

Minutes of Sible Hedingham Parish Council Meeting Held at the Village Hall, Parkfields, Sible Hedingham on Monday 10th December 2018 at 7.30pm

In the chair: Cllr R Volkwyn

Present: Cllrs S Metson, P Sarel, L Parkin, B Gardener, L Heywood, County Cllr D Finch, Mrs G McCoyd (clerk) and 14 members of public.

Public Comment

The following points were made regarding the Library Consultation:

Does the Parish Council have any plans regarding the possible closure of the library?

The library is a safe space for older people, children and vulnerable residents and as such the community should fight to save it. It is an invaluable resource with access to the internet, it is not just about books as many activities also take place, and it would be hard to keep this going on a voluntary basis.

In the Library Consultation it clearly says that Sible Hedingham Library is a tier 4 and as such will be closed. ECC state it is for austerity reasons but Highways have just wasted money installing and then removing a traffic island in Swan Street.

Cllr R Volkwyn explained that the Parish Council would wait to see the outcome of the consultation. He stated that no-one wants to see the library closed. There is a drop in session on Thursday 31st January 2.30-4.30pm in the library regarding the proposals which he urged residents to attend.

Since the traffic island has been removed there is now a lack of a crossing, the suggestion was made that a mini roundabout could be installed at the bottom of Rectory Road. Cllr R Volkwyn said this was a Highways decision. Cllr D Finch said put forward the suggestion to him and he would see what could be achieved.

The parking along Alexandra Road and Recreation Road is especially bad between 3-3.30pm can anything be done about it? Cllr R Volkwyn said it had been referred to the North Essex Parking Partnership but with no result. Cllr D Finch said he will discuss this with NEPP.

94. Apologies for Absence

Cllr J Skittrall (unwell), Cllr G Jefferson (business), Cllr J Stopher (business), Cllr P Gammon (business), District Cllrs H Johnson and J Beavis (BDC meeting)

95. Members declarations

There were no declarations.

96. To confirm the minutes of meeting held 12th November 2018

The minutes of 12th November having been circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

97. Matters arising from those minutes

There were no matters arising.

98. Chairman's Report

Cllr R Volkwyn read the following email from District Cllr H Johnson

Dear Chairman,

I am sorry that I am unable to attend this meeting. Should Cllr. Finch be in attendance it would have been my intention to discuss the initial installation and subsequent removal of the traffic island adjacent to the new houses and near to the library. I have been contacted by a number of villagers concerned over the costs, the disruption, and worries about crossing, this busy junction.

I would like to state how pleased I and the local communities are that the proposed health centre is moving forward. Subject to plans being approved and finalisation of paperwork we should anticipate building to commence in 18 months time. The already constructed work hub has eager companies keen to move in., there are some issues concerning possible pollution which have to be resolved prior to fully handing over the property. I am involved in matters concerning the possible closure of our library and have discussed some options which I would like share with Cllr. Volkwyn. The Christmas tree looks exceptional I am certain that many people really do appreciate all the efforts which go into putting this up, well done and thank you all.

Cllr. Hylton Johnson

99. County Councillor's Report

Cllr D Finch spoke about the Library Consultation, he said that no action would be taken to close the library until the full consultation had been finished and analysed. ECC would continue to invest in the library service but there had been a steady decline 43% decline in the usage over the last 5-6 years and 23% decline in the use of the internet. Any library that may be due to close after this consultation would have another consultation before closure.

East Sussex had closed libraries but then had re-opened them with volunteers.

Leicestershire libraries were self-service using a swipe card to enter.

So far there have been 7,000 respondents to the consultation and 40-50 different ideas suggested for use and staffing.

Sible Hedingham Library has had a 25% drop in use over the last 5 years.

ECC could not afford to have an empty building, underused with no-one interested in it. It needs to be an effective part of the community.

Cllr Finch answered the following questions:

Sible Hedingham Library is a tier 4 library in the consultation which means it will close. Cllr Finch responded that it could be used for other options and that ideas and other possible uses should be suggested in the consultation.

The consultation seems to be modelled on a central large library with fewer peripheral libraries. Cllr Finch replied that it was possible a library could stay open even if it is small if the right usage was found for it.

How can we keep a Community Library and where will it be housed? Cllr Finch replied that the same building could be used if help was given to make it more vibrant, groups needed to work together to find ways to utilize the library more.

Cllr Finch said that the traffic island had to be removed as it was a hazard issue for both vehicles and residents; it conflicted with access to the 9 dwellings opposite Bloor Homes. The pedestrian refuge was constructed at the only location where there is adequate carriageway lane to accommodate it. For this reason, it unfortunately could not be relocated. He said he would follow through other traffic calming issues as he knows this is a problem.

100. To consider the proposed closure of the library in Sible Hedingham

Cllr R Volkwyn said this item had been covered already, he suggested that residents take suggestions, ideas to the Parish Council Office and fill out the consultation. The suggestion was made that the PC could hold its monthly meeting in the library, the Parish Council will consider the idea but the village hall has more parking and is very reasonable.

101. To consider the removal of the traffic island in Swan Street

Cllr R Volkwyn said this item has also been covered in previous comments.

102. To consider which charities to support with the money raised from the sponsorship of the Christmas Tree.

Cllr S Metson stated that 22 residents had sponsored the tree at £40 each and the Co-op had also donated £150 so £1030 had been raised for the event. He proposed that the money raised from the sponsorship of the tree be split 50% to the Air Ambulance, 25% to the Smile of Arran and 25% to be kept towards funding the event next year. After discussion it was decided to keep none of this money for next year and to give the remaining 25% to another village charity. Cllr L Heywood proposed the Thursday Club, Cllr L Parkin seconded and the motion was carried.

Cllr S Metson thanked the following people who helped make the lighting of the Christmas Tree a success:

Jean & Robert Fuller for the donation of the tree

Chris Jenkins for providing the lights

The volunteers and Cllrs who helped erect the tree and gave their time on the night.

Everyone who gave sponsorship money.

The Co-op who sponsored the tree and provided mince pies.

Splinters for providing mulled wine.

The schools for providing the brass band and the choir.

Concept Signs for providing the sponsorship sign.

Eareys for providing food.

The event was a huge success and he hopes that it will be possible to build on it year on year.

103. To consider purchasing a larger notice board for the wall by the Co-op.

Cllr S Metson said he had difficulty in displaying all the posters in his window and often they were doubled up in the notice board. The notice board is not actually suitable for displaying posters; a larger one would enable him to clear his window.

Cllr R Volkwyn proposed postponing this idea till next year as the notice board has been refurbished this year. All were in favour.

104. To consider removing the B phone box in order to possibly extend the lay-by in Yeldham Road

Cllr R Volkwyn explained that in order for a feasibility survey to be carried out for the Local Highways Panel regarding possibly extending the lay by, the Parish Council had been asked if they would consider the removal of the BT phone box. Everyone was in favour of this idea.

105. To receive minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee held 16th November 2018

The minutes having been circulated were accepted in lieu of a report.

106. To receive the minutes of the Planning Committee held 16th November 2018

The minutes having been circulated were accepted in lieu of a report.

107. To receive the Accounts for payment. Appendix 1

Cllr L Parkin proposed the accounts be approved and paid, Cllr B Gardener seconded, the motion was carried

108. Any other business

There was no other business.

The meeting closed.