

**Minutes of Hitcham Parish Council meeting held via Zoom
on Wednesday 9th November 2020 commencing at 7.30pm**

Present: Allan Scott, Chairman; Pauline Squirrell; Wendy Crease; Jim Morgan; Rob Whiting; Brian Hubbard; County/District Cllr Robert Lindsay; Doreen Neun, Clerk/RFO

1) Apologies for Absence:

None received.

2) Declaration of Pecuniary Interest:

None declared.

3) Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 14th September 2020:

These were approved as being a true record of that meeting. Proposed: Mr Morgan. Seconded: Mrs Squirrell.

4) Matters Arising from Meeting held on 14th September 2020:

a) Neighbourhood Watch Scheme: This had been put out to those on the Covid-19 Group on WhatsApp. There had been a lot of interest but no co-ordinator as yet. It needs to go out wider on Hitcham Noticeboard and website. Heather may will come forward as co-ordinator.

b) Neighbourhood Plan: Mr Morgan reported on the recent Government White Paper re. Local Planning which has come in for a lot of local authority criticism due to their having to find a lot of housing capacity. This is unpopular in Suffolk and SALC's response had been quite good. It is unlikely that there will be any early action as there are many other problems to solve first. However, we should start talking to people about what they want as we need to be in a position to move forward when necessary. It was agreed that Mr Morgan and Mr Scott would have a discussion on how to do this. It was suggested that information could be sent to those on the electoral role and asking for their questions. Mr Morgan agreed to put something together for consideration. Cllr Lindsay's report showed that the Council had come out against the Government's plan. The new electoral role document is due to come out in early December so it as agreed to wait before sending anything out till then.

ACTION: All were in favour so a draft will be sent out to Parish Councillors for their perusal in the near future.

c) Fourth SID Post: Nothing had been heard from Highways but Mr Scott will raise the issue again with Cllr Lyndsay.

d) Insurance: The Clerk had contacted the insurers and was waiting for a response.

e) New Councillor: The question of co-opting a new councillor was discussed and several names were suggested.

ACTION: Mr Scott agreed to contact those suggested. If there was no agreement he would come back to Council at the next meeting.

Cllr Lindsay joined the meeting at this point and expanded on certain items in his latest report. Copies of his current report were circulated at the meeting and a copy will be kept on file with these minutes.

5) County/District Councillor's Report:

a) New housing quota formula: The full council unanimously rejected the Government suggestion to increase Babergh new housing from 300 to 789.

b) Government White Paper 'Planning for the Future': There were concerns that this will affect our Neighbourhood Plan as they seem to be asking for a large number of houses in areas like ours. Cllr Lindsay felt we should still proceed with it as it is only a consultation at the

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moment and many councils have rebelled against it. Also, with Brexit and Covid on-going it might be put on hold.

c) Joint Local Plan: This new Joint Local Plan goes to council this week. Cllr Lindsay will send a link for the whole document so we can see the revised Hitcham map. He is not expecting any changes but final approval is needed regarding legal compliance and soundness before it goes to planning inspectorate for examination.

d) 5year housing land supply is healthy: Self-explanatory in report.

e) Although Cllr Lindsay's motion for a 20mph limit in residential areas was defeated by correspondence and gained support from the Labour Party

f) Quiet Lanes: Highways has been given funds for this which covers side roads and roads with little traffic to be made more aware of cyclists, dog walkers, horse riders and be more considerate to them. There is a link for parishes to register their interest in the scheme. It was felt that Dale Road and Brettenham Road would benefit from the scheme.

g) Covid-19: Bildeston Food Bank numbers have gone up since the first lockdown. It is still open to accept donations which can now include fresh fruit and vegetables.

h) Public Realm: Babergh's current contract expires in November 2021 and will then be taken in house. This covers open spaces, litter bins and grass cutting. Cllr Lindsay played a large part in getting this through council.

i) Boundary Changes consultation: This would increase villages in Cosford from 70 to 75. Cllr Lindsay feels that with more villages the less he can help. Any changes will not come into force until 2025. The consultation closes on 25th November and there is a link for comments in his report.

j) Suffolk Covid spending gap: This has been plugged by the Government with £39.1m ringfenced for Covid grants and £1.7m from additional spending from business rates

Mr Scott thanked Cllr Lindsay for his time and report. Cllr Lindsay then left the meeting.

6) Police Report:

Although no police report received Steve Third had reported the defacing of several grave stones in All Saints graveyard. This has now mostly been cleaned off. There was no idea who caused the damage.

7) Community Play Area Report

Following the recent inspection report it was felt that repair work needed to be done. It was suggested that arranging a date for a work party would be a good idea. Will Pratt has been asked to cut down all the long grass that had been left as nature areas during the summer.

