## **Aldham Parish Council**

# <u>Minutes of Aldham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall at Aldham</u>

**Present** Cllr Mike Lambert (Chairman), Cllr Adam Scott (Vice Chairman),

Cllr Brenda Brown, CCC Dennis Willetts and 10 members of the public.

23/78 To accept Apologies for Absence:

Apologies received from Cllr Andrew d'Angibau, CCC Sara Naylor, ECC Lewis

Barber

23/79 Declarations of Interest

None

23/80 Parish Clerk

The Chairman announced the Council had accepted the resignation of the Parish Clerk, Grahame Walkingshaw on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 with immediate effect. It was reported that because a handover has not been possible some matters on the Agenda would be deferred until the next meeting in February.

23/81 Toxic Behaviour in the Workplace

Cllr Adam Scott explained a Webinar on Toxic Behaviour in the workplace, how to recognise it and how to deal with it. It was noted that in the Council's recent experience such issues have taken many hours to deal with but now the Council can focus on rebuilding their relationship with the Village and APC will continue to work towards the Civility and Respect Pledge

23/82 Playing Field

Henry Holmes, (HH) owner of the present playing field gave a short presentation outlining proposals for the field. He explained potential options for building but also retaining a play area with the intention of developing a more detailed plan. HH confirmed the planting along Brook Road will not be affected by any plans. Further ideas and options will be put to the whole village within the next 6-12 months. The Council noted the presentation and welcomed the intention to carry out further consultation. The Council also requested the playing field remain available to the village whilst future plans are discussed. HH to consider and respond to the Parish Council.

### 23/83 Public Open Forum

A resident raised the matter of maintenance around Hardings Close, pointing out that the Council Tenants all pay a weekly sum towards this but no work is done. Dennis Willets explained that all monies go to Colchester Borough Homes who decide how it is used but they have acknowledged the situation. The Chairman noted this matter had been raised before and undertook to follow up.

A resident reported on the issue of parking in Hardings Close and the possibility of dedicated residents parking areas. Dennis Willets explained why there are many cars in Social Housing areas.

A resident noted that the hedge along Tey Road is encroaching and needs trimming.

#### 24/83 To approve the minutes of the last meeting

The Chairman commented on action taken on various items. Co-option of new Councillors deferred to the February meeting. No minutes available for the October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2023 meeting but there was a presentation at that meeting of how the APC work and this would be put on the website when we have access to it.

Proposed: Cllr Adam Scott Seconded: Cllr Brenda Brown

Agreed by All

#### 24/84 **Visitor's Report (CCC Dennis Willetts)**

Locality Budget. Aldham Village Hall have applied for funds towards a new porch at the Village Hall. Aldham Grapevine have also applied for funds.

A12/A120. A report from the meeting with National Highways arranged by Sir Bernard Jenkin MP and Cllr Barber and attended by local City and Parish Councillors has now been put on the Aldham Grapevine FB page.

#### 24/85 Clerks's Report

Payscale and Parish Clerk Salary noted

#### 23/86 **Finance**

No access to necessary paperwork was available.

The Parish Council were unable to consider Budget figures.

Item deferred

Date of Internal Audit on 17th April 2024 noted

Internal Audit. To approve 3 payments in January to the outgoing Clerk for salary,

PAYE and expenses to date of leaving amounting to £746.20

Seconded: Adam Scott Proposed: Mike Lambert

All agreed

#### 23/87 Planning/Housing

23/87.1 No new Planning Applications to report.

decision at the next meeting.

23/87.2 None

23/87.3 The Chairman circulated Draft Planning Committee Terms of Reference for discussion. These had been prepared with the intention of clarifying when the Planning Committee should meet and the procedure for responding to minor and householder applications without the need for a meeting. The Terms of Reference would be considered for

23/87.4 Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Willetts explained the benefits of having a Neighbourhood Plan in terms of the control it potentially gave but the PC felt the village was too small to justify the work and expense but agreed to keep the matter under review.

#### 23/88 **CALC Representative (Colchester Association of Local Councils)**

Chairman Mike Lambert agreed to stand as new CALC representative.

Proposed: Cllr Adam Scott Seconded: Cllr Brenda Brown

All agreed

#### 23/89 **Ground Maintenance Contract**

Deferred – no information available

#### 23/90 Precept 2024/25

Deferred - no information available

### **23/91 Section 106 money**

Noted that S106 money from the Ashington Lodge planning fee was intended to be used for Gallows Green environmental study but CCC advised it was not eligible. The Chairman to contact CCC to establish what type of projects it can be used for. Post Meeting Note: the monies amounting to £1867.45 are now to be used as a contribution towards the Village Hall porch.

#### 23/92 Website

There were no contracts or quotes to consider but Councillors noted the urgent need for updating and refreshing the web site.

### 23/93 Biodiversity

Cllr Adam Scott explained that Government has introduced new rules for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) which came into effect this month requires any destroyed habitat by development or infrastructure is to be replaced with similar nearby. Noted separately the Parish Council, who are responsible for Gallows Green, may need to provide a plan for its future.

#### 23/94 VAS Contract

To approve Cllr Adam Scott and Chairman Mike Lambert signing the necessary licence required to activate the sign.

Proposed: Cllr Brenda Brown Seconded: Cllr Adam Scott

All agreed

### 23/95 Flooding

In response to an email from a member of the public regarding the Brook Road flooding the Chairman undertook to contact Cllr Lewis Barber to determine the extent of the Highways Boundaries and therefore the responsibilities of Landowners/Highways.

Tey Road. Noted that CBB have acknowledged their responsibility for the flooding in Tey Road near the Village Hall and will investigate.

Flooding in New Road from the Church past Hardings Close. Noted that CBH have agreed to cut back the hedge (now done) and excavate the ditch along side it to link the Church ditch with the field ditch further down the hill.

### 23/96 Training/Events

The EALC (Essex Association of Local Councils) provide Councillor Training Sessions for new and existing Councillors in particular to support new Councillors and to provide Clerk training as required.

It was agreed to consider allocating funds for this in the future.

#### 23/97 Village Volunteers

Peter Vestey has resigned as 'Pothole Pete' and a volunteer replacement is needed. Jean Jennings patrols the local footpaths and reports any remedial action required. Sharon Tidy keeps a watchful eye on the Playing field and ensures it is litter free. The Chairman apologised that these volunteers were not recognised as usual at the end of last year. To approve a gift card to a value of £50 for each in appreciation of their work.

Proposed: Cllr Mike Lambert Seconded: Cllr Brenda Brown

All agreed

### 23/98 Information Exchange/Items for next Agenda

Norwich to Tilbury Pylons - The Parish Council had joined a webinar with Colchester City Councils new National Significant Infrastructure Projects lead who outline the likely time line for a Statement of Community consultation paper due shortly ahead of the main statutory consultation on National Grids proposals that is expected in April 2024. This consultation will be key and is likely to last for 10 weeks.

### 23/99 To confirm date and time of next meetings

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30pm. Meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed

### **Mike Lambert**

Chairman

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024