

MINUTES OF SIBLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, PARKFIELDS, SIBLE HEDINGHAM ON MONDAY 13th AUGUST 2012 AT 7.30PM.

In the chair: Mrs. G. Massey

Present: Cllrs. J. Beavis, C. Cannell, S. Glen, R. Green, D. Holmes, E. Jones, A. Law, S. Partridge, J. Skittrall, F. Swallow and L. Waller
Mr. A. Corder-Birch (Clerk)
Mr. H. Johnson (District Councillor)
Together with 4 (four) members of the public

Fire regulations

Details were given of the fire regulations relating to the Hall and in particular the whereabouts of the fire exits, the assembly point in Parkfields and vehicles must not be removed from the Hall Car Park.

Public comment

Prior to commencement of the meeting, Mr. J. Nicholson referred to the BDC LDF meeting held on 25th July 2012 when the majority of District Councillors had spoken well and SHPC had successfully obtained 4 out of 5 modifications requested. However he expressed concern about statements made by the Leader of BDC, which he regarded as prejudicial. In addition as a former senior manager with the NHS, the Leader should have presented accurate and up to date information about the number of local Doctors. There was no other public comment.

109. **Apologies for absence**

Cllrs. A. Prill (in USA), D. Finch and W. Scattergood

110. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

111. **To confirm minutes of meeting held 9th July 2012**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2012, having been circulated, were taken as read were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

112. **Matters arising from those minutes**

a) **ECC S106 contributions**

Mrs. L. Waller enquired the position with regard to an assurance from ECC that S106 contributions paid by developers of sites in SH will be used locally. The Clerk confirmed that he had written to Cllr. D. Finch who had sent an acknowledgement confirming that he will consult relevant senior officers at ECC.

b) **River Colne Countryside Trust**

Dr. R. Green reported that he had represented SHPC at a meeting of the RCCT on 12th July. It was a disappointing meeting, poorly attended and difficult to find officers. Although further discussions will take place it is unlikely that progress will be made. It was hoped that Mrs. W. Scattergood will help.

113. **Chairman's report**

The Chairman reported that she had attended the recent JAG meeting and that the Police were now holding Beat Surgeries in SH Library. It was agreed that future PC reports in the Parish Magazine will be written by Mr. S. Partridge, Mr. D. Holmes, Mr. J. Skittrall and Ms. S. Glen (in that order).

114. **Youth Council Report**

In the absence of a Youth Council representative no report was given. Mr. Partridge reported that the Inflatables Day did not take place.

115. **County Councillor's Report**

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

116. **District Councillor's Reports**

Mr. H. Johnson reported on the following:

- (a) JAG meetings will in future be held in Braintree and not Halstead.
- (b) Voluntary work on maintaining footpaths was very encouraging and he thanked all the volunteers.
- (c) The BDC LDF meeting held 25th July 2012.
- (d) Progress with HRW.
- (e) The concrete obstruction in the road outside Tortoise House, Wethersfield Road, SH. It was agreed that this is potentially dangerous and the Clerk was asked to make enquiries with ECC Highways Department.

Mr. Johnson was thanked for his report.

117 **Planning Committee**

The minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings held on 13th July and 3rd August 2012, having been circulated were accepted in lieu of a report. Arising from this item Mrs. L. Waller reported that the attitude of two District Councillors at the BDC LDF meeting on 25th July was disgraceful and everyone expects better from District Councillors. The article and letter in the press from Mrs. G. Massey had helped. A letter is to be sent to the Department of Communities and Local Government later in the week about Parish Councillors feeling intimidated at the LDF meeting by two District Councillors. It was agreed that Dr. Caroline Davies had spoken very well at the meeting but the Leader of BDC had later made incorrect statements about Doctor's numbers in Castle and Sible Hedingham. In view of modifications to the Master Plan it will be necessary to attend the next LDF meeting.

118. **Recreation and Amenities Committee**

The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting held on 20th July 2012, having been circulated, were accepted in lieu of a report.

119. **Finance and Funding Committee**

The minutes of the Finance and Funding Committee Meeting held on 16th July 2012, having been circulated, were accepted in lieu of a report.

120. **Footpaths and PROW Advisory Group**

The minutes of the Footpaths and PROW Advisory Group Meeting held on 17th July 2012, having been circulated, were accepted in lieu of a report.

121. **Report upon training for the Code of Conduct**

Mrs. L. Waller reported that she had attended Code of Conduct training with other Councillors which was led by Mrs. E. Wisbey, Monitoring Officer and Mr. King, Head of Governance, BDC. SHPC had adopted the NALC model but BDC had adopted a different code. Although the principles were much the same some details differ. The failure to declare financial and pecuniary interests is now a criminal offence but behaviour is still dealt with by BDC. An independent person is now required on the Allegations Panel and that person is now available to the accused which is a small improvement over the old system.