8) Chairman's Report

a) All necessary steps had been taken with Babergh regarding losing Paul Marshall's as a Councillor and the appropriate notice regarding the need for an election had been posted. As there had been no response to this notice we can go ahead and co-opt a new Councillor.

b) All equipment for the SID and speedwatch has been returned by Mr Marshall to the Clerk. Until a new co-ordinator is found Paul Southcott would be happy to deal with the SID.

9) Correspondence:

The Clerk continues to send all necessary information out to Councillors via email whilst the current situation continues. Copies of relevant correspondence are kept on file.

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10) Planning Matters:

The Clerk had sent any Babergh planning applications or outcomes to Councillors by email as they came in. Since the last meeting the following had been forwarded:

- a) Pepper Tree Farm House, Cooks Green: Erection of annexe accommodation for elderly relative and carer – no objections received
- b) Hill House, The Causeway: removal of kitchen boiler to external position – no objections received.
- c) Loose Hall Farm, Loose Hall Drive: erection of 2 storey rear extension. Planning permission had been granted.

11) Finance Report:

- a) The RFO had circulated the current account balances and budget forecast prior to the meeting.

Hitcham Parish Council a/c as at 1st November (Statement 32) £14,200.72

Outstanding cheque: 379 Information Commissioner £40.00

Hitcham Community Play Area as at 1st November (Statement 18) £369.03

(Standing Order due Nov'20 £300.00 G H Squirrell & Sons Play Area annual land rent)

- b) In order to facilitate paying current expenses it was agreed to transfer £1,000 from the Parish Council account to the Play Area account. Proposed: Mr Scott. Seconded: Mr Morgan.
- c) After discussion it was agreed to continue to send S137 donations as per previous years and cheques will be drawn as set out below. Proposed: Mr Morgan. Seconded: Mrs Squirrell.
- d) It was confirmed that the annual donation of £1,500 to help with the church grounds maintenance would also come under S137 as it is for the use of the whole community. Proposed: Mrs Crease. Seconded: Mrs Squirrell.
- e) Councillors had been requested to consider any changes to the budget and Precept prior to this meeting. It was agreed that there was no current need to amend the budget figures or the Precept of £7,500 especially at this time. Proposed: Mr Whiting. Seconded: Mrs Crease. These items will be brought to the next meeting for final approval. Precept form is awaited.
- d) The following payments were approved and cheques drawn accordingly:

Hitcham Parish Council a/c:

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| Chq 384 | SALC | £120.00 | 4 x £30 webinar fees: Planning & Budgeting |
| Chq 385 | Mr P Marshall | £30.00 | Gratuity for Roundabout delivery Oct/Nov'20 |
| Chq 386 | Hitcham Parish Church | £1,500.00 | S137 payment (grounds maint) |
| Chq 387 | Hitcham Play Area a/c | £1,000.00 | Transfer of Funds |
| Chq 388 | Mrs D Neun | £300.00 | Clerk's Oct-Dec'20 salary |
| Chq 389 | HMRC 20PW00311648 | £75.00 | Clerk's Oct-Dec'20 PAYE |
| Chq 390 | Suffolk Accident Rescue Service | £100.00 |) |
| Chq 391 | Headway Suffolk | £100.00 |) |
| Chq 392 | East Anglian Air Ambulance | £100.00 |) |
| Chq 393 | Mid Suffolk CAB | £100.00 |) |
| Chq 394 | St Nicholas Hospice Care | £100.00 |) S137 donations x 10 |
| Chq 395 | St Elizabeth's Hospice | £100.00 |) |
| Chq 396 | Avenue East | £100.00 |) |
| Chq 397 | Stowmarket & Area Food Bank | £100.00 |) |
| Chq 398 | Homestart in Suffolk | £100.00 |) |
| Chq 399 | East Anglia's Children's Hospices | £100.00 |) |
| Chq 400 | Babergh District Council | £202.70 | 2020-21 dog/litter bin emptying |

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Hitcham Community Play Area a/c:

Chq 149 Tye Farm Contracting £143.33 Sept/Oct Play Area ground care

Chq 150 Babergh District Council £90.64 Play Area annual inspection fee

12) Any Other Business:

a) Mr Currie has kindly agreed to refurbish the double seat from the footpath by the Village Hall. Mrs Squirrell will arrange getting the seat to Mr Currie.

13) Date of Next Meeting:

It was agreed to book the 2021 meeting dates with the Village Hall secretary although it as felt that Zoom meetings may have to continue for the first part of the new year.

Meeting dates will all be Mondays commencing at 7.30pm unless stated:

January 11th

March 8th - Parish Council meeting 7.00pm prior to Annual Parish Meeting 7.30pm

May 10th - Annual Parish Council meeting

July 12th

September 13th

November 8th