

**MINUTES OF HITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 10TH JULY 2017 IN HITCHAM VILLAGE HALL COMMENCING AT 7.30PM**

Present: Allan Scott, Chairman; Pauline Squirrell, Vice Chairman; Wendy Crease, Brian Hubbard;
Jim Morgan, Rob Whiting; Robert Lindsay, County Cllr; Giles Hill, Play Area Co-ordinator;
Doreen Neun, Parish Clerk/RFO and four residents.

1.	Apologies for Absence: These had been received from Paul Beedham and Michael Creffield, District Cllr.
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interest: None were declared at this meeting.
3.	Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2017: These were signed as being a true record of that meeting.
4.	Matters Arising from Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2017: a) Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS): Mr Scott had heard from the Council Engineer, Ray Brotherton, that the four agreed places for the VAS posts had been approved. The signs need to be visible from 100 meters away and on same side as the oncoming cars. The sites approved are near the ‘White Horse’; opposite the Village Shop; at Plains Farm and near Tudor House. Mr Scott had formally signed off for these sites. There had been three design choices for the sign and the preferred choice had been the one which showed the cars speed and the appropriate smiley or frowning face. It is made in Germany and will cost approximately £2,900. This sign was felt to be more effective than those that just showed the speed of the car. Proposed: Wendy Crease. Seconded: Brian Hubbard. It is believed that the posts will be provided and installed free of charge. The question of insurance and Health and Safety for those installing posts needed to be looked into. Bildeston has new ‘gates’ at each end of the village which appear to be a good idea. It was agreed to look into their cost and any possible funding. b) Fen Lane Repairs: Pot holes still need to be repaired as the completed road edges had used more available tarmac than expected. Whole road needs resurfacing, but the problem is Fen Lane is not classed as a busy road. Local MP could be contacted. Mr Morgan will contact Highways. c) Broadband Improvements: Several residents had contacted the Parish Council about the current broadband coverage. Mr Scott would like to do a dedicated survey in the village regarding this. When results were in it would show who needs what and where. At present the Brettenham Road area is particularly bad. The idea for a survey was agreed. d) Causeway Estate Access: Residents of Causeway Estate had contacted the Council regarding ease of access and requesting the possible removal of the trees and grass verges to make the road wider to assist with parking, exiting driveways and general use. At present parking is causing problems with access for dustman, deliveries and especially the emergency services. Also the banjo at the end should be kept clear to enable vehicle turning. There is also a wider issue with building and the use of the rear access. With current residents having children, over time the number of vehicles at each house will probably go up therefore increasing the problems with roadside parking and exiting from private driveways. As Babergh maintain the verges they would need to be contacted. The local MP could also be copied into any correspondence. It was pointed out that parking had been included in the social housing plan which the Council turned down. If the land at the back was considered for parking it would have to be fenced and gated.
5.	County Councillor’s Report: Cllr. Lindsay covered the following topics: a) Pension Fund: The pension committee is preparing to put the bulk of its £2.6billion in assets into a ‘pooled plot’ with other local authorities across the East and South East as demanded by Central Government. This will reduce, but not remove, the ability of Suffolk County Council to invest sums in the local economy. Cllr Lindsay would like the pension fund to examine whether it is wise to remain so heavily invested in fossil fuel companies.

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b) Council Payments to Care Homes: The audit committee had discovered that the Council have inadvertently been paying private Care Homes for residents that have already died. It is caused by either the Care Home not telling the Council of deaths or the Council not acting on information given. Care UK took over the County's care homes several years ago and this could have been when the problem started. The County has recovered all monies due and the overpayment has been reduced to £40K.

c) More Say for Backbenchers: Latest plans are for there to be four cabinet committees on the County Council with twelve members, to include two from Green Party, Independent and Liberal Democrat group; two from Labour and eight Conservative.

d) Cabinet Meeting 11th July: Councillors have been briefed on three cabinet decisions to be made tomorrow. One is to approve a £5m loan to the University of Suffolk to expand their student numbers and increase income. Secondly, they are adopting a 'social value and sustainable procurement policy' and thirdly they are agreeing a 'priorities' brochure for 2017-21 which is based on the Conservative manifesto. It was noted there were no performance targets for mental health, carbon reduction or more cycle ways, despite the latter being in their manifesto.

e) Hitcham: Concern has been raised regarding current road diversions. Road closures, diversion routes and signing are the responsibility of the individual or organisation requesting the closure. If the signs are still in place when work is finished the Highways Customer Service Team in Needham Market should be contacted.

