

**MINUTES OF SIBLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT
THE VILLAGE HALL, PARKFIELDS, SIBLE HEDINGHAM ON
MONDAY 11th JUNE 2012 AT 7.30 p.m.**

In the chair: Mrs. G. Massey
Present: Cllrs. C. Cannell, R. Green, E. Jones, A. Law, S. Partridge, A. Prill, J. Skittrall, and L. Waller
Mrs. S. Smith (Relief Clerk)
Together with 7 (seven) members of the public

Public comment

Mr. J. Nicholson referred to Agenda Item 20, Regeneration Area. He wished to ensure he had the correct information and asked that the following be made clear:

- No member of the Parish Council would see the plan in detail until tomorrow (this was confirmed).
- Was this now a specific planning application from Bloor Homes and what was the timing of public consultation? Mrs. Massey said the MasterPlan would have to be adopted by Braintree District Council before it went forward as a planning application. Mrs. Waller added that the public consultation would take place tomorrow. There was usually 28 day statutory period for consultation after the planning application is received.

Because there had been very short notice of the date of the consultation, the Parish Council planned its own consultation evening on Monday 25th June, which was at the end of the period when the plans were available to view in the Parish Council office.

Mr. Nicholson also asked how the Localism Act applied to planning applications.

Mr. Prill added that it was imperative to get the development right for the village.

Mrs. Massey said that, unless circumstances were exceptional, she would not allow an adjournment mid-meeting for further comments from the floor.

49. **Apologies for absence**

Cllrs. J. Beavis (BDC meeting) D. Holmes (on holiday), F. Swallow (unwell), and W. Scattergood; Adrian Corder-Birch.

50. **Declarations of interest**

Cllrs. C. Cannell and J. Skittrall declared a personal interest in item 16. Cllr. A. Law declared a personal interest in item 17.

51. **To confirm minutes of previous meeting held 14th May 2012**

The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on 14th May 2012, having been circulated, were taken as read. The following amendments were agreed:

Public Comment line 17: 'expected' changed to 'suspected'

Public Comment line 14: add: 'other than Cllr. Finch offered to put the new cabinet member of Highways in touch.'

The minutes were then confirmed and duly signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

52. **Matters arising from those minutes**

Item 25(b) Matters arising: Cllr. S. Partridge confirmed that Mr. B. Howlett had agreed to continue in his role as Treasurer of the Steering Committee for the Youth Club.

Item 47 Rent Review: Cllr. L. Waller asked what progress had been made. Cllr. G. Massey stated that the Clerk had spoken to the landlord. It had been agreed that both he and the Parish Council would seek advice on a fair rent.

Item 47 Covenant to Purchase Freehold of Office: No quote for the landlord's solicitors' costs in this respect had been received.

53. **Chairman's report**

There was nothing to report that was not covered by agenda items.

54. **Youth Council Report**

Cllr. L. Waller reported that the youth had been very appreciative of a great day at the Legacy Day last Saturday. They had also said they would like to go on more outings, expressed concern about the skateboard park, and requested to go paint-balling. Thanks were recorded to Cllr. S. Partridge for all his hard work to make the Legacy Day so successful. Cllr. S. Partridge thanked all Councillors who had helped with the day. About 200 people had attended and 28 medals had been presented. He would do a written report to go with these minutes. (*Action Cllr. Partridge*)

55. **County Council Report**

Cllr. Finch reported that at the end of the financial year, on an overall expenditure of nearly £2.3 billion, the Council had underspent by £7 million. It was expected that £10 million approx. would be spent on improving Highways.

There were probably 2000 families in Essex that have complex needs, which cost the Council £2 million in total. The Council will look at how to intervene in these cases.

The Council is keen to foster economic growth in the region.

In the area of crime reduction, a large number of crimes are perpetrated by people in difficult social circumstances or who are unemployed. The Council is working with parents and social workers to turn this round.

During the recent heavy rain, the Environment Agency had not come out to Alderford Mill for Health & Safety reasons. Essex County Council would now come out when others were not able to.

