

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16th JANUARY 2024 AT 7.00PM AT HARGRAVE VILLAGE HALL

In Attendance: Cllr S Martin
Cllr M Roscoe
Cllr M Pilkington
Cllr R Bird (Chairman)

Cllr S Ratledge
Cllr R Jones
Cllr Mike Jones (Ward Councillor)
Members of the Public: 5

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr F Halton, Cllr C Nicholls due to previous commitment and Cllr Sackett due to ill health.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED 23/041 – that Cllr Sackett be elected as Vice-Chairman for until May 2024, proposed by Cllr Ratledge seconded by Cllr Roscoe and unanimously agreed. Cllr Sackett signed her acceptance of office outside of the meeting.

VACANCIES

Vacancies- it was noted that there remained 1 vacancy on the Parish Council and an email of interest from Mr Richard Jones had been received. It was proposed by Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Ratledge and unanimously

RESOLVED 23/042 that Mr R Jones be co-opted onto the Parish Council with immediate effect.

ACTION: Inform CWaC of new Co-option.

ACTION: Add information to Website and provide new email address.

DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS

None were received.

PUBLIC SESSION

Gail Webb, Chair of Huxley Primary School Governors IEB reported that they have undertaken due diligence and legal requirements, leases and service level agreements review, HR have met with staff and the school has had meeting with parents to explain the proposed changes and they are now at a point where the school will convert to an Academy on the 1st February through the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT) with Neil Dixon being the Chair. The Chair of the Governors reported that the school will continue to work through the improvements and recommendations highlighted following the OFSTEAD report. The Chair of the Governors confirmed that numbers at the school remained stable at 35 and that the Flexi-schooling has been found to be very successful.

Neil Dixon introduced himself and the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust – the plans are business as usual, the work that the IAB and staff have carried out is a real achievement. The model will not change. The Trust currently has 14 schools currently in their with 4 more schools joining.

Two members of the public left the meeting.

A resident brought to the Parish Council's attention concerns they had with regards to a planning application that had been retrospectively submitted. They asked for the Parish Council's support in rejecting this retrospective planning application and urged the Parish Council to ask for the building to be removed.

MINUTES

RESOLVED 23/043 that the Chairman signs, as a true and correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2023 proposed by Cllr Ratledge and seconded by Cllr Roscoe.

ACTIONS

Actions not otherwise on the agenda that had been completed:-

- Inform CWaC of new Co-options and provide them copies of the completed Members Interests
- Update Website and provide Councillors with new email addresses.
- Cllr Pilkington contacted resident who had raised concerns about stiles that required replacement on the Gatesheath to Hargrave path.
- Clerk had requested costs of Interactive Speed Sign for Church Road.
- Clerk had chased CWaC re outstanding Planning Enforcement Issue
- Clerk had circulated around the draft budget for 2024-25
- Clerk had circulated the CIL criteria for spending.
- Clerk had sought clarification as to which housing development the CIL money related to.
- Clerk had provided timesheet information for the hours she had recently worked.
- Clerk had drafted Investment Policy and looked at Community Savings Accounts currently available.

Actions not otherwise on the agenda still outstanding:-

- Cllr Ratledge, Martin & Cllr Roscoe undertook to arrange for the relocation of the Beacon when the weather improves.
- Move the Beacon to the other side of the wall so it is less conspicuous.
- Cllr Nicholls has the plaque available to fix when the Beacon has been relocated.

BUSINESS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Huxley Primary School – covered under Public Participation.

Footpaths – Cllr Pilkington reported that she had been contacted by a resident of Tattenhall Parish regarding two stiles on the Gatesheath to Hatton Hall footpath that follows the old railway. One of the stiles is a broken and requires repair and the other is ok but they would like a clear route from Tattenhall using kissing gates rather than stiles.

It was suggested that the Parish Council contact Deborah Lack, PROW Asset Management Officer to see if they could assist in the funding of this.

ACTION: Clerk to email to Deborah Lack at CWaC.

Cllr Bird raised concerns about a footpath from Gowy Bridge that travels to the Roman Bridges that appears to no-longer be there. Cllr Roscoe confirmed he believed that this footpath had been diverted and now comes out on the Christleton Road.

ACTION: Cllr Pilkington to review and report back.

Review of Condition and Safety of Assets – It was reported that the Parish Council Beacon had been relocated to be less conspicuous and the priority was to relocate it into its new position that had been agreed on the field when the weather improves.

ACTION: Cllr Ratledge, Martin & Cllr Roscoe undertook to arrange for the relocation of the Beacon when the weather improves.

ACTION: Cllr Nicholls has the plaque available to fix when the Beacon has been relocated.

Speeding and Road Safety within the Parish – It was reported to the meeting that quotes had been received from CWaC and TWM Traffic below:-

CWaC – complete installation and maintenance for 15 years = £11,845.83 + VAT

TWM Traffic Quote = £3519.08 + VAT *plus* installation by CWaC = £700 + VAT *plus* CWaC taking on the maintenance for 15 years of £3,105.00 + VAT – it was noted that this quote was for a 450mm and CWaC had recommended 600mm roundel.

Following review of these quotes and noting that at the last meeting it had been agreed for CWaC to undertake road markings including roundels and dragon's teeth past the Primary School it was agreed to wait until the road markings work have been completed and review their impact on traffic prior to deciding to move towards the installation of VAS.

ACTION: Clerk to check how long the Parish Council has to spend the CIL money.

Resident correspondence – it was noted that a resident had contact the clerk with regards to concerns at they had about external lights being left on overnight which does not adhere to the Neighbourhood Plan's dark skies policy and the erection of the wooden fence outside a property boundary which they believed possess a danger to the highway and asked that the Parish Council raise these with the owner and or the local authority as they feel appropriate.

It was agreed that the fence in question had already been reported to the appropriate department at CWAC. It was therefore agreed that an article should be included in the next edition of Down our Way asking all residents to be conscious of the area being a Dark Skies Zone.

ACTION: Down our Way to remind all residents that lights should be on timers or not left on all the time – due to dark skies zone – part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Handley and District Parish Council – It was reported that the Parish Council had received information from Handley and District Parish Council in relation to the proposal to erect a sign denoting the boundary of Golborne David on the A41. It was **RESOLVED** 23/044 unanimously that the Parish Council had no objections to the erection of a sign in the proposed location.

Police and Crime Commissioner – Budget for 2024-25 – it was reported that correspondence had been received from the Police and Crime Commissioner ahead of him setting the police budget for 2024-25, he has put a survey together that he has as residents views on their community.

ACTION: Put on Facebook and on the Community Website.

D-Day 80 – following receipt of information relating to organising a D-Day 80 celebration on 6th June 2024, in Commemoration/Celebration of the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings on the five Beaches in Normandy, France, which took place on 6th June 1944. It was suggested that this information be forwarded to the Church for consideration as to if they wished to ring the bell at 6.30pm on the day and also to to consider if they wished to arrange the lighting of the Beacon.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Vicar of St Peter's Church Hargrave.

ACTION: Clerk to contact regarding the lighting of the Beacon.

PLANNING

The Planning Register dated 04/01/2024 was accepted and changes to the planning register from last meeting were noted.

It was reported that the following applications had been consulted upon since the last meeting:-

23/03201/FUL – Brook House Hoofield Lane Huxley Chester CH3 9BR - The installation of 62 ground mounted

solar panels – it was agreed that this application would be reviewed and responded to in between meetings. – the Parish Council has *no objection* to this application.

23/03611/FUL – Greenlooms Farm, Martins Lane, Hargrave, Chester CH3 7RX – conversion and extension of agricultural barn building to 3 dwellings – the Parish Council has *no objection* to this application.

23/03589/FUL – Greenlooms Farm, Martins Lane, Hargrave, Chester CH3 7RX – Demolition of two existing semi-detached dwellings and ancillary curtilage outbuildings. Erection of two detached replacement dwellings with detached garages and associated landscaping works – the Parish Council submitted an *objection* to this application for the following reasons:-

- The planning statement makes no reference to the NDP, which suggests the applicant is unaware of it. Although the NDP supports the replacement of dwellings (policy 1b), the proposed new builds are not aligned to NDP Policy 3. In particular 3b – the elevations show a design that is not a building form consistent with the local character. The new dwellings are of a very modern design and are out of character with the rest of the site and the local area. There is also a change in orientation from the road. This policy is particularly important as the proposed development is in close proximity to a listed building.
- There is also a concern with the removal of the wooded area - or at least several mature trees are proposed to be cut down to provide space for the new buildings which the Parish Council could not support.
- There is concern about the drainage arising from the new impermeable surfaces and sewage treatment from the new domestic properties.