The Clerk reported that all 13 Councillors had completed Register of Members' Interests, which had been forwarded to BDC. These will be published on BDC and SHPC websites.

122. **To consider amendments to the Code of Conduct**

Mrs. L. Waller reported that SHPC had adopted the NALC code on 11th June 2012 since when the Government had issued further regulations, which necessitate the code being revised and gave full details of the revisions. It was proposed by Mrs. Waller, seconded by Mr. Partridge and carried that these revisions are approved. It was agreed to circulate a hard copy of the revised edition to all Councillors. (See appendix 3).

123. **To consider amending Financial Regulations**

Following some discussion it was proposed by Mrs. G. Massey, seconded by Mr. J. Skittrall and carried that para. 3.3 of the Financial Regulations, is revised as follows:

"The Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman and one other Councillor may incur expenditure on behalf of the council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work

which is of such extreme urgency, life threatening or dangerous, that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £2,500."

124. **To consider Terms of Reference for Finance and Funding Committee**

Terms of Reference for the Finance and Funding Committee were adopted.

125. **Hedingham Riverside Walk Report**

Dr. R. Green reported that the HRW AGM was held on 19th July, when Mr. B. Stacey had given an annual report, which is widely available. Many people had used the new footpath, which walkers appreciated.

Mrs. G. Massey reported upon the meeting held on 2nd August regarding the crossing at Alderford Street. Mr. R. Parmee had been appointed as the Project Manager to arrange the crossing a.s.a.p. Revised designs of the crossing are awaited from BDC. Land ownership, boundaries and any rights over the forecourt in front of Alderford Mill are to be checked by BDC with ECC. Mr. H. Johnson reported that he had spoken to the Chief Executive of BDC about the crossing to try and expedite it. The inordinate delay with the crossing was very frustrating. Mrs. L. Waller suggested negotiating a right of way with Mr. F. Ladkin, but this had been discussed with him in the past and refused. Following some discussion it was proposed by Mr. S. Partridge, seconded by Mr. J. Skittrall and carried that a formal application is made to transfer the freehold of HRW from BDC to SHPC under the asset transfer provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and in the meantime to continue to press BDC for the revised plans for the crossing.

126. **Hedge between Oxford Meadow and Oak Walk on the Graysmead Estate**

Ms. S. Glen reported upon the high hedge, owned by SHPC, which obstructs cables and street lights at Oak Walk. She had met Mr. B. Stacey on site who had prepared a report, which was circulated to Councillors on 3rd August. Ms. Glen recommended a combination of options 2 and 3 in the report to carry out the work without too much cost. In view of the height it is not an appropriate job for volunteers. It was suggested that the vertical face is cut back and also the top down to 2 or 3 metres high, to where it has previously been cut. It was agreed that Ms. Glen should initially consult residents of Oak Walk in case they have any issues with light, noise and loss of privacy. Following consultation with residents it was agreed that the Clerk obtains quotes for work on that part of the hedge in front of Oak Walk only but not the whole hedge.

127. **Proposed creation of garden around pond in Grays Hall Meadow**

Mr. S. Partridge reported that SHALGA was looking for a project to form a garden, whilst waiting for allotments and asked for permission to form a garden around the pond in Grays Hall Meadow. SHALGA intends to ask Hedingham Environmental Volunteers if they are interested in helping. Mr. D. Holmes reported that there are high voltage cables under that part of Grays Hall Meadow and EDF can advise upon the route and depth. Mr. H. Johnson and the Clerk confirmed that plans are available from the previous scheme for which funding had been requested from BDC POS S106 monies. It was proposed by Mrs. G. Massey, seconded by Miss. C. Cannell and carried that SHPC gives permission for the work to be carried out and SHALGA can apply for funding in the future.

(Mr. H. Johnson left the meeting)

128. **BALC report**

The Clerk gave a report of the BALC AGM, which he had attended on 23rd July. EALC will be moving to new premises near Dunmow during 2013, which will provide space for meetings and courses. BALC affiliation fees will not be increased and for SHPC will remain at £24 per annum. Representation on the new Braintree Local Highways Panel, which will be chaired by Cllr. D. Finch, was discussed. It was agreed to ask Mr. Finch if SHPC can be represented on the new panel.

(Mrs. J. Beavis arrived at the meeting).

BDC is in discussions with the Local Government Boundary Commission, which may result in a reduction of District Councillors from 60 to 40 and single member wards. The transfer of assets and services from County and District Councils to Parish Councils under the Localism Act was discussed together with Neighbourhood Planning.

129. **Report of meeting with Mr. D. Atterbury regarding office rent**

Mrs. G. Massey reported that she had met Mr. D. Atterbury on 10th August and put forward the view of SHPC that the office rent should not be increased. Comparisons were made with other offices and rents.

Mr. Atterbury was adamant that the rent should be increased or he will go to Arbitration. In order to avoid Arbitration an increase of £30 per month as opposed to the £50 per month requested had been negotiated. Mrs. Massey recommended that an increase of £30 per month from £450 to £480 per month is accepted. In answer to questions from Councillors the Clerk confirmed that the lease will continue until 31st May 2016. It was proposed by Mrs. Massey, seconded by Mr. J. Skittrall and carried that the rent increase of £30 per month is agreed and is backdated to 1st June 2012.

130. **FOAM report regarding control of floodgates**

Mr. A. Law reported that the damage caused to the floodgates at Alderford Mill by flooding on 3rd June has been repaired and are in full working order. The gates are now controlled by Mr. Graham Robinson, ECC Millwright and by FOAM volunteers. Since the new scheme has been arranged it has been working well.

131. **Hedingham Under 14's Football Club**

A memo on behalf of Hedingham Under 14's Football Club requesting sponsors for new kit was considered. It was agreed that (a) Mr. S. Partridge advises them upon the availability of grants and (b) that the Clerk invites them to participate in Legacy weekend 2013.

132. **Funding for skatepark improvements**

Mr. S. Partridge reported that out of a project cost of £19,681 for improvements to the skatepark the following amounts had been offered:

The Veolia Environmental Trust	£14,481.00
Essex County Council Big Society Fund	£3,900.00
Hedingham Youth Council	£762.00

This left a shortfall of £538, although it was hoped that this would be reduced. It was proposed by Mr. D. Holmes, seconded by Mr. J. Skittrall and carried that SHPC meets any shortfall up to £538.

133. **To fill vacancy on Personnel Committee**

Ms. S. Glen was appointed to fill the vacancy on the Personnel Committee.

134. **Neighbourhood Plan**

A report was given of a recent training course hosted by RCCE and provided by Planning Aid at which SHPC had been represented by Mr. T. Gammell, Mrs. G. Massey, Mr. S. Partridge, Mrs. A. Weatherley and Mrs. L. Waller. Those attending had since met and discussed an action plan including the formation of a SHPC Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. A further meeting is to be arranged at which a representative of RCCE will attend and advise. A Neighbourhood Plan will be a complicated document upon which wide consultations in the community and a referendum will be required. The process will commence with consulting surrounding parishes as a Neighbourhood Plan may be prepared in alliance with them either as consultees or as partners. It was agreed to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan.

135. **To allocate £2,000 from reserves to fund start-up costs for the Neighbourhood Plan**

It was proposed by Mrs. G. Massey, seconded by Ms. S. Glen and carried that SHPC contributes £2,000.00 towards the Neighbourhood Plan start up costs.

136. **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) A letter and enclosures from BDC regarding improvements to Public Open Spaces was considered. In spite of previous representations to BDC it was noted that its maps still did not show HRW to its full extent and the privately owned allotments were incorrectly shown as POS. It was agreed that this is an opportunity to again press BDC for PC owned allotments in SH. It was also agreed to refer the Open Spaces Action Plan consultation to the Planning Committee for further consideration.
- (b) The attendance of Ms. S. Glen and Mrs. E. Jones at the EALC Roles and Responsibilities course on 18th September 2012 at £43.00 each was approved.

137. **Accounts for payment**

The accounts listed in appendix 2 were presented for payment together with two additional accounts as follows:

Mr. D. Atterbury – Half share of building insurance premium £209.42

Mr. D. Atterbury – Additional office rent – 3 months @ £30 per month £90.00

It was proposed by Miss. C. Cannell, seconded by Mrs. L. Waller and carried that the accounts are paid and that the following account is paid under the provisions of S137 of the LGA 1972:

Hedingham Twinning Association – Grant £250.00

Arising from the accounts Mrs. E. Jones expressed her delight with the new planter at High Street Green.

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

Mrs. E. Jones reported that persons cutting grass along verges need to be insured and taxed, which unfortunately may deter volunteers from carrying out such work.

Mr. J. Skittrall reported that the revised SHPC Emergency Plan for 2012-2013 was nearly complete and he will arrange a meeting of the Emergency Planning Advisory Group in the near future.

There was no other business

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

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(Date)

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(Chairman)