

Minutes of the Clavering Annual Parish meeting held on Monday 1st. June 2015 at 8pm in the Clavering Village Hall

Present - Cllrs Stephanie Gill (Chairman), Richard Carter, Michael Patmore, Ron Couchman and Rebecca Stanford

Also present - County Councillor Ray Gooding, District Councillor Oliver and 14 parishioners

Apologies of absence were received from Cllrs Brian Barrow, Stuart Boardman and Peter Smith

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and mentioned the service of firstly Mark Wilkinson who, as Vice-Chairman, resigned during the year as Councillor but he has agreed to continue as the Village's Emergency Planning officer especially responsible for sand bags. Jenny Allan has stood down as a Councillor at these elections having served for 7 years on the Council. She was a Jubilee Field Trustee, organised the Litter Picks, oversaw the account books and served as Editor of the Newsletter – a task which also included delivering paper copies to those who do not receive it as an email.

The Chairman then asked the Councillors present to introduce themselves and explain their responsibilities on the Council

2. The Chairman then called on Edward Stanford (and Peter Walters) to give a presentation regarding the group "Hands off Clavering". Edward started by commenting that the Gladman Development application had made it a necessity to form an action group and "Hands of Clavering" was formed. The group has now an extensive list of supporters about 200 members who regularly send in letters of objection. Following the original application and subsequent revisions of the plans they continue to write to UDC planning officer with their objections. Edward asked for more letters to be written this time as the number of objection letters are down from the last time. Gladman application has now gone to Appeal and the hearing is 1st. July 2015. The appeal could be lengthy and costly to the "HOC" group. The group has raised about £7,000 but the target figure is closer to £30,000 (Legal advice from the solicitor is about £300-£600 per hour) so Edward said that the funds would not go very far, about 15 hours of advice. He then informed the meeting that more fundraising would be needed to fend of this appeal, and possible more, to come from Gladman Development. Edward then asked for volunteers to read lengthy legal documents, prepare documents for the solicitor at the appeal stage. "HOC" were organising a survey of Clavering residents to see and to gauge their feelings about the proposed development. At this point Edward asked if he could respond to questions from the floor. The Chair allowed this. He was asked if "HOC" was against all development in the village. He replied No. Every application must be open and looked at on its own merit. He personally thought that it would be a good idea to talk to developers as they might be in position to give something back to the village. Other parishes have obtained a new village hall or sports facilities etc. He was asked about the name "Hands off Clavering". He replied by saying that the group would like to get away from the name as the name is poor and doesn't represent what "HOC" can do. He asked for suggestions. He was asked if "HOC" had spoken to Gladman Developments. He replied that on legal advice from the solicitor the answer was No. "HOC" will speak with Gladman Development only if ALL residents and CPC are invited to the one meeting. Cllr Couchman asked about a judicial review. Peter Walters explained the nature of such and stated that Gladman Development, as a company, have a brilliant success rate and will do anything to keep the rate high. Peter again reiterated what Edward had said earlier about needing volunteers to help with the

campaign. Cllr Couchman asked how residents/villages get involved. He was told to contact either Edward or Peter. Cllr Carter asked Peter about the 42 houses that has gone to appeal: Is this the last appeal or does Gladman keep going to appeal after appeal? Peter Walters informed the meeting that the Inspectorate would and could get very annoyed with Gladman putting in appeal after appeal and would possibly ask Gladman to concentrate the appeal into one as the objections are the same whether the application is for 51 houses, 42 houses or any number of houses. Cllr Oliver spoke to say that he has spoken, and seen the report from the UDC planning officer, and the UDC planning officer answers to the inspector are exactly the same as the first application.

At this point the Chairman thanked Edward and Peter for their presentation.

3. The Chairman informed the meeting that the 2012 minutes could not be retrieved from the computer storage hard drive as it had been corrupted and so cannot be circulated to residents. With the attendee's permission, the Chairman then read out, in summary- with full copies of the minutes and reports available, the 2014 minutes. With the insertion of Cllr Patmore's name as an attendee these minutes were signed as a true and accurate record.

4. Chairman's Annual Parish Meeting Report

In the past year the Parish Council has continued to work with and for parishioners. The RCCE award for Best Kept Village in our category and their giving Clavering the accolade of Essex Village of the Year 2014 exemplifies and is a testament to the village cooperation that I am sure we are all seeking and confirms that Clavering is a vibrant village for people of all ages and with varied interests.

