

Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council

The Minutes of the Meeting of Hoo Saint Werburgh and Chattenden Parish Council
Held in Hoo Village Hall on Thursday 6th July 2023 at 7.00pm.

Councillors present: Barton
Chester
Cutting
Dunkley
Fray
Gissing
Hopson
Koroma
Mitchell
Pearce
Styles
Tildesley
Williams
Winters
Wood

Also: Sherrie Babington - Parish Clerk, and members of the public.

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Williams.

1. Apologies.

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.

Apologies were received, and reasons for absence accepted from Cllr Sparkes (work) and Cllr Sands (prior commitment).

To consider any Dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

There were no dispensations is to consider.

2. Declaration of Interests.

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.

No interests were declared.

To consider any Dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

There were no dispensations to consider.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to all present.

It was proposed by Cllr Tildesley to accept these as a true record, seconded by Cllr Dunkley and agreed by all present.

The approved Minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes.

a. Safe Crossing of Bells Lane.

MC emailed with request for a safe crossing on Bells Lane at the junction to Fourwents Road – currently awaiting a response.

b. Water Leak Elm Ave.

This is in the hands of Medway Council as the Highway Authority, and Southern Water.

c. Additional Allotment Land Letter.

Awaiting a date for a meeting with The Brice Charity representatives.

5. Public Comments.

A resident raised concerns about an oversized shed in a neighbouring rear garden.

The resident was advised to raise this with Medway Council.

6. Urgent Matters.

It was reported that the PACT Meeting would now take place on 1st August 2023 at 7pm in the Church.

7. Parish Council Administration.

a. Civility and Respect Pledge.

Parish Council to consider signing up to the national Civility and Respect Pledge at the September PC Meeting.

b. Parish Council Committees Review of membership.

Members ratified the Committee membership reviewed under delegated authority, proposed by Cllr Wood, seconded by Cllr Pearce, and agreed by all present.

Planning Committee

Cllr Fray

Cllr Styles

Cllr Sparks

Cllr Pearce

Cllr Koroma

Cllr Barton

Cllr Chester

Cllr Winter

Environment Committee

Cllr Fray
Cllr Mitchell
Cllr Pearce
Cllr Wood
Cllr Hopson
Cllