

**DRAFT MINUTES OF SIBLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, PARKFIELDS, SIBLE HEDINGHAM ON
MONDAY 9th JUNE 2014 AT 7.30PM.**

In the chair: Mrs. G. Massey

Present: Cllrs. J. Beavis, S. Glen, D. Holmes, A. Law, S. Partridge, A. Prill, R. Ratcliffe-Bingham, J. Skittrall, R. Volkwyn and L. Waller.

Mr. A. Corder-Birch (Clerk)

Together with 2 (two) members of the public

Public comment

Mr. M. Firman, on behalf of the Hedingshams and District Branch of the Royal British Legion, asked if the forthcoming gardens near Brook House could commemorate the centenary of the First World War, with a plaque in memory of those lost.

Mr. A. Prill suggested that the gardens commemorate those lost in all conflicts.

Mr. S. Partridge requested that a suitable name for the gardens is chosen in the near future.

Mrs. L. Waller stated that this public open space provides an opportunity to dedicate something important and become a quiet place.

Mr. Firman confirmed that he will approach the local schools so the children respect the gardens, the plaque, be quiet and understand the purpose of the gardens.

Mr. J. Nicholson referred to current proposals to light the MUGA and reminded Councillors that there had been major concern among residents when the previous proposals for lighting were made and abandoned. He stated that the residents looked forward to the consultation process.

Mrs. G. Massey reported that the residents living closest to the MUGA had already been consulted and assured Mr. Nicholson that he would not be affected by the lighting.

Mr. J. Skittrall reported upon a site meeting with a lighting contractor since when the Chairman and himself had visited residents who would be affected.

Mr. A. Prill accepted that Mr. Nicholson had a point regarding consultation.

Mr. S. Partridge reported that lighting will be the subject of a planning application when residents can make representations to BDC through the planning process.

There was no other public comment.

49. **Apologies for absence**

Cllrs. J. Fennelly (holiday), E. Jones (illness), D. Finch, H. Johnson, W. Scattergood

50. **Co-option of new Councillor to fill casual vacancy**

Mrs. G. Massey reported that the Interview Panel had interviewed two candidates who would both make good councilors and had decided to recommend Mrs. Rebecca Ratcliffe-Bingham to fill the casual vacancy. It was proposed by Mrs. Massey, seconded by Mr. S. Partridge and carried that Mrs. R. Ratcliffe-Bingham is co-opted onto the Parish Council.

51. **Declaration of Acceptance of Office of new Councillor**

Mrs. R. Ratcliffe-Bingham then signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office form, which was countersigned by the Clerk.

52. **To fill vacancies**

The following vacancies were filled:

- a) Finance and Funding Committee – Mr. A. Prill
- b) Personnel Committee – Mrs. R. Ratcliffe-Bingham
- c) Water Management Advisory Group – Mrs. L. Waller
- d) Halstead Area Crime Prevention Panel – Mrs. R. Ratcliffe-Bingham
- e) EALC – Mrs. J. Beavis
- f) Recreation and Amenities Committee – Mrs. R. Ratcliffe-Bingham

In addition Mrs. Ratcliffe-Bingham may attend the next Transport and Highways Committee meeting as an observer to consider the possibility of joining this committee at a later date.

53. **Declarations of interest**

Mr. S. Partridge declared a NPI in connection with the item relating to allotments as Chairman of SHALGA. There were no other declarations of interest.

54. **To confirm minutes of meeting held 12th May 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th May 2014, having been circulated, were taken as read were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

55. **Matters arising from those minutes**

a) **Bench at Cobbs Path**

Mrs. L. Waller reported that Mr. D. Holmes had replaced, free of charge, the plaque on the bench in memory of Barbara Robinson for which he was thanked.

b) **Freedom of Information**

Mrs. G. Massey reported that she was working on a document for consideration by the working party.

c) **Site Allocations**

Mr. A. Prill enquired if the Site Allocations process will have to start again as its objective has changed. Mrs. G. Massey reported that requirements for housing were now greater than before so it is unlikely that the existing plan will proceed in view of the risk on costs if the Inspector refuses it.

Mrs. J. Beavis reported upon two forthcoming meetings on 12th and 30th June to consider Site Allocations and that in the meantime BDC is taking legal advice.

Mr. S. Partridge enquired about membership of the LDF panel, which Mrs. Beavis believed remained the same.

Mrs. L. Waller enquired what planning justification Bloor Homes had in light of the current Site Allocations position. Mrs. Beavis suggested that the outcome of forthcoming BDC meetings, are awaited.