I would like again to record my thanks to the members of Clavering School, the Jubilee Field, the Village Hall, the Cricket Club, the Over 60's Club, and the Information Box Team, plus villagers Peter Walters and young Ben Moore who presented to the judges alongside parish Councillors and answered questions posed.

The Council was awarded a cash prize, which was subsequently divided between the Jubilee Field, the Clavering Scout group, the Clavering Brownie group and the Clavering School's Forest School work in recognition of their contributions.

I am also pleased to report that, on the strength of the nomination put forward by the Council, at the inaugural Essex Police Commissioner's Awards, the Speedwatch Team were highly commended for their work in our village in being, as the Council had stated, 'a community solution to a community problem'. John Smith, who has now retired from leading the team, went to Colchester and collected the certificate from the Police Crime & Commissioner, Nick Alston.

After last year's Parish Meeting, the Public Meeting relating the outcome of the new yellow lines on the Stortford Road was held. Parishioners were able to address concerns to our Essex County Councillor Ray Gooding, our local PC 'Jack' Russell, a resident of Oxley's Close who is also a school governor as well as the Councillors. It appears that there are still people who park inconsiderately and the police have asked that, via our Clerk, they are passed information on this.

However a graver concern has arisen concerning speeding along Stortford Road when the children arrive at and leave the school as there are no longer cars to slow down traffic.

Our next parish Council meeting has an agenda item for discussion as to whether requests be put forward to Essex Highways to adjust limits in certain parts of the village, e.g. Middle Street reduced to 30mph, outside the school to 20mph. This may be the

opportunity to make a representation on the positioning of the yellow lines along the Stortford Road.

The Skeins Way Phone Box, which this time last year was a sad, peeling eyesore, has gained a new lease of life as the Village's Information Box and children's lending library. The Parish Council would like to record their thanks to the small group who sprang into action and took the project on.

This past year has seen grants from the Easements Funds given over for varied projects: The refurbishment of said Information Box: the installation of a microphone and hearing loop system in the Christian Centre as its usage is increasing and especially as the Parish Council Meetings must be held there when the Village Hall is not available: a marquee for the Village Hall for use primarily at the Art Show and the Fete.

Having initially agreed to maintain in the long-term a new bench to commemorate the fallen of the two world wars, sited at the Village Shop, the Parish Council was then informed that the members of the organisations hoping to raise the funds for purchase could not do so. The Council then agreed to facilitate its purchase using Easement Funds. UDC then announced that it had some grant money available for such a project and reimbursed the Parish Council, so we have put the UDC grant in our repairs and renewals reserves.

The Council has also committed Easement Funding to the Bonfire Committee for catering equipment to be purchased later this year. Easement funds will also be used to replace the PC Noticeboard (it is in a poor state, despite undergoing running repairs) and the information board at Blacksmiths Corner. We also have agreed to pay part of the cost of the new bus shelter to be installed near the Cricketers. This should have been in place this March, but has been held up at County level.

A new Village website has also come into being. Phil and Stuart of the Corsto Group have given their time- free- to put this in place so please do use it as Parish Councils are now obliged to report their meetings via this technology!

This evening you have heard from Hands Off Clavering and you are no doubt aware that UDC have issued a new call for sites for development in order to put together a Local Plan that the Inspectorate will allow, after their last one was rejected. The Parish Council has looked at the merits of our having a Neighbourhood Plan. This is not a Village Design Statement, but is planning documentation that runs alongside the District Local Plan and which cannot differ in context from that Local Plan. So until UDC has a current plan in place, Councillors can be in a research phase only.

The Parish Council remains committed to speaking on behalf of the parish in planning matters.

You may have observed that our new Clerk of last year, Kevin, is still with us . . . he has also taken on the role of Responsible Financial Officer. Historically, this was carried out by a Councillor in Clavering, but it is normal now to have the clerk carry out this duty. And finally, may I remind you that there are still three vacant places around the table. If there is anyone who would like to join us, please do let the Clerk know.

