

**Minutes of Hitcham Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th July 2019
held in Hitcham Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm**

Present: Allan Scott, Chairman; Pauline Squirrell; Rob Whiting; Paul Marshall and Brian Hubbard

1. Apologies for Absence:

These had been received from Wendy Crease, Jim Morgan and Cllr Robert Lindsay. The Parish Councillor absences were agreed by those present.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2019:

Following the amendment of proposer of previous Minutes from Paul Marshall to Rob Whiting they were signed as being a true record of that meeting. Proposed: Rob Whiting. Seconded: Allan Scott.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes of Meeting held on 13th May 2019:

a) Neighbourhood Plan: Mr Scott had contacted the company whose presentation he had seen, as mentioned in the last minutes, and they had said there were things we would need to do before calling them in. Mr Scott will contact County/District Councillors to see what we have to do.

b) Hitcham News: At the moment it will still be a quarterly issue. The Roundabout is now being run through Semer but will not cover our area as before. Mrs Crease has done some research into this which will be brought to the next meeting.

c) Causeway Estate: Nothing further to report at moment.

d) Wattisham Rd Junction speed limitation: See Cllr Lindsay's report and item (f) under this heading..

e) Loss of Bus Subsidy: Information on the possible loss of the village bus route had been circulated prior to this meeting. As Mr Scott understands it, if each of the 17 parishes involved pays approx. £460 this will keep the route running until the end of March 2020. After this it will cost each village approx. £1,100 a year. The Parish Council had heard from several residents, mostly from The Ranch, stating great concern about this as this bus is the only way they can get out of the village. It was proposed and agreed that we could pay the £460, although the annual fee would need further consideration and may need an increase in precept if required. It was agreed that the Parish Council should write to Joy Moran, with copy to Cllr Lindsay, saying we are willing to pay our share covering period to March 2020. It was also agreed that a letter be sent to Mary Evans and James Cartlidge, MP stressing that we are extremely unhappy about this.

f) Hitcham Traffic Speeding: It is believed there should have been another speed sign post placed by The Ranch and Mr Scott recommended that we contact Highways and request a further post even if it means we pay for it. All agreed.

4.

County and District Councillor's Report:

Due to the absence of Cllr Lindsay, the Clerk presented his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. A copy would also be circulated to Parish Councillors. The report covered: Babergh District Council cabinet formation; the new draft Local Plan;; loss of bus subsidy; recycling restrictions; Suffolk Children's Services Ofsted and Hitcham speed limit change.

a) A copy of the draft Local Plan document had already been forwarded to the Parish Councillors. Cllr Lindsay noted that the four previously suggested allocation sites had been removed but a settlement boundary had been included between the village shop and village hall which is already subject to a planning application. Cllr Lindsay had queried this inclusion.

b) As mentioned above. the Council has announced they will be cutting the bus subsidy from 23 routes to create a saving of £340,000. He is prepared to put some of his locality budget to keeping the bus running until March. Cllr Lindsay has written to Mary Evans, cabinet member for Highways, and James Cartlidge, MP stressing the lack of alternatives for our most vulnerable residents.

c) Cllr Lindsay had forwarded an answer to our request to reduce the speed limit from the start of the Hitcham boundary near Wattisham Road and this had already been forwarded to Parish cont....

2/8.7.19 cont... (Dst/County Cllr report)

Councillors. Unfortunately, it was not considered that this stretch of road lent itself to a 40mph speed limit and reasons were given for this. Cllr Lindsay felt that it may still be worth collating some more data with cyclists and pedestrian numbers but we need to meet the four criteria we are still failing on. Until we can get more information it is not worth spending the £1,000 on a report from the Safety and Speed Management Team.

5.

Police Report:

No report available.

6.

Community Play Area Report:

Will Pratt has started work on grass cutting although a member felt that more of the long grass should be cut, although this had been done to encourage wild life and children's interest in it, and also the first invoice seemed rather high for the work done. It was pointed out that the invoice covered two and a half months of work and that the agreed annual bill was going to be split over the year. Mrs Squirrell or Mr Morgan will meet with Mr Pratt to confirm work to be done.

7.