It was reported that the following applications had been decided since the last meeting:-

23/01736/LDC – Eaton Villa, Hoofield Lane, Huxley CH3 9BR – Existing use of land as garden land associated with Eaton Village for over 10 years – *approved*.

It was reported that the following planning application had been received since the agenda had been circulated:-

23/03812/FUL - Meadow Cottage Old Hall Lane Foulk Stapleford Chester CH3 7RT - Erection of oak framed log store with hipped slate roof adjoining existing garage (retrospective) – the Parish Council undertook to respond to this in between meetings.

Enforcement Issues

Following receiving a response regarding enforcement case 19/00692/EOPDEV from the Planning Enforcement Department for the siting of a static caravan / mobile home at land adjacent to St Peters Church, Church Lane, Hargrave, Chester.

It was reported that, the Enforcement Notice has now been re-drafted and will be re-issued early January (due to the Christmas period) seeking the removal of the static caravan.

With regards to the removal of a septic tank, on review of the file, the Planning Enforcement Department reported they could find no complaint regarding aspect and therefore requested the Parish Council forward evidence.

Cllr Jones questioned when the Deli at The Inn at Huxley's temporary planning permission ran out. It was confirmed that a permanent application was submitted on 25th May 2022, application no 22/01981/FUL and approved on 28th June 2023.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This item was deferred to the next meeting due to Cllr Sackett and Cllr Nicholls's absence.

FINANCIAL ITEMS

Cashbook and Out-turn Forecast YTD

RESOLVED 23/045 Year to date cashbook and out-turn report dated 04/01/2024 was approved as a true and correct record.

Bank Reconciliation against Cashbook YTD – **RESOLVED 23/046** – that Cllr Pilkington signed the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Statements.

Budget for 2024-25

It was **RESOLVED 23/047** that the budget for 2024-25 would be set at £9,499 as set-out below, proposed by Cllr Bird seconded Cllr Pilkington.

Budget Element	Budget 2024-25
EXPENDITURE	
People	
Clerk & HMRC	3,636
Professional service	
Insurance	403
Internal Audit	50
External Audit	0
Payroll Services	182
General Services	
Admin/Website	109
Room Hire	144
Admin & Expenses	
Expenses	320
Chairman's Allowance	100
Training	190
CHALC Membership	156
SLCC Membership	40
Other Membership	0
	140
Data Protection fee	35
Elections	0
Projects	
Defibrillator	60
Road Safety Measures	0
Footpath Upgrades	2,952
Street Furniture Maintenance	150
British Legion Wreath	28
Ad Hoc Beneficial Items	500
Inflation %	206
Contingency % of above	67
TOTAL CASH OUT	9,499
RECEIPTS	
Precept	6,057
Bank Interest	190.00
VAT recovery	300
CIL Money	0
Money taken from Reserves	2,952
Other	0
TOTAL INCOME	9,499

Precept Request – it was proposed by Cllr Roscoe, seconded by Cllr Martin and the Parish Council **RESOLVED 23/048** to request a Band D precept Charge for 2024/25 of £22.82 which is an increase of 0.9% and 20p increase from 2023-24 and a precept request of £6,057.

Churchyard Grant Application it was **RESOLVED 23/049** to submit a Churchyard Grant Application on behalf of St Peter's Church, Hargrave for the amount £2,550 to cover the cost of grounds maintenance at the closed churchyard.

SLCC Membership – it was **RESOLVED 23/050** to approve the contribution towards the SLCC membership for the Clerk which is split between 5 Parish Councils. Total SLCC membership currently cost £188.00.

