

MINUTES OF THE LITTLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14th May, 2025
LITTLEBURY VILLAGE HALL, LITTLEBURY at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Mike Scott, John Broomfield, Steve Roberts, Peter Rieck, Peter Garland, Jan Menell.

Also Present: Neil Gregory

Public: 1

	Peter Rieck chaired the meeting	
1.	Apologies for Absence: Philip Marns, Scott Rowling, Richard Pavitt, Paul Gadd.	
2.	Election of Chair and Vice Chair: Peter Rieck suggested that the Council was undergoing significant transition and that continuity was desirable in its leadership. On this basis Mike Scott, supported by Janet Menell, suggested that Philip Marns should become Chair. Mike Scott was also asked if he wanted to be considered for Chair but declined. Accordingly Philip Marns was elected Chair- Proposer Peter Rieck, Seconder Janet Menell. There was some debate about the desirability of having both Chair and Vice Chair resident in Littlebury Green. However, none of the Littlebury members felt they had the time to commit to the VC role. Thus Mike Scott was elected Vice Chair – Proposer Steve Roberts, Seconder John Broomfield.	
3.	Parish Council Vacancies: Mike Scott has notified Uttlesford District Council of the resignation of Jean Cowell and Peter Garland. Notices have been placed on the parish notice boards indicating that any 10 persons on the parish electoral role can request an election within 10 working days (by 31 May) to fill these vacancies. If there is no such request the PC can co-opt members to fill the vacancies.	
4.	Public Participation (15 mins): None	
5.	Approval of minutes: Parish Council meeting held on 9 th May, 2025: The PC approved the previously circulated minutes and they were signed by the Vice Chair.	
6.	Report from the District Councillor/County Councillor: County Councillor: Paul Gadd submitted a written report. District Councillor: Neil Gregory re-iterated that the UDC Local Plan was now with the Inspector and that no significant changes that would impact this part of the District were expected. He stressed the importance of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. With the upcoming local government re-organisation and the likely merging of Uttlesford, Harlow and Epping into a new Unitary Authority there is expected to be significant pressure for increased development in this area. A strong Neighbourhood Plan is the best bulwark to minimise the impact on the Parish.	
7.	Replacement Clerk: Mike Scott gave a summary of progress to date in replacing the clerk/RFO. The paper parish records have been moved from Tracy Coston to a secure cabinet in the village hall. In due course they will need sorting and archived or destroyed in line with parish policy. A new computer has been acquired and set up by Ian Dunham with a dedicated Microsoft 365 account and cloud storage. A new email account has been set up for the RFO and Mike now has access to the clerk email. It remains for Tracy to transfer the electronic records and provide a list of key dates and contacts.	

	There were 6 responses to the advert for a new clerk/RFO. 2 were rejected as they lived too far away. 4 were invited to interview by a sub-committee of John Broomfield, Peter Rieck and Mike Scott. One subsequently withdrew and one was considered unsuitable. The remaining 2 candidates were both deemed suitable, assuming no further candidates come forward. The sub-committee requested the PC's approval to offer the position to the preferred candidate and draw up a contract of employment using the NALC template. This was agreed. It is hoped that the new clerk/RFO will commence on or shortly after 1 June. Mike Scott has offered to work alongside for the first month. It was also agreed to extend Tracy Coston's appointment as RFO till September 30th to enable a smooth transition of the financial functions.	
8.	Project Updates: a) Report from Littlebury Energy Project: No further information. b) Catmere End pond: Peter Rieck stated that the project is in abeyance pending resolution of the land ownership and UDC plans for the treatment plant.	
9.	<u>Planning:</u> a) For Discussion: UTT/25/1131/HHF: 20 Merton Place, Littlebury: Replacement of all windows and re-rendering of existing house. Erection of a single story rear extension. No objections UTT/25/1251/TCA School House, High St, Littlebury 1no. Hazel - Remove tree and grind stump below ground level. 1no. Yew - Approximately 1 metre crown reduction by pruning back to previous pruning point. Crown lift to 3 metres on garden side by removing whole branches where appropriate. Clear roof of out building by at least 1 metre. No objections <u>b) Decisions:</u> <u>None</u> <u>c) Neighbourhood Plan:</u> The formal request to UDC Planning was submitted by Tracy Coston on 13th May. The Terms of Reference for the Working Group was accepted.	
10.	Matters/Actions arising from the minutes: a) Blind Lane: Awaiting response from Tees Law on costs. b) Path between Church Walk and High St. A resident's gardener has cleared the overgrowth on the path. No progress with request to InterCounty to ask landlord to cut back overhanging foliage and attend to fence. c) Invitation to Police Commissioner: Phil Marns has written requesting a meeting. An automated receipt has been received there has been no follow up.	
11.	Clerk's update: a) Levelling of football pitch at Recreation Ground: A quote of £2090 + VAT has been received from Hardy's. It was agreed that the cost cannot be justified unless there is regular use of the pitch for football matches. b) Planting of Littlebury triangle: Hardy's have quoted £595 to supply and plant the triangle. A quote from Springwell is awaited. It was agreed that any planting should be done in the autumn.	