The Government was changing the criteria for payment of Council Tax Benefit and would cut this fund by about 10%. Pensioners would be protected but there would be significant reductions in benefits for people on low incomes. Cllr. Finch agreed to send a copy of the relevant paperwork to the Parish Council when it is available. (*Action Cllr. Finch*)

Questions raised with Cllr. Finch included:

- Concern about reduction in grants to shelters for abused women – the grant to Women's Refuges has been increased.
- Concern that health, education and social services should be included in discussions about a family's needs – ECC had put money into the social impact bond which should help to reduce the number of children in need.
- Cllr. R. Green thanked those who had been controlling the Mill Gates during recent flooding. Cllr. A. Law added that the water going through the open gates had caused a vibration which disengaged the ratchet, causing the gates to start to close. Cllr. A. Prill had suggested that the gates could be automated. This would be less expensive and is technically possible. Cllr. Finch said he would take this back to the Environment Agency. (*Action Cllr. Finch*)

56. **District Council Report**

Cllr. G. Massey read a report that had been sent by Cllr. W. Scattergood in her absence concerning the National Planning Policy Framework. Where District Councils have a core strategy in place (as does Braintree), the core strategy has precedence over the NPPF document until March 2013. BDC has one year to determine which, if any, parts of the Core Strategy should be updated to reflect the NPPF, and will be required to take account of the new guidance in the preparation of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. During the transitional period full weight may be given to policies in the adopted plans even if there is a limited degree of conflict with the NPPF.

57. **Planning**

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee on 11th May were received. It was **agreed** (proposed by Cllr. L. Waller, seconded by Cllr. J. Skittrall, all in favour) to defer the minutes of the meetings held on 30th May and 1st June as they had not yet been approved by the Planning Committee. Cllr. S. Partridge added that a report on the Premdor/Rockways site should be added to the minutes of the meeting on 1st June.

58. **Terms of Reference for Planning Committee**

It was **agreed** to also defer these to the next meeting, as they were an attachment to the minutes of the meeting on 1st June

59. **Blue Plaques Sub-Committee**

Cllr. E. Jones emphasized that inactivity was due to lack of funding for these plaques. Following discussion it was **agreed** that a special committee is not needed. When provision of these plaques was financially viable, it should be put on a Parish Council meeting agenda. Cllr. E. Jones would continue to seek for a source of funding.

60. **Recreation and Amenities Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th May had been circulated and were accepted in lieu of a report.

61. **Hedingham Riverside Walk**

Cllr. R. Green reported that the renovation of the pathway had been completed right up to the Alderford Mill area. He added that it had been decided that there will be a culvert rather than a bridge and it was hoped this would be done by the end of the year.

62. **Parish Council Vacancy**

Cllr. G. Massey reported that 5 applications had been received for the vacancy. One request had been received to hold an election, but requests from 10 electors were necessary for an election to be held. There was a legal duty to promote the office of Parish Councillor. The vacancy had been advertised on the Parish Noticeboards and on the web site. Following discussion it was **agreed** (proposed by Cllr. J. Skittrall, seconded by Cllr. A. Law, all in favour) that the Halstead Gazette would be contacted and requested to include it in the editorial for this week. (*Action Cllr. G. Massey*)

63. **Localism Act 2011 and Code of Conduct**

Cllr. G. Massey said that the working party had looked at the Code of Conduct recommended by BALC and also that recommended by NALC. Both had been circulated to Councillors. The working party considered that the NALC Code should be adopted because it is in plain English and more understandable. It was **agreed** (proposed by Cllr. G. Massey, seconded by Cllr. E. Jones, all in favour) to adopt the NALC Code of Conduct.

64. **Choisy-Au-Bac visit to Sible Hedingham in November 2012**

Cllr. J. Skittrall had taken part in the recent visit to Choisy-Au-Bac. This weekend had been given a high profile because it was the 20-year anniversary of the Twinning. The Twinning Association Committee is putting together a programme for the weekend in November and was planning a dinner with a traditional British menu, to be catered by a Sudbury company. The Association was requesting a grant of £500 to help with the catering costs, which would be £1200 approx. Cllr. C. Cannell asked whether Castle Hedingham Parish Council would be contributing.

The meeting adjourned for public comment.

Mr. D. Appleby said that the village of Castle Hedingham was not included in the twinning charter.

The meeting then resumed.

Discussion included consideration of contributions from members of the Twinning Association and the possibility that next year's grant to the Twinning Association be advanced to this year.

There was also discussion about a suitable gift to be presented in November. It was **agreed** that a notice be put in the Parish Magazine inviting suggestions of designs for work produced by local artists. From these a design would be chosen, with a payment of £150 approx. for the work. (*Action Cllr. S. Partridge*)

It was also **agreed** that a possible contribution towards the meal be added to the agenda for the next meeting, with a recommendation of a specific amount.

65. **Friends of Alderford Mill**

It was **agreed** to make a grant of £100.00 to the Friends of Alderford Mill (proposed by Cllr. C. Cannell, seconded by Cllr. L. Waller, all in favour).

66. **Quotes re FP 33 at Oxford Meadow**

Two quotes had been received in relation to (a) repairing existing path or (b) replacing existing path or (c) removing existing path and creating new path along route of FP 33 at Oxford Meadow, and to consider concrete as opposed to timber edging. It was **agreed** to defer to the next meeting. In the meantime Cllr. Prill would review the quotes and they would be put into the correspondence file for all Councillors to view. (*Action Cllr. A. Prill*)

67. **ECC Big Society Fund**

Applications were invited by the above fund for a grant for a community project in the village. The criteria were read out, and matched funding would be required. Different possibilities were discussed. It was **agreed** to apply for a grant to enable the Blue Plaques to be erected in the village (9 plaques were needed at a cost of £200 each, plus fixing).

68. **Sible Hedingham Regeneration Area Site Redevelopment and Public Consultation**

Cllr. G. Massey said the Planning Committee had requested sight of the Master Plan before the consultation took place tomorrow, but this had not been received although an electronic copy had been expected.

Discussion included the following:

- BDC should be reminded that some Community use on this site had been promised
- Road systems and infrastructure needed consideration
- It would be good for employment opportunities to be provided
- This was a one-off opportunity for village development on that site, and it would be most effective for the Council to enter consultation with Bloor Homes in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue
- Perhaps the Parish Council could offer an alternative, imaginative plan.

Braintree District Council had not kept the Parish Council informed. The Master Plan would be available for consultation on 12th June at the Village Hall between 12.00 noon and 7.00 p.m. However 8 Councillors would meet with representatives of Bloor Homes and BDC early tomorrow morning. The exhibition panels would be available to view in the Parish Council office until 22nd June.

There would be a village Parish Council consultation evening on Monday 25th June and the Parish Council response to a planning application would be based on that evening. It was **agreed** this meeting would be advertised on an A5 sheet that would be delivered to all homes in the village. It was also **agreed** that a letter be written to the local paper on this subject from the Chair of the Parish Council. (*Action Cllr. Massey*)

69. **Correspondence**

The correspondence received and listed in appendix 1 was referred to relevant Councillors for information and action. Arising from the correspondence the following items were discussed:

- (a) Cllr. S. Partridge recommended that the Parish Council enter for some of the EALC awards. (*Cllr. S. Partridge to discuss with Mr. A. Corder-Birch*)
- (b) Cllr. R. Green commented on the letter concerning FP 37 in Brook Meadow. The letter had been passed to Greenfields. A check would be made on its ownership. (*Action Cllr. J. Skittrall*)
- (c) It was noted that letters of apology had been received from two youngsters concerning damage to a tree. This had been dealt with by the police.

70. **Accounts for payment**

The accounts listed in appendix 2 were presented for payment. It was proposed by Cllr. A. Law, seconded by Cllr. J. Skittrall and carried that the accounts are paid.

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

- (a) Cllr. E. Jones reported she was impressed with the service that the Librarian is offering.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

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(Date)

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(Chairman)