Chairman's Report:

a) Further Defibrillator: Details had been forwarded to Councillors about a further defibrillator and cabinet available through Paul Hicklin at a total cost of £1,250. This will be located in The Ranch car park and has the approval of the site Manager. Purchase of this defibrillator was agreed and the Clerk was asked to contact Mr Hicklin to arrange payment and delivery.

b) Neighbourhood Watch: Several residents had contacted the Parish Council following the article in the last Hitcham News. Mr Scott suggested a village meeting might be required to coordinate any scheme. Mr Whiting said the Police recommend the Next Door app which involves local people joining and further information can be found at Nextdoor.org.uk. The Neighbourhood Watch Group in Suffolk could give us some more information.

8.

Correspondence:

a) The Clerk had obtained a copy of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Guidance for Parish and Town Councils following the receipt of a Parish Council Neighbourhood CIL Payment in April. The Guide explains how the scheme works and how the Parish Council should spend any monies received. How we spend the money received will need discussion so it is spent correctly. We need to ensure we produce an annual CIL Income and Expenditure Statement.

b) An offer of door stickers from Able Community Care which state 'DO NOT KNOCK' No Uninvited or Unexpected Callers'. These are being offered to older people or older people's groups. It was felt that these stickers may encourage those who target the older population.

c) There is a need to complete our re-declaration of compliance with the Pension Regulator. This has to be done every three years and our deadline is 3rd December 2019.

d) Community Action Suffolk has developed a new insurance policy, known as Parish Protect, to meet the changing needs of the modern Parish Council. The policy will be underwritten by Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance Group. Our current cover remains in place until it is due for renewal. Information on the new core cover was set out in the letter from CAS. New renewal details regarding the Parish Protect policy will be received a month prior to renewal date

e) The Clerk had forwarded information to four Councillors to enable them to complete their Register of Interest form for Babergh District Council website.

9.

Planning Matters:

a) Babergh have requested amendments to the planning application for new houses on Roxburgh Place land, on The Causeway, which had been granted.

b) Further drawings have been requested by Babergh for the development at Pilgrims Barn, Bury Road.

3/cont....

10. Accounts:

a) The Internal Audit Report had only been received the day before this meeting and it was decided to hold any discussion over to the next meeting in order to give Councillors more time to consider it. There were no major causes of concern but a couple of recommendations which need clarification on the legal wording. The Clerk will contact SALC to ask for help in understanding these comments. The Councillors thanked the RFO for her work on the annual accounts which has resulted in a good audit. The RFO will arrange for the necessary papers to be placed on the village noticeboard and website to comply with the Transparency Code.

b) The RFO reported that two income items mentioned at the last meeting had been missed from the Minutes: 8.4.19 Receipt of the first half of precept: £3,750. CIL payment £2,300.99.

c) Current bank balances are as follows:

Hitcham Parish Council a/c £13,870.13
(chq 319 Avenue East £100.00 still un-reconciled)

Hitcham Community Play Area a/c £51.42 (all payments cleared)

d) The following payments were agreed and cheques drawn and signed accordingly:

Hitcham Parish Council a/c
Chq 334 SALC – Cllr briefing fee £27.60
Chq 335 Mrs D Neun – Clerk’s salary £300.00
Chq 336 HMRC 120PW00311648 – Clerk’s PAYE £75.00
Chq 337 Hitcham Community Play Area – transfer £1,000.00

Hitcham Community Play Area a/c
Chq 140 Tye Farm Contracting – grass cutting £179.17

e) Mr Marshall reminded the Councillors that he was still awaiting the agreed annual payment of £50.00 to cover the cost of charging the Speedwatch sign. With apologies it was agreed to draw a cheque for Mr Marshall to cover his expenses.

11. Any Other Business:

a) The Parish Council had been asked if they could help in finding a safe place for children waiting to board the school bus at The Causeway/Brettenham Road junction. After discussion it was suggested that the entrance gate to the Gas Board tower could be used, although concern was raised that the children would have to walk along the road to get to it. Mrs Squirrel will get details of who to contact in the Gas Board. It was felt that standing where they do at the moment was still probably the safest option as the bus has the opportunity to pull in at the Brettenham Road entrance.

b) The hedge outside the Old School House is in need of cutting back. The Clerk will try and contact the owner as was the case several years ago.

c) There was a suggestion that photos and details of the Parish Councillors should be put on noticeboard so residents will know who their Parish Councillors are. The Clerk had put up a list of names and addresses on the board after the election and they are also listed in every Hitcham News issue.

d) Mr Scott informed the meeting the All Saints’ Church had obtained funding for the Tower Project. This will include covering the cost of moving the organ, replacing the bell ringing floor and restoring the bells.

12. Date of Next Meeting:

This is arranged for Monday, 9th September 2019 commencing at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