There were no other matters arising.

56. **Chairman's report**

The Chairman reported that she had attended the Jack Petchey Awards evening in place of Mrs. J. Beavis. Mrs. Massey had been a judge and was thanked by Mrs. Beavis for representing her.

57. **Youth Council Report**

Mr. S. Partridge reported that about thirty young people were very upset that someone had destroyed the litter bin outside the Youth Shelter and had insisted that action is taken against the culprit. Mrs. G. Massey stated that the incident had been reported to the Police who were investigating. Mr. D. Holmes asked if the incident had been recorded on CCTV and Mrs. Massey confirmed that it had been partly recorded and that the Police were also seeking statements from witnesses to enable them to prosecute and/or to obtain payment from the culprit and/or to arrange for community service to be undertaken. Concern was expressed that in some cases of criminal damage the Police do not prosecute. Mr. A. Prill requested that if the Police do not prosecute then SHPC consider taking proceedings in the Small Claims Court. Mr. R. Volkwyn questioned the merits of this and the Clerk advised that proceedings can be taken based on invoices for the cost of replacement and installation but in view of the comparatively small amounts involved this may not be cost effective. Mr. Prill considered that action should be taken as a matter of principle, in cases where there was sufficient evidence and there was a good prospect of success. Mrs. Massey stated that each case must be reviewed on its merits.

58. **County Councillor's Report**

In the absence of Mr. D. Finch no report was given.

59. **District Councillor's Reports**

Mrs. J. Beavis reported on the following:

That she had met Mr. Ian Stidson of the NHS about a Medical Centre for Sible Hedingham (and no branch surgery for Great Yeldham). It was a good meeting and the case for a Medical Centre for Sible Hedingham only will continue.

That Service Level Agreements for CAB, RCCE and BDVSA were all up for renewal, which Mrs. Beavis will deal with as the Cabinet Member responsible. All three organizations support the north of the district. Mrs. Beavis had attended a recent BDC Planning Committee meeting when she had supported SHPC and the planning application in respect of the Old Woodyard at Southey Green. Unfortunately BDC had refused permission and the appellants had lodged an appeal, upon which Mrs. Beavis will be writing a

letter of support.

60. **Planning Committee**

The minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings held on 9th and 30th May 2014, having been circulated were accepted in lieu of a report.

61. **Recreation and Amenities Committee**

The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting held on 16th May 2014, having been circulated, were accepted in lieu of a report.

62. **Transport and Highways Committee**

The minutes of the Transport and Highways Committee Meeting held on 21st May 2014, having been circulated, were accepted in lieu of a report.

63. **Personnel Committee**

The minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 20th May 2014, having been circulated, were accepted in lieu of a report.

64. **To consider naming of gardens to commemorate the centenary of the First World War**

Further consideration was given to this item which had been deferred from the previous meeting. Councillors took into consideration the representations made by Mr. M. Firman in public comment. Mrs. R. Ratcliffe-Bingham asked if there would be room in the garden for trees and it was confirmed that there would be. Mr. D. Holmes suggested a marble plaque and will produce brochures for consideration. Alternatively a plaque could be placed on a bench. Mr. Firman will enquire if the RBL will contribute to the cost of a plaque although Councillors considered that funding should come out of the S106 artwork contribution. It was noted that the gardens will not be finally established for about another three years. Following some discussion the following was agreed in principle:

That the gardens should commemorate all war dead (not only the First World War).

That a suitable plaque is provided.

That a suitable name is chosen for the gardens in the near future and used to prevent inappropriate names such as Pocket Park and Earls Garden being used.

That the name should initially be considered by the R&A Committee and thereafter be referred to the next full PC meeting for approval.

65. **To consider the former Nat West Bank building**

Mrs. L. Waller considered that the former Nat West Bank building would make a modest Parish Office in a more central location. Mr. A. Prill considered that it lacks a meeting room, is not large enough, but an extension could be considered. Mrs. G. Massey thought there may be difficulty extending the building into a POS and reported that £20,000 is available under the S106 agreement for refurbishment of the building and enquiries had been made with BDC as to the development commencement date and when the garden and building will be transferred to SHPC. Mrs. J. Beavis considered that the building was too small, it lacked proper foundations and there was no parking provision. In addition the existing office should not be compromised for a smaller space, which may not be possible to extend. The Chairman stated that this item should be deferred and discussed again when the garden and building come into SHPC ownership.

66. **Update on proposed allotments**

a) **To consider valuation from Oswicks Limited relating to land off Station Road**

The Clerk had previously circulated a valuation report from Oswick Limited of the land for the proposed allotments including parking area and vehicular access off Station Road. Mr. D. Holmes and Mr. S. Partridge reported upon enquiries made with other local authority allotments in the area where car parking is not provided and therefore is not essential.

b) **To consider sale particulars relating to land off Queen Street**

The Clerk reported that Strutt and Parker had not yet prepared sale particulars in respect of the land off Queen Street, which they were advertising for sale but had agreed to send SHPC a copy when ready.

However they had indicated that the Vendor was seeking a six figure sum on the basis that the land could be developed. It was agreed to defer consideration of this land for the time being.

c) **To progress proposed allotments**

It was agreed to continue to negotiate with the owner of the land off Station Road and to offer the recommended value for the 'orange' land, including the vehicular access and to discuss a reduction in the area of the 'pink' land required and consequential reduction in its value. This will leave the owner with a commercially viable area of land. Clawback clauses could be offered although these should not be relevant for statutory allotments, which should never be disposed off. It was proposed by Mr. D. Holmes, seconded by Mr. S. Partridge and carried that the owner is invited to a meeting at the PC office to discuss the position when SHPC will be represented by Mrs. G. Massey, Mr. S. Partridge and Mr. A. Prill.

67. **To approve Parish Council Accounts and the annual governance statement for 2013-14**

The Clerk reported that the internal audit of the Parish Council's accounts had been completed by the Internal Auditor and found in order. The Internal Auditor had made one observation namely that some fixed assets are under insured but this risk is currently being addressed. The Clerk reported that he had asked the insurers to add some fixed assets to the property damage section of the policy in February 2014 but the insurers had not done so until this month following a reminder to them from the Clerk. Mrs. L. Waller observed that the reserves were still increasing despite the precept not increasing. It was proposed by Mrs. J. Beavis seconded by Mr. R. Volkwyn and carried that the accounts for the year 2013-2014 and the annual governance statement set out on page 3 of the annual return are approved. The accounts and annual return were then signed by the Chairman and Clerk and will be sent to PKF Littlejohn LLP on behalf of the Audit Commission for external audit.

68. **To consider making available podcasts of Parish Council meetings**

Mrs. L. Waller reported that the majority of BDC meetings are webcast, which is a good way of engaging with the public and could reduce the length of the minutes. Mrs. G. Massey reported that she had made enquiries and five pieces of software are required, which can be downloaded free of charge. The screen in the PC meeting room could be used for committee meetings and Mr. K. Thorogood of KTS was willing to help to set up the system. It was proposed by Mr. A. Prill, seconded by Mr. A. Law and carried that meetings are webcast for six months on a trial basis.

69. **Correspondence and emails**

The correspondence received and listed in appendix 1 was referred to relevant Councillors for information and action. Mrs. L. Waller raised the letter from Mr. Slee regarding the clearance of FP14. The Clerk reported that Mr. H. Johnson had kindly offered to clear this FP voluntarily. Mrs. Waller outlined the situation regarding voluntary work on footpaths, which had effectively been "killed off" by red tape from ECC and their officer's failure to attend meetings or respond to communications. It was therefore agreed that the next R&A Committee meeting should consider paying contractors to clear footpaths. In the meantime Mrs. Beavis agreed to email all members of the Footpaths Advisory Group asking them to report any footpaths problems and in particular any footpaths which need clearing.

70. **Accounts for payment**

The accounts listed in appendix 2 were presented for payment together with additional accounts from "The Hedingham" for £283.25 for the hire of Ripper Hall and the provision of food and drink for BH's retirement party and PPL for £58.88 for Public Performance Licence for Legacy Day, both being S137 payments. It was proposed by Mr. R. Volkwyn, seconded by Mr. J. Skittrall and carried that the accounts are paid.

71. **Any other business/exchange of information/agenda for next meeting**

a) **Bridge from Alderford Street to HRW**

Mr. D. Holmes expressed concern about the delays with installation of the footbridge over the stream from Alderford Street to HRW for which the start date was now August 2014.

b) **Transport and Highways Committee**

Ms. S. Glen asked if the representatives from Go Ahead Group PLC and Hedingham and District Omnibuses had been invited to attend the next Transport and Highways Committee meeting. The Clerk confirmed that they had been invited to attend but had not responded to the invitation. In the circumstances Ms. Glen will communicate direct with them to ensure their attendance.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

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(Date)

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(Chairman)