from 7.00pm

PR Village Hall
No information other than the Bike Ride at end of July – volunteers required to help with
refreshments and marquees.

Allotments

Annual Meeting held on 24 March. Letter sent prior to the meeting asking plot holders to
confirm they still wanted a plot as some gardens apparently were not being worked. All
rents collected and banked from those who confirmed continuing. £254.00 banked. The one
outstanding response confirmed to this meeting and rent of £17.00 to be banked.
Nigel English has been using the new strimmer and is to be paid at the rate of £10.00 and
hour for up to four hours a month

FINANCE

The Annual Internal Audit had been carried out on 17 April by Mr David Gray and is
presented for approval to this meeting. Copies of the accounts had been made available
for all present and the Chairman signed the books.

Received from HMR&C.....Instruction on change from annual to
quarterly/monthly payment, and Employer Payment Book

The Chairman put forward a suggestion that a small donation towards the repair to the
Church Tower should be made, similar to one given to the School from New Homes Bonus
Income.

Proposed by Paul Riddle, Seconded by Glen Parcell. Agreed.

Cheques signed.....

Widford Village Hall.....8 meetings at £4.00 per hour.....	£ 56.00
Mr J Turner. ...Beningfield Green.....Grass Cutting (1 of 3).....	£ 83.33
Mrs C Parrott.....Closed Churchyard Maintenance (1 of 4).....	£224.00
Playing Field.....1/2 annual grant for grass/hedge maintenance.....	£500.00
Widford PCC ..Donation to Church Tower repair (from New Homes Bonus).....	£320.00
M B Hollylee..reimburse..AoN Insurance.. Add Strimmer.....	£1.08)
Reimburse Allotment Water 01/11/14 to 31/03/15....	£6.09).....£ 7.17
Mrs J English ...Litter Picking 25/04/15 to 16/05/15.....	£105.76
Mrs J English....Litter Picking 25/05/15 to13/06/15.....	£105.76
Widford PCC.....Annual Donation to upkeep of New Churchyard.....	£300.00
HAPTC...2 copies of The Good Councillor Guide @£2.00 per copy + Post£1.51...£	5.51

Consideration is being given to the Insurance Company – AoN v Zurich.
 AoN has been the Widford choice for many years and this year an offer is made for a three year freeze on the premium.
 This is being assessed against Zurich which appears to be used more widely by Parish Councils .
 The Premium is due as from 1st June.

Consideration of a gift for Internal Auditor Mr Gray.....Chairman to consult with Mr Gray.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sponsor for School 140th Anniversary. Estate Agents sign boards to be sited – suggestions for suitable locations sought., Suggested Beningfield Green, Chapel, Medcalf Hill, Hillside, Coombe Villas.....

RPB 18 – A proposal to drive a 6m (20 foot) wide route from the B.1004 Coal Yard access through the valley alongside the old railway track, then east along a short section of Footpath 13 and onto Pegs Lane had been promoted by Mr Wesley, associated with the Ramblers Association in 2004. In 2011, the Parish Council received information from the County Council that the project was still ongoing, to re-instate the old route, not to be used by mechanical vehicles.

The Parish Council wrote to the County Council that ‘this is madness.....’ But could find no evidence of such a route existing. No further comment could be made at that time but it was understood that there would be an opportunity at a later stage for more detailed response. Several residents have now received notification of an Inquiry to be dealt with by written representation, but, as the previous letter was apparently not passed on to the Secretary of State, the Parish Council has not received notification of the appeal and therefore nothing more can be done.

QUESTION TIME

The Chairman had received a letter with regard to the 56% increase of the Precept and its effect. There had been several other telephone calls on the same matter.

The Chairman explained that previously the precept had been kept low mainly because of the goodwill and community spirit of the residents and members of the Parish Council. Times are changing under the Localism Act 2011 and more power being devolved to Parish Councils, without considering the stringent the many health and safety rules that now apply. Localism as changed the way a Parish Council must behave when appointing a Parish Clerk, who now has to be an employee of the Council however small the Council may be. The Clerk is now paid on a nationalised recognised scale and is based on these hours ranging from £3,382 - £4,509 per annum. Impossible from our Precept of £5,500. Also training costs for the Clerk and New Councillors and travel expenses have to be borne in mind. The new

Clerks training costs will be shared with the two other Parishes to which he is also Clerk. He is entitled to 21 days holiday pay, sickness pay – both pro rata. Insufficient pay is being made to have to meet pension costs . The new clerk will have the necessary Certificate in Local Council Administration once he has taken his final examinations.

Also through Localism Act, other large expenses are looming such as the creation of a Neighborhood Plan under the Draft District Plan which we are still fighting to the suggestion that we are a Group 1 village. If despite our best efforts we have to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, we shall need to draw on a committee of willing village volunteers to plan for the future between the ratification of the District Plan in 2015/16 and 2030. Even with grants and local assistance, the lowest estimate is £5,000.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 10.30pm

Signed.....
Chairman.....Jill Buck.....

Date.....7th July 2015.....