

**Draft Minutes of Hitcham Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 6th May 2021
at 7.30pm via Zoom in line with Covid-19 restrictions**

Present: Allan Scott, Chairman; Pauline Squirrell; Wendy Crease; Brian Hubbard; Rob Whiting and Doreen Neun, Clerk

Appointment of Chairman: Following his agreement, Mr Scott was nominated as Chairman of Hitcham Parish Council for the forthcoming twelve months. Proposed: Mrs Crease Seconded: Mr Hubbard. All agreed

1) Apologies for Absence:

These had been received from Cllr Robert Lindsay, who was involved in County Council elections taking place today.

2) Declaration of Pecuniary Interest:

None was declared.

3) Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 8th March 2021:

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

4) Matters Arising from Meeting held on 8th March 2021:

- a) Neighbourhood Plan: Discussions still on-going.
- b) 4th SID Post: Highways have now installed this near the entrance to The Ranch.
- c) Neighbourhood Watch Scheme: It is hoped to maybe hold a Zoom meeting in the near future with those who have shown an interest. There will be a WhatsApp group for everyone. We already have a volunteer to be the co-ordinator.
- d) Co-option of Councillors: A name was suggested to those present and Mrs Crease agreed to approach the resident in question.
- e) Church Green oak tree trimming: Still to be done and Mrs Squirrell will contact Gadd Brothers about it.
- f) SID batteries: Mrs Neun had continued to charge the current batteries, but cannot get them to last any longer than a week and the charging is taking too long. It was agreed that a quote for new batteries be obtained and new batteries purchased as agreed at the last meeting and the RFO will obtain prices. Proposed: Mrs Squirrell. Seconded: Mr Hubbard. Mr Whiting was happy to take over dealing with the SID. The rota for use is the SID is normally used on one side of post then switched to other side, then moved to another post. A computer needs to be used to get any readings from the SID.
- g) Village litter pick: This had gone very well and thanks were offered to Gerdine Cubitt for the organisation and for taking on the annual co-ordination.

5) County and District Councillor's Report:

- a) Cllr Lindsay had sent his apologies and his report, which the Clerk had circulated by email prior to this meeting. Matters covered in the report included:
 - i) Highways have confirmed they will be resurfacing the road near Bury Road corner and re-dig the ditches further up Bury Road. Date of work is not yet known.
 - ii) Approval in principle has been given for 20mph limit through Bildeston after a long campaign. Cllr Lindsay will make a contribution from his budget towards the cost. If he is re-elected he hopes to continue to support Hitcham with obtaining a reduce speed limit between the Water Run and Luckys Corner.
 - iii) Bildeston Food Bank now helps 18 families and Cllr Lindsay has been able to help with a contribution from his Babergh awards budget.

2/cont.... (6.5.21/Cllr report)

- iv) Go Start has stepped in and saved the 112 bus route to Sudbury following the county's withdrawal of its subsidy. Cllr Lindsay was able to contribute £1K at their launch in 2020 and another £1K this March from his locality fund.
- v) Budget amendments: Although voted down by the Conservative administration at County and Babergh, budget amendments and motions made by a cross party group, which included Cllr Lindsay, during the year had flagged up areas that needed attention, some of which were later adopted.
- vi) Flood team: Suffolk County Council had agreed to hire extra staff to help tackle the flooding backlog after a proposed amendment asked that an extra officer be funded to help bid for funding and manage projects.
- vii) Biodiversity: Cllr Lindsay had seconded a motion for Suffolk that will implement a new biodiversity strategy which had passed unanimously.
- viii) Pension committee: During the past year the committee, with Cllr Lindsay's help, had agreed to move its entire passive equity fund into a low carbon fund. This represents about 10% of the total fund.
- ix) Suffolk 5-year cycling plan: There are 148 potential routes to be prioritised as a result of a motion proposed by Cllr Lindsay in 2018 calling for a strategic costed 5-year cycling plan. Funding has yet to be secured, but the plan will provide a strong basis to bid for funding when it is available
- x) Climate Emergency Recommendations published: In July 2020 Suffolk cabinet approved recommendations of a cross-party policy development panel on how council should respond to the climate emergency and reduce emissions. This followed a Green Party motion in 2019 committing the council to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- xi) During this most challenging of years it was pleasing to be able to continue to work and to represent people of Hitcham and hold the administration at the County and District Council to account, helped enormously by being a part of a cross party political group on the County Council and being part of a four strong Green Group on Babergh District Council.

Mr Scott thanked Cllr Lindsay, in his absence, for all the help he has given Hitcham. It was good news about the bus route and the re-surfacing of part of Bury Road. There will now not be a need for a site meeting regarding the road and the Clerk was asked to inform Cllr Lindsay of this.

6. Police Report:

Only one incident was reported on the Sudbury Police site, but no definitive information was available.

7. Hitcham Community Play Area report:

- a) The Clerk had looked into adult fitness equipment costings and gave an example of £2,699 for a group of four pieces of equipment. It was agreed to put a question in the next Roundabout to see what residents felt about having adult equipment in the Play Area. It had been felt a good idea by those who attended the Annual Parish meeting on 8th March.
- b) The RFO will look into the purchase of a new litter bin to replace the broken one.

8. Chairman's Report:

Mr Scott had nothing further to bring to the attention of the meeting other than what has already been mentioned.