Payments Made & Received since the last meeting:-

Income received since the last meeting:-

£16.97 & £15.40 in Bank Interest

Payments made since the last meeting - for approval

Date	Payable to	Net Amount	VAT	Gross Amount	Comment
08/12/2023	Mr M Roscoe	£205.00	£41.00	£246.00	Replacement Battery for Hargrave Defib
22/12/2023	Mrs T Ryall-Harvey	£427.62	£0.00	£427.62	Salary Tax Month 9

Payments not yet made - for approval

Date	Payable to	Net Amount	VAT	Gross Amount	Comment
25/01/2023	Mrs T Ryall-Harvey	£288.95	£0.00	£288.95	Salary Tax Month 10
18/01/2023	Mrs T Ryall-Harvey	£59.60	£0.00	£59.60	Clerk's Expenses

RESOLVED 23/051 to accept the income and payments since the last meeting for approval.

PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

Investment Policy

It was RESOLVED 23/052 to adopt the Investment Policy as circulated with the meeting papers.

Following this the clerk reported she had identified three Community Savers Accounts for the Parish Council's consideration:-

Skipton Building Society – Community Saver Account - 3.65% Gross Interest (Easy Access Account)

Unity Trust Bank – Deposit Account - 2.75% Gross Interest (Instant Access Account)

Metro Bank – Community Instant Access Deposit Account – 4% Gross Interest

It was reported that the Lloyds Deposit Account that the Parish Council currently hold it's reserves in, has a Gross Interest rate of 1.3%.

ACTION: It was therefore requested the Clerk explore opening a Unity Trust Bank Instant Access Deposit Account and check it offers a two signatory account.

ACTION: Check what interest the Bank of Scotland offer and do they do a Community Instant Savings Account.

Training Needs

The Clerk sought clarification as to if there were any training requirements that Parish Councillors sought for 2024.

Cllr Halton confirmed she wished to attend Planning Training it was suggested that she attend the Introduction to Planning Training on 2nd May at a cost of £35.

Cllr Nicholls and Cllr Jones confirmed they wished to attend the Induction for Councillors and Clerks Training on 8th February at a cost of £25.

It was RESOLVED 23/053 that these training courses be funded out of the training budget for 2024-25.

The Clerk circulated a schedule of training she wished to undertake between January and July 2024 and it was RESOLVED 23/054 to approve the fund of this as it was split between 5 Parish Council and would cost the Parish Council £102.00.

Local Council Award Scheme

The Clerk sought confirmation from the Parish Council as to if they wished to apply for the foundation level of the Local Council Award Scheme – this award looks to demonstrate that the Parish Council has all the documentation and information in place to operate lawfully and according to standard practice. It also ensures the policies and training of councillors and officers. It was agreed that the Parish Council would support/not support the clerk's further exploration of this award.

Civility and Respect

The Parish Council RESOLVED 23/055 to sign up to the Civility and Respect pledge stating that they agreed to the following:-

- Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council has agreed that it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.
- Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff
- Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council has signed up to Code of Conduct for councillors
- Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts.
- Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
- Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment when if and when it happens.
- Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model/champion council e.g., via the Local Council Award Scheme
- Hargrave and Huxley Parish Council supports the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

Newsletter

The Clerk sought clarification of items the Parish Council wished including in the next Parish Council contribution to Down our Way:

- It was suggested that the response to the two recent survey's be publish.
- The Next Parish Council meeting.
- The Parish Meeting.
- Stiles and Footpaths
- Dark nights lighting
- Litter picking – date to be agreed

Parish Meeting

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had a statutory requirement to hold a Parish Meeting and the annual Parish Meeting needs to take place between 1st March and 1st June every year.

Two members of the public left the meeting.

The Parish Meeting is the opportunity for residents and local community groups to get together and report on things that have happened in the village in the last 12 months and raise the profile of the organisation between each organisation.

It was suggested that Andrew Hull be invited to come and speak about the Area of Outstanding Beauty, Sandstone Ridge.

ACTION: Clerk to make contact with Mr Hull and get some possible dates for a Parish Meeting that he is available to attend.

The Clerk sought Parish Councillor's views on local groups that could be invited to the meeting and their contact details.

ACTION: Clerk to circulate and request names and contacts for all groups in the Hargrave and Huxley area to invite to the Parish Meeting.

ACTION: Include in Down our Way information regarding the planned Parish Meeting in April.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 7.00pm in Huxley Village Hall.

Signed: 

The meeting closed at 20.32

Dated: 19.3.24