12.	Highways a) Cutting back vegetation on Windmill Hill path to Saffron Walden: No update. b) Replacement posts for Highway signs: Brad of Saffron Signs has quoted £100 labour plus the cost of the post. Steve Roberts agreed to do a parish walkabout with Brad to identify all posts and get an overall cost.																																							
13.	Risk Register: a) Review of the risk register: The risk register was circulated to all councillors. No new risks or failures in mitigation were noted. The risk register will be reviewed every quarter.																																							
14.	Littlebury and Littlebury Green Play areas: a) Nets for Littlebury Recreation Ground: The new nets have been ordered and are due for delivery in a few days. b) Littlebury and Littlebury Green Playground inspections: Awaiting quotes for repairs. Mike Scott will follow up with Tracy Coston c) Bins at Littlebury Green Playground: Jan Menell noted that the waste bins are full and one is decaying. Steve Roberts offered to inspect the bins and measure the goal nets.																																							
15	Communications between Councillors: John Broomfield commented that response to emails was often slow and a faster communication channel was desirable. After some discussion about the merits of WhatsApp it was agreed to set up a councillors and clerk only group. It was recognised that such messages do not form part of the public record and should not contain any attachments or sensitive material.																																							
16.	Finance a) Approval of cheques: The following payments were approved:																																							
	<table><tr><td>Payments</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Tracy Coston (April payment)</td><td>£439.23</td></tr><tr><td>John Broomfield (Hacksaw blades)</td><td>£8.99</td></tr><tr><td>John Broomfield (filing cabinet)</td><td>£11.12</td></tr><tr><td>Walden Local (Clerk advert)</td><td>£72.00</td></tr><tr><td>HMRC (Tax)</td><td>£329.40</td></tr><tr><td>Rob Cook</td><td>£87.50</td></tr><tr><td>Rob Cook</td><td>£250.64</td></tr><tr><td>Rob Cook</td><td>£80.50</td></tr><tr><td>MedUK (defibs)</td><td>£298.14</td></tr><tr><td>The Play Inspection Company</td><td>£212.40</td></tr><tr><td>P J Marns (Dell computer)</td><td>£480.00</td></tr><tr><td>Hardy Landscapes (goal mouth filling. Littlebury Rec)</td><td>£300.00</td></tr><tr><td>Hardy Landscapes (grass cutting)</td><td>£535.84</td></tr><tr><td>Littlebury Village Hall (room hire 01/04/23 -31/03/25</td><td>£600.00</td></tr><tr><td>Littlebury Village Hall (refreshments for litter pick)</td><td>£210.00</td></tr><tr><td>EALC Subscription</td><td>£376.07</td></tr><tr><td>Tracy Coston (football nets)</td><td>£88.85</td></tr><tr><td>Total Payments</td><td>£4380.68</td></tr></table>	Payments		Tracy Coston (April payment)	£439.23	John Broomfield (Hacksaw blades)	£8.99	John Broomfield (filing cabinet)	£11.12	Walden Local (Clerk advert)	£72.00	HMRC (Tax)	£329.40	Rob Cook	£87.50	Rob Cook	£250.64	Rob Cook	£80.50	MedUK (defibs)	£298.14	The Play Inspection Company	£212.40	P J Marns (Dell computer)	£480.00	Hardy Landscapes (goal mouth filling. Littlebury Rec)	£300.00	Hardy Landscapes (grass cutting)	£535.84	Littlebury Village Hall (room hire 01/04/23 -31/03/25	£600.00	Littlebury Village Hall (refreshments for litter pick)	£210.00	EALC Subscription	£376.07	Tracy Coston (football nets)	£88.85	Total Payments	£4380.68	
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	b) Authority changes to the Unity Trust Bank mandate: Peter Rieck is now authorised to approve payments. Steve Roberts, John Broomfield and Scott Rowling are waiting for Unity Trust Bank to mail log in details. .																																							

17.	General Correspondence: Walden Velo will be holding time trials on the B1383 on Thursday evenings from May to October	
18.	Area Report: a) Verge Cutting: John Broomfield has received a WhatsApp from a resident asking about the timing of the cutting. This will be reviewed when the contract is renewed next year. b): Litter Picking: It was suggested that we find a place such as the Village Hall for storage of litter picking equipment. c): Thanks: The PC thanked Peter Garland for his contributions and wished him well for his move	
19.	Date of next meeting, The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 11th June, 2025 at 7.30 pm in Littlebury Village Hall, Littlebury.	

The meeting closed at 10.35 pm

Signed

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Dated

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