5. a) Essex County Councillor Ray Gooding firstly congratulated "HOC" and again asked for residents to send in letters of objection to UDC. He said that the Highways department in any planning application would only comment on the application and not to give an opinion either way. Even though residents know full well that the bend at Pelham Road is dangerous. He went on to say that Colchester Borough Council has the largest growth area in Europe for housing. He agreed that is now difficult for anyone wishing to get onto the property ladder with an ageing population. Therefore more developments are needed for the younger generation. He went on to remind residents

to still report potholes. ECC have given priority to the major roads and they estimate just 305 potholes are left to fill. The next stage is to move to the countryside. ECC made a zero increase in the Council tax which put pressure on the 2015-16 budget. 10 years ago the budget was £2.3bn this year it is £1.78bn. As a result ECC has had to cut overheads and staff saving about £500m. Cllr Gooding reported that he has been given the portfolio of education which, in his opinion, is the most contentious portfolio to have. He has already received threatening letters at his home. 80% of primary schools are now 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. There were 1650 children in care 3 years ago. It is now 1,000 at an average cost to ECC of £5,000 per week.

At this point Cllr Gooding took questions. The first question was about Superfast Broadband – He replied by saying that ECC was not a provider of broadband only as a financial input to BT who won the contract. ECC has injected £28m towards BT connecting all to broadband and the programme is working well. This caused amusement with all the residents agreeing that Clavering only has speeds of 2%. Businesses are suffering. There is one business owner who has joined a gym in Cambridge which has free Wi-Fi. He spends one hour on the running machine and 5 hours on the Wi-Fi doing his work. A resident commented on what the Prime Minister, ECC Councillors and local Councillor are saying about the broadband being essential. This is not what ECC are saying. Something is wrong, Cllr Gooding was informed. Ben Gill informed Cllr Gooding that he had attended a seminar in Chelmsford regarding broadband. He informed the meeting that 95% of the country would be on superfast broadband and that phase 1 was completed. However phase 2 project, all of Clavering is not included, and will still have to wait maybe until 2018. UDC has put £100,000 into another provision. Mrs Carter asked Cllr Gooding to look closely and urgently into the potholes and the quality of work being undertaken by contractors for ECC. The roads in Clavering, she said, were of a third world country. Cllr Gooding said that over £28m has been spent on repairing potholes in the county. Contractors apply to ECC for the contract to repair the roads but Highways, who accept the contractors bid, do not go out afterwards to inspect the contractors work. At this point the Chairman thanked Cllr Gooding for his report even though the response was a little hostile.

5. b) District Councillor Edward Oliver informed the meeting that after 3-4 weeks of canvassing he has spoken to the planning department about the extra houses that Clavering are expected to have built. There are 504 houses in Clavering already with 50 extra houses already due to be built. The area must absorb these houses first before any more development takes place. He envisages that another 10% (1,000) houses will be built in the next 10 years. The Gypsy & Traveller site at 5 Acres has been put forward but not passed yet. A discussion is due to take place in July this year. There were original 41 pitches earmarked in Uttlesford and this has now come down to 18. Cllr Oliver agrees with the residents that the broadband is very slow in Clavering. He went on to request that Cllr Gooding not only looks at the potholes in the middle of the roads but also at the edges, especially for cyclists and dog walkers. When a pothole fills up with water it can cause tremendous damage to vehicles resulting in compensation from ECC

6. Questions from Electors

A resident asked if the Council knew anything about rubbish being dumped in Chalkpit Lane and motorbikes being ridden off the track, now the track has been surfaced with road planings. The Chairman asked the Clerk if this had been reported to the Council by the landowner- it had not- and stated that if rubbish were to be dumped on the track it is possibly up to the owner i.e. ECC to remove; if the motorbikes are trespassing on private land, that is a matter for the owner too.

A resident asked about the new bus shelter and where it was going to be sited. The Chairman informed the meeting that Andrew Scullion at ECC had that day emailed the clerk and it was suggested by ECC to site the bus shelter on ECC highways land just to the left of the village hall entrance. The residents then stated "would this not block the line of sight for vehicles"? The Chairman then asked the clerk to contact Andrew Scullion to arrange a site meeting with Colin Howland and 2 Councillors to ascertain the correct and safe siting.

Mrs Carter wanted, on behalf of the parishioners attending the meeting, to thank all the Councillors for their admirable and continued service. It was sad to see that no more residents had come forward to serve on the Council.

The Chairman then thanked everyone for attending this Annual Parish meeting and closed the meeting at 9.45pm

Signed.....**Stephanie M. Gill**.....Date 16th. May 2016

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