

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2017

PRESENT: Councillors: Carl Powling (Mayor)
Peter Banks
Dave Bragg
Peter Clements
Robert Jenkins
Paula Moore
Sylvia Wargent
Sophie Weaver

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: Petra Palfreyman
Borough Councillors: Robert Davidson
John Jowers
Patricia Moore

Public Session

7 members of the public in attendance.

A member of the public explained that trees owned by West Mersea Town Council overhung his property boundary and asked if West Mersea Town Council could pay for the cost of them being cut back in his garden. Also that the overspill parking at the Glebe is a major problem for his property and others in that area.

A member of the public made representations on behalf of Cooks Pet & Garden Centre which is under threat of closure due to redevelopment. Further comments were made by another member of the public regarding the same proposed development and the effect it would have on traffic, parking and several local businesses.

A member of the public was concerned about the trees that have recently been cut back in West Mersea Park, which were trimmed following advice from the Tree Preservation Officer at Colchester Borough Council. Also queried was the hedge cut down at the north of the Glebe (end of grass tennis courts) which was cut down and will be completely removed due to health and safety reasons and was decided by the Council at a Sports & Recreation committee meeting. Further queried was the availability of the tennis courts and the flood lights to the public and a request for a token machine by the fence to operate the flood lights.

Reports from Borough Councillors

Borough Councillor John Jowers - Agreed that there should be more public use of the tennis courts.

Attended a meeting of the local plan panel meeting – Mersea has been designated as an urban retail centre which suggests that a street that was always a retail centre should not be changed in to a residential centre.

Presumption of the waterside study is upheld so there will be no development on the seaward side of Coast Road and in a conservation area which upsets the maritime usage and character of the area.

Karen Syrett has done a good job reinforcing the coastal protection belt which repeats the presumption against development over the centre line of the Island, so when you are driving towards Mersea you see green space and not housing. Although we do see some houses it was a condition on Colchester Road development that hedges and trees was planted to screen the houses but the hedge was poisoned twice.

Attended a Regional Flood Defence committee where they were given an outline of what was going on around the coast and an issue about Bradwell was mentioned. An Environment Agency representative will be coming to talk to Mersea and look at Mersea issues as they are different to the surrounding areas.

There has been an update on part of the Essex Act 1954 (reviewed 1984) which states there should not be any new houseboats.

Recently chaired the Police Crime meeting and can advise that police will attend local meetings and two policemen have already been seen on the island.

Essex County Council are going to invest considerable sums of money in to Cudmore Grove and therefore asked the county planners and the cabinet member to take a close look at any developments that might impinge on our land and might take away from the country parks open plan landscape character.

If all the development of 350 houses were opposed, we might still have ended up with all of them so to get it down to 200 as an opposition was very lucky.

Borough Councillor Robert Davidson - There will be a full council meeting of the Borough and the budget is likely to be approved for an increase of 2.94%, the first increase there has been for a few years which is equivalent to £45 a year on Band D Council Tax. In addition to that will be anything the Parishes put on top. Colchester Borough Council has increased by 2.8 %, the County Council has increased by 2.9%, the Police have increased 3.25% and the Fire Authority increase is 1.99%. County is not raising Council Tax for the 5th year in a row but they are taking 3% Adult Social Care precept.

Natural England – the Coast Path proposal for Mersea Island is out for consultation

From the Councillors fund some financial help will be provided to the West Mersea allotments and the Lions bus.

Tim Young the portfolio holder for tourism is interested in making more lodges for tourism on the island. He will also like business rates for toilets to disappear. At the moment he does not have the discretion but he may do in the future.

Referring to the proposed development at Cooks Pet & Garden Centre, Cllr Davidson commented that it is government policy to convert commercial or office space in to housing but he will try to fight it.

Borough Councillor Patricia Moore - The buoys to mark the swimming area off Victoria Esplanade will not be purchased this year via the Council contribution as there was a misunderstanding with Colchester Borough Council and also the windsurfing club opposed them but Cllr Moore would still like to get this done if West Mersea Town Council could provide the concrete sinkers with lightweight buoys on, as a safe zone is needed. If not, the allocation will be used next year for this.

Managed to get the Conservative group of councillors at Colchester to formally agreed they are against the new build at Bradwell.

The Cooks Pet & Garden Centre planning application has been called in. It seems that the lack of parking facilities may have a strong bearing on approval or not.

It has been agreed that the Strood railings need repair but highways are looking at the collapsing road as a more urgent issue.

Report from Colchester Borough Council Zone Warden

The Zone Warden confirmed Colchester Borough Council would be taking part in the Spring Clean-up on 4th March 2017 in Seaview Car park at 10.00am, for anyone that wishes to join in. Bags and picks will be supplied. There will be a dog education day on 29 May in the Victoria Esplanade Car Park where dogs can be chipped free of charge and the Colchester Borough Council dog officers will be giving behavioural and education advice. There will be another beach clean in the summer holidays – date to be advised.

Fly-tipping has increased since the terms have changed at the Recycling Centre in Upland Road. There have been 6 incidents this week in the Borough. A previous incident in Cross Lane will be going to court later this month as the Zone Wardens could not identify and name and address from the rubbish.

There will be changes to recycling with collections fortnightly. Arrangements can be made for extra collections if there is a need for people with exemptions. Garden bags will be free later this year. The Zone Wardens can arrange a roadshow if needed.

The Marine Police have agreed to some days of action in the summer on the water.

6414 TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

6415 TO RECORD DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest received.

6416 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 10 NOVEMBER 2016 – MATTERS ARISING

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Moore, SECONDED by Councillor Clements that the MINUTES of the Meeting held on 10 November 2016, be CONFIRMED. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6417 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PLANNING MEETING OF 1 DECEMBER 2016 – MATTERS ARISING

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Jenkins, SECONDED by Councillor Banks that the MINUTES of the Meeting held on 1 December 2016, be CONFIRMED. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6418 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 5 JANUARY 2017 – MATTERS ARISING

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Moore, SECONDED by Councillor Clements that the MINUTES of the Meeting held on 5 January 2017, be CONFIRMED. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6419 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF 17 JANUARY 2017 – MATTERS ARISING

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Jenkins, SECONDED by Councillor Clements that the MINUTES of the Meeting held on 17 January 2017, be CONFIRMED. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6420 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PLANNING MEETING OF 26 JANUARY 2017 – MATTERS ARISING

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Weaver, SECONDED by Councillor Banks that the MINUTES of the Meeting held on 26 January 2017, be CONFIRMED. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6421 TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

(a) 17 0190

Provision of a ramp for disabled access. Access to level threshold front door.
36 High Street North, West Mersea – Mr B Bishop

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend CONSENT be granted in respect of this application.

(b) 17 0172

Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and front porch.
9 Brambledown, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Bielecki

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend CONSENT be granted in respect of this application.

(c) 17 0192

Extension of existing function room, re-location of existing toilets to include additional facilities. Addition of a covered porch to existing flat roof entrance. Construct pitched roof on first floor dwelling and clad exterior of existing pub.

Fox Inn, 106 East Road, West Mersea – Mr S Jowers

West Mersea Town Council propose that Colchester Borough Council look at the design as it is not in keeping with the existing building.

(d) 17 0100

Change of use of ground floor (A1) retail to (C3) residential. Two storey side extension.
14 Church Road, West Mersea – Mr R Cook

West Mersea Town Council strongly objects to this planning application for a number of reasons. If this goes ahead it will terminate a sustainable and unique business of 55 years standing right within the heart of the designated retail area for West Mersea. The change of use of these premises to housing profoundly contradicts the requirements of the NPPF (para 14). Furthermore para 23 of the NPPF sets out the need to retain town centres and specifically para 28 “promote the RETENTION and development of local services...”. Mersea has been designated an Urban Retail Centre and a resolution was passed by Colchester Borough Council to retain local retail units over residential. Additionally if this shop closes the environmental impact of many more car journeys from and returning to the Island to purchase items currently held in stock defeats the government’s (and NPPF) push for a Low Carbon future.

(e) 17 0098

2 no. new dwellings.
63 Churchfields, West Mersea – Mr J Grogan

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend CONSENT be granted in respect of this application. Councillors Banks and Moore voted against the proposal.

(f) 17 0209

Single storey rear extension and loft conversion.
4 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea – Mrs Newman

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend CONSENT be granted in respect of this application.

(g) 17 0230

Extend floating pontoon by 1.6m wide and 43m long.
Pontoon opposite West Mersea Yacht Club, Coast Road, West Mersea – Colchester Borough Council

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend CONSENT be granted in respect of this application.

(h) 17 0359

Variation of condition 3 & 5 (to retain extension as built) of planning permission 14 6556. Proposed extensions and alterations. Resubmission of application 14 5290.
51 Seaview Avenue, West Mersea – Mrs Philpot

West Mersea Town Council recommends that Colchester Borough Council investigates whether the conditions have been met.

(i) 17 0363

Construction of single storey side/rear extension. Construction of a single detached garage.
40 Churchfields, West Mersea – Mr T Fitness

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend CONSENT be granted in respect of this application.

6422 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING DECISIONS RECEIVED

Applications Passed

- (a) 16 2904
Proposed replacement detached dwelling and garage (following demolition of existing). Resubmission of previous application 16 0662.
11 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs G Farmer
- (b) 16 3164
Variation of condition 2 (approved drawings) of planning permission 16 1182 to permit changes to the fenestration with associated changes to the internal layout.
Land adjacent 83 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea – M Cox & T Hart
- (c) 16 3056
Alterations and extension and replacement garage.
7 Seaview Avenue, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Wallington
- (d) 163171
Proposed rear extension and replacement garage.
24 St Peters Road, West Mersea – Mr B Lord
- (e) 16 3152
Extension, improvements and associated works.
98 Coast Road, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Eckstein

6423 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

Bradwell – There will be another meeting next week. Otherwise, there have been no substantial changes since the last report.

Cemetery Committee – This has now been changed to a working group once the group met for the first-time last week. A database for Feldy View and Firs Road has been set up. The hedge between Firs Road old and new section may be removed. The rules for Feldy View will be looked at and rewritten to make sure it is being used as a woodland cemetery.

Communications Committee – The new phones and Broadband are now working with some small teething problems still to sort out. The website is being updated to make it generally more accessible. The Facebook page is being reviewed and a further drive will be made once the website is up to date.

Facilities & Assets Committee – There will be another litter pick on 4th & 5th March, as the Zone Warden mentioned. At the next meeting in 6 weeks' time an update about the coin op system and refurbishment of the public toilets should be available. We have the support of the Borough Councillors in claiming S106 funding for the children's play area and the Youth field.

LCAP – The recent meeting in Layer De La Haye was well attended with 19 people, including the Police. The usual issues such as dog fouling, parking and littering were discussed. Three ‘special’ PCs have been appointed for rural areas and have been seen in West Mersea.

Neighbourhood Plan – The group are progressing with the questionnaire which will be available on line and in paper format.

Personnel Committee – Nothing to report

Sports & Recreation Committee – The committee have calculated that it is very expensive for West Mersea Town Council to run the Glebe and Sports Pavilion, including the grass cutting and pitch marking this totals around £16000 to £17000 per year. West Mersea Town Council have asked MISA to manage the Glebe and Sports Pavilion and talks are in progress. The Tennis Club have also been asked to join MISA and they will all enjoy shared use of the facilities and the Tennis Pavilion, which the Council would pay to install heating for. Once an agreement has been reached a new legal agreement will be drawn up.

Traffic Committee

West Mersea Town Council have made an application for road parking schemes. Letters will be sent out to residents and 70% support is required within the road for the scheme to go ahead. We might also get red lines near The Post Office and the butcher in Yorick Road. Red lines mean no parking or stopping whatsoever and is enforced by cameras. The decision for this is likely to be made in October.

Waterside committee. Nothing to report. The next meeting will be 8 March 2017.

6424 MAYOR’S NOTES

Cllr Powling thanked everyone once again for their efforts and said that all the Councillors were working incredibly hard.

6425 TO DISCUSS THE NEW RURAL POLICING TEAM IN WEST MERSEA AND CONSIDER FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Jenkins advised that the ‘Specials’ are working evenings and weekends and although it was very early days it would be useful in due course to invite them in for a meeting.

6426 TO CONSIDER AND AGREE PUBLISHING AN EXPLANATION OR BREAKDOWN OF THE 2017/18 PRECEPT

Following discussion it was agreed that this item could be included in the Mayors notes report or similar.

6427 TO CONSIDER AND AGREE PUBLISHING A REGULAR BI-MONTHLY OR QUARTERLY REPORT ABOUT THE WORK OF WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

Following discussion it was agreed to review the Mayors notes section in Mersea Life and consider each committee chairman giving a written report.

6428 TO AGREE A CHANGE TO THE INTERMENT PROVISION FOR FELDY VIEW WOODLAND CEMETERY SO THAT THE COUNCIL DECIDE WHAT AND WHERE, TREES AND SHRUBS WILL BE PLANTED. TO BE INTRODUCED FROM 1 MARCH 2017

Following discussion it was agreed that West Mersea Town Council should be making the decisions about the planting in order to manage the cemetery.

6429 TO CONSIDER AND AGREE CHANGING THE FINANCE AND PLANNING MEETINGS TO COUNCIL MEETINGS

Following discussion it was agreed that with immediate effect, the Finance and Planning Meetings will now be full Council meetings, held every 3 weeks except for August. The Borough Councillors will still only be invited every 6 weeks and the reports will also only be every other meeting but this will allow many of the other matters that need to be discussed at Council meetings, to be discussed sooner.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.