MINUTES of the ONLINE MEETING of ARKESDEN PARISH COUNCIL
held via Zoom at 7.30 pm on

Monday 15th March 2021

Present: Rod Higgins (chairman), Robert Patmore (vice chairman), Chris Coady, Cllr. Edward Oliver and Steve Coltman (clerk).
Alistair Mclean, Holly Greenhow, Tony Robertson and Trevor Wombwell

1. Apologies: Satu Lawrence

2. Co-option of councillors
Following the resignation of two councillors there had been two candidates that had come forward.
   b) Vacancy caused by resignation of Ted Buttling: Alistair Mclean proposed by Robert Patmore, seconded by Rod Higgins. Agreed unanimously.
   c) Acceptance of office: signed by both councillors
   d) Declaration of interest: signed by both councillors
   e) Chairman welcomed both new councillors to the Parish Council

3. Public Speaking
Tony Robertson spoke in support of the planning application at Reubens for a change of use of annexe.
Trevor Wombwell stated that he was present to hear the comments of the council on his application for an annexe.

4. Declaration of Interests: None

5. Minutes of the meeting of 15th February 2021: Agreed by those councillors that were present.

6. Matters arising from the minutes of 15th February 2021
   6.1 Website Progress
       Satu Lawrence declared that the website as virtually finished and she was only waiting for a couple more pieces of information and the personal photos from the councillors.
   6.2 Resignation
       Ted Buttling had resigned after the last meeting, which had allowed both candidates for the original vacancy to be co-opted.
   6.3 Land South of Quicksie Hill – hedge removal
       The Parish Council had sent a letter to the planning dept. to ensure that the hedge was not removed completely after being coppiced to ground level.

7. Planning matters
   7.1 New Applications
       7.1.1 UTT/21/0403/DFO Land South of Quicksie Hill Approval of reserved matters
       The main concern of the Parish Council was the treatment of the boundaries, in particular the boundary adjoining the Wenden Road. There was agreement that the
1.8m high close boarded fencing would have a detrimental impact on the approach to the village, especially now that the hedge had been coppiced. It was agreed to ask for a possible alternative to the close boarded fencing and for some more mature planting for hedging. It was also noted that the landscaping plan showed the hedge to the south of the entrance removed completely and this was against the mitigation measures agreed, which included retention of the hedges.

Some concern was expressed that the brickwork and gates surrounding the entrance area gives an impression of a “gated community” which is not appropriate for a rural location.

Previous applications on this site had brought forward concerns over the drainage and the Parish Council agreed to ask that this issue was addressed as there was no information on drainage in the reserved matters.

7.1.2 UTT/21/0466/HHF No. 6 Quicksie Hill Annexe
The Parish Council had no objections to this application, but in line with previous applications for annexes, it would ask for a condition to limit the use of the building to an annexe and that it would not be used as a separate dwelling in the future.

7.1.3 UTT/21/0546/AG Land at Wenden Road Agricultural Barn
Clerk explained that this was similar to a permitted development request and that provided it met certain conditions on its use and the size of land ownership then permission would be granted without the need for a full planning application. It appears that these conditions have been met and consequently it has been approved.

7.1.4 UTT/21/0671/HHF Watts Folly Oak framed extension
UTT/21/0672/LB Watts Folly Ditto
The Parish Council had not objected to the previous application and could see no reason to object to this second (smaller) application.

7.1.5 UTT/21/0790/FUL Reubens Re-application for change of use of annexe
The Parish Council had not objected to the original application and since this second application was simply a clarification of the access arrangements, the Parish Council had no objection to this proposal for a change of use.

7.2 Determinations
7.2.1 UTT/21/0365/DOC Land South of Quicksie Hill Biodiversity enhancement plan Discharge of condition 11 – Approved

8. Report from District Councillor
Edward Oliver reported that UDC was making up to £300 million worth of investments throughout the country. Some controversy had arisen over this policy due to the use of a company that had been involved in arms sales.

The auditors are still refusing to sign of the 2019/20 accounts due to irregularities in the governance report.

There has been a new monitoring officer appointed to the council to oversee the performance of the council.

Cllr. Oliver confirmed that he has received the letter from Gigaclear that went to all residents stating that they would no longer be proceeding with their commercial project through Clavering and Arkesden.

The Stansted enquiry has started but UDC has already declared it will accept the application with conditions. There may well be a claim for costs from MAG.

Alistair Mclean reported that the new shed was now up and also the MFC had applied for a grant towards a new (extra) picnic bench.
10. Village Hall report
Holly Greenhow agreed to be the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Committee. Clerk would inform Simon Coop

11. Highways
Both footbridges at Great Becketts – one on Hampit road and one on Clodmore Hill had been repaired. Clerk agreed to ask for the road gullies to be cleaned out, especially at the top of Quicksie Hill outside Mulberry House. Clerk would check on the progress of reported potholes at Clanver End and the bottom of Long Lane.

12. Correspondence – as circulated via email

13. Finance
13.1 Balance of current account: £6380.05
13.2 Invoices agreed to be paid:
   - EALC – new clerk’s course £84.00 inc. VAT
   - Clerk’s wages – 3 months £1100.00

13.3 Review of internal financial controls:
The Parish Council reviewed its financial controls and agreed the following:

   i). Appropriate accounting records had been kept throughout the year.
   ii). The Parish Council had complied with financial regulations, payments had been supported by invoices, all expenditure had been approved and VAT accounted for.
   iii). The Parish Council had assessed the risks to achieving its objectives.
   iv). The precept had resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget had been regularly monitored and reserves were appropriate.
   v). Expected income had been fully received and VAT accounted for.
   vi). Salaries to employees and allowances to members had been paid with the council’s approval and PAYE and NI had been properly accounted for.
   vii). Asset registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.
   viii). Periodic and year end bank account reconciliations had been carried out.
   ix). Accounting Statements for the year were properly prepared.
   x). The council had certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2019/20, and it had met the exemption criteria.
   xi). The council demonstrated that during the summer of 2019 it had provided for the exercise of public rights.

This annual review had been necessary for the internal auditor to complete his governance statement.

14. Further Discussion Points
The Litter Pick was agreed for Saturday 27th March in family groups or pairs only, to comply with covid 19 restrictions. It was agreed to circulate the date via email and through the Whatsapp Group. Clerk would order extra picking sticks.

15. Date of next meeting.
The next meeting was set for Monday 19th April and the Annual Village Meeting for Thursday 19th April. Both still on Zoom. Clerk would enquire as to the legality of holding both last year’s and this year’s meetings on the same date.

Rod Higgins (chairman)                  Steve Coltman (clerk)