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9. Correspondence:

a) A suggestion has been made to reinstate the village Welcome Pack for new residents. It was felt any new issue should be less specific and contain more general information such as doctors; the web site; Hitcham noticeboard; footpath map; shop times for example. Mrs Squirrell agreed to look into this.

b) No response had been received as yet with regard to the church bells survey which had been circulating parts of the village.

c) A request has been received from Granville Developments for the Parish Council to agree their choice of road and house names for the new development on land north of Lower Farm Barns. Their suggestions were: Road name: Henslow Gardens

House names: Plot 1	Grant House
Plot 2	Eastern Lodge
Plot 3	Burket Cottage
Plot 4	Whytewell Place
Plot 5	Matters House
Plot 6	Bremore House

The house names reflect gentlemen who had a connection with All Saints Church. After discussion it was agreed to ask for the amendment of the road name to 'Henslows' and that one house name be changed to 'Oxford', the name of the field the development is being built on, and another be changed to 'Wetherall' a previous incumbent who many residents remember and who is still alive. The Clerk will take these suggestions back to Granville Developments.

d) An email had been received from Dr Chris Christou who, with his family, was considering the purchase and development of Eastwood Farm Barn into a four bedroom house. He had already put in a planning application with Babergh, DC/19/00574, but wanted to know how this would be greeted in Hitcham as he wished to provide a building that the parish and local residents approve of. It was felt that Dr Christou had been very considerate with his email and the Clerk was asked to respond to him wishing him well with his application and to let us know if we can be of any help.

10. Planning Matters:

The following planning applications and decision notices had been emailed to Parish Councillors as they had been received and comments requested.

- a) Erection of three stables at Brettfields, Fen Lane - no objections raised.
- b) Discharge of Conditions re. The Old Guildhall, Church Lane – no comment required.
- c) Erection of dormer and formation of catslide roof (after removal of existing modern pitch roofed dormer) – Church Cottage, Church Lane – no objection raised.
- d) Listed building consent re. two storey extension, inc. basement at Hitcham House, Balls Hill – application granted by Babergh
- e) Brick House appeal to Secretary of State re. refusal for No1 dwelling – appeal had been dismissed.

11. Finance Report:

a) The RFO was expecting the bank statements to the 30th April in the next few days. The only movement expected, apart from the clearing of two outstanding cheques detailed in the last minutes, was receipt of the first half of the precept. A remittance advice received from Babergh showed that this was credited on 6h April. There is also a small grant from Babergh of £290 expected. A budget forecast and up-to-date account information will be available for the next meeting as usual.

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4/cont... (6.5.21/Finance)

b) The RFO had sent copies of the Certificate of Exemption, the AGAR papers, cash book, balance sheet and other supporting papers to Councillors for their perusal prior to this meeting. The balance sheet showed the predicted balances on the accounts as follows once all cheques cleared to date:

Hitcham Parish Council a/c	£9,387.02	
Hitcham Community Play Area a/c	£548.40	Total funds available £9,935.42

Current balances are:

Hitcham Parish Council a/c	£9,487.02	
Hitcham Community Play Area a/c	£691.73	Total funds @ 31.3.21 £10,178.75

The Councillors gave their approval of the cash book, balance sheet, asset register, receipts and payments summary and supporting statement.

c) The Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 (Section 1) was discussed. It was agreed that item 6 had not been actioned, but with things returning to something like normal, following Covid-19 restrictions being lifted, this would now be implemented. All other requirements were approved as being implemented.

d) The Accounting Statement for 2020/21 (Section 2) was approved as was the Certificate of Exemption.

Approval of AGAR papers, Certificate of Exemption and supporting documents was proposed by Mrs Squirrell. Seconded: Mrs Crease. All agreed. All the documents relevant to the Transparency Code requirements need to be put on the website by 1st July 2021.

e) Any documents requiring the Chairman's signature will be completed after this meeting and the Certificate of Exemption will be scanned to P K Littlejohn, external auditor, once it has been signed and the minutes of this meeting prepared as a minute reference is required on this and other AGAR papers. The RFO will then collate all the necessary papers and send on-line to SALC, our internal auditor, as soon as possible.

f) The following payments were approved and cheques drawn accordingly:

Hitcham Parish Council a/c:		
SALC	£338.16	Annual subscription 2021/22
Hitcham Community Play Area a/c:		
Tye Farm Contracting	£143.33	March/April Play area maintenance

g) The donation towards the Village Hall car park refurbishment has still not been requested. At the moment a recent serious roof leak is proving more important.

h) The RFO suggested that BHIB insurance company be approached for a quote as a comparison to the Parish Policy we currently hold. They are used by several parish councils.

i) The repair of the memorial bench by the Village Hall will cost £250. The work will be done by Malcolm Currie and the wood obtained from Col Aldous's son. Proposed: Mrs Squirrell. Seconded: Mr Scott. All agreed.

12. Any Other Business:

a) Highways has approved tree, hedge and wildflower planting on their verges and land within Parishes. There was a discussion on where this might be possible and it was suggested that an article on this could be put in the Roundabout after confirming details in original email from Highways.

b) Protocol re. email correspondence: Unless the matter required urgent attention the correspondent will be thanked and advised that the matter will be brought up at the next Parish Council meeting under the correspondence section of the Agenda.

c) The Tower Project and toilet/kitchen facility in All Saint's Church are now finished. There will be a blessing on the 1st August. The Henslow exhibition in the Museum of East Anglia opens on the 18th May.

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5/cont... (6.5.21/AOB)

d) An egg purchase machine is being installed in the garage in the farm field to the left of Causeway House Farm to replace the current egg stall. Simon Squirrel has had to move the speed warning sign on the SID post next to Tudor House closer to the hedge as it was blocking clear sight when vehicles entered or left the car park area.

13. Date of Next Meeting:

This is already arranged for Monday 12th July and will be a face-2-face meeting in the Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm.