

SIBLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 6th December 2011
at the Baptist Church, Sible Hedingham at 7.30 p.m.

In the chair: Mrs. G. Massey

Present: Cllrs. J. Beavis, C. Cannell, R. Green, D. Holmes, B. Howlett, E. Jones, A. Law, S. Partridge, A. Prill, J. Skittrall, F. Swallow and L. Waller
Mr. A. Corder-Birch (Clerk) and Mrs. S. Smith (Relief Clerk)
Together with 24 (twenty-four) members of the public

Opening Remarks: Mrs. Massey thanked the Baptist Church for providing the venue.

Fire Regulations: Mr. Law informed the meeting of the position of fire exits.

Public Comments: Members the public commented as follows:

(a) *Rev. Paul Corson* welcomed the Parish Council to the church. He wished to state his appreciation that whilst Mrs. Massey had been Chair, the church has been offered an opportunity to be more involved in the community.

(b) *Mrs. Lesley Lewis* said she had come as a concerned resident to thank the Chair, in particular because under her leadership a new allotment organization had been formed and an allotment site offered. She supported Mrs. Massey in her work.

(c) *Miss Jan Cole* stated that she is a co-opted member of the Public Transport, Highways and Speedwatch Committee, a member of the Community Budget Working Party and Hedingham 2012 Festival. The notice of motion had caused worry and distress. She was very concerned that she could not find out from the Clerk or anyone else what the complaints were about because of confidentiality. During the last six months, progress with SHALGA, the Community Bus Scheme and Hedingham Festival had been achieved. It was good to see residents helping with these schemes and Miss Cole offered Mrs. Massey her support.

(d) *Mr. Jim Lock* commented that the Parish Council had acted well in the past, but that a motion of no confidence was not good. He gave his support to the current Chair.

(e) *Ms. Sally Glen* reported that she is also a co-opted member of the Public Transport, Highways and Speedwatch Committee, with a particular interest in community buses. Mrs. Massey and Mr. S. Partridge were dedicated and the community bus scheme would not have progressed as far as it has without them. Mrs. Massey is happy to engage with residents and Ms. Glen urged everyone to support her as Chairman.

Members of the public were thanked for their comments.

216 Apologies for absence: Mr. H. Johnson and Mrs. W. Scattergood.

217. Declarations of Interest: No interests were declared.

218. Report of complaints referred to BDC Monitoring Officer: The Chair had been advised by the BDC Monitoring Officer that complaints should not be discussed while the process is on-going. She therefore **proposed** that such complaints should not be discussed at this meeting. This was **seconded** by Mr. Swallow and **agreed**, with all in favour.

219. To consider a motion of a vote of no confidence in Mrs. G. Massey, as Chair of Sible Hedingham Parish Council, by reason of events at the Parish Council Meeting on 14th November 2011 and complaints referred to BDC Monitoring Officer. The undersigned call for SHPC to vote on the accompanying motion of no confidence in Mrs. G. Massey as Chair in order to regain the confidence of residents of Sible Hedingham in the Parish Council and to restore stability. Appropriate notice of the motion has been given to the Clerk and the motion has been signed by Cllrs. Beavis, Green, Holmes, Jones, Law, and Skittrall.

Mrs. Beavis said that, on advice, and in view of the overwhelming number of complaints that had been lodged with the District Council, she was **proposing that the motion be withdrawn**. As a point of order, no debate was currently permitted. All other signatories were asked to support this proposal.

Cllr. Law wished it to be noted that there must have been a mistake as he had not signed such a motion.

Cllrs. Green and Holmes expressed concern at the events at the previous Parish Council Meeting but supported withdrawal of the proposal.

Cllr. Jones withdrew her support for the motion.

Cllr. Skittrall added that he had not signed the motion. After consideration he had withdrawn his support for the motion before tonight's meeting.

The proposal to withdraw the motion was **seconded** by Dr. R. Green and **agreed** with all in favour.

220. If resolution of vote of no confidence was carried, to (a) Elect a Chairman and (b) Elect a Vice Chairman. In view of the above proposal, this item was withdrawn.

221. To consider adoption of revised Standing Orders

Mrs. Massey said that the BDC Monitoring Office had suggested that because the adoption of revised Standing Orders may be contentious, this item should not be debated at present but should be deferred while the Council considers the options for deciding it under mediation. She added that the options for this meeting were therefore:

- to defer the item;
- to ask BDC or another body to give some help; or
- to go ahead with it.

Mrs. Beavis said that this had not been her understanding. The complaints that have been lodged will go to the Standards Committee, who will decide whether any of the Councillors would need mediation or support. Mrs. Massey reiterated that the mediation being offered is concerning the Standing Orders.

Mr. Holmes **proposed that advice be taken on the Standing Orders and other issues and that the Standing Orders should not be discussed at this meeting.** This was **seconded** by Mr. Skittrall.

The ensuing discussion included the following points:

- possibly no need for help with the Standing Orders
- given the current situation, it might be particularly helpful to seek advice on the Standing Orders and other matters
- the Council had not really had an open discussion and this should take place
- the meeting to discuss Standing Orders should not be clouded by other issues
- if it were decided not to consider the Standing Orders at this meeting, the Chair and Clerk should be charged with exploring this and reporting back to the Council.

A vote was taken and all were in favour of the above motion.

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.