6. District Councillor's Report:

As Cllr Creffield had sent his apologies there was no report available.

7. Police Report;

No local incidents had been reported since April.

8. Community Play Area:

A recent meeting had been held at the Play Area between Mr Morgan and Giles Hill. The Clerk had also attended as she had spoken to Janice Gant earlier to discuss problems Janice had noted whilst working in the Play Area. Several maintenance jobs had been highlighted including the removal of the perimeter wire fencing and path edging stakes and repairing the field-side gates. Although he was not able to organise a work party Mr Hill will order the chippings which need to go round some of the equipment. A date needs to be set for laying the chippings. It could be incorporated with a Coffee Morning. A leaflet would be needed to ask for volunteers. Information could also be put on village website. A digger would be needed to remove the rubbish heap at the bottom of the Play Area. The sacks in the rubbish bins were not strong enough to withstand wind damage as there are no metal liners in bins. Mr Hill will try and obtain liners and agreed to empty the bins on a weekly basis. Mrs Squirrell can provide extra strong heavy duty black sacks for the bins. She also knew someone who could help with the rubbish heap removal. It is believed that the litter problem is caused by one person. It might be helpful if a policeman could speak to him.

9. Chairman's Report:

Mr Scott had nothing further to add.

10. Correspondence:

The Clerk brought the following to the attention of the Council:

a) A document had been received from the Local Government Boundary Commission explaining an Electoral Review of Babergh: Warding arrangements. The electoral review will recommend new electoral arrangements for Babergh District Council. For parishes, the review can recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils i.e. the number, names and boundaries of parish wards and the number of parish councillors for each parish ward. However, this is only in circumstances where the parished area is to be divided between wards. Even in these circumstances the Commission will not normally recommend any change to the number of councillors to be elected to a parish or town council. The Commission has no power to consider changes to the external boundaries of a parish or the creation of new parishes.

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- b) A copy of Issue One, Spring 2017, of The Local Councillor had been received and was available for Councillors perusal.
- c) Information on forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner meetings had been received. The nearest meeting to us will be on the 20th September in Sudbury Town Hall.

11. Planning Matters:

The following planning applications were discussed and no objections were found:

- i) Hitcham House, Balls Hill: erection of two storey extension including basement (following demolition of two storey and single storey extension, together with attached three bag garage.
- ii) Application for Listed Building Consent in connection with above application for Hitcham House.
- iii) Barn next to The Gables, Bird Street: Change of use of agricultural barn to residential dwelling including works existing vehicular access.
- iv) North Oak Cottage, The Causeway: Demolition of flat roofed side extension and erection of one and a half storey side extension and internal alterations.
- v) Application for Listed Building consent in connection with above application for North Oak Cottage.
- vi) The Rectory, The Causeway: Erection of two storey side extension and single-storey front porch extension.

12. Finance:

- a) The RFO presented the current account reports and an up-to-date budget forecast:

Current balances are:

Hitcham Parish Council account £13,587.35.
(Cheque 258 Mrs D Neun £300.00 still unreconciled)
Hitcham Community Area account £843.07. (all cheques cleared)

- b) The following payments were approved and cheques drawn accordingly:

Hitcham Parish Council account:

Mrs V Raivio £50.00 2016-17 internal audit fee

Hitcham Community Area account:

Hitcham Countryside Services £210.00 Play Area Maintenance June'17 + petrol, oil
Odd-Job-Jan £150.00 Play Area Maintenance June'17
Material Change £128.40 Chippings for Play Area

13. Questions to the Chair:

- a) A complaint was raised regarding bins being left on the roadside all the time. It was agreed to put a note in the next Hitcham Newsletter reminding residents of the need to take bins in once emptied.
- b) The path between the White Horse corner and the Church is overgrown with vegetation and is becoming dangerous to those who use it. A resident had started to clear it, but this was felt to be too dangerous to continue. The pathway is a Highways issue, but the land owner is responsible for keeping their boundaries clear. The Clerk will write to the land owner on behalf of the Parish Council asking that the boundary is cleared as soon as possible. The County Council can also intervene if necessary.

14. Date of Next Meeting:

This has been arranged for Monday 11th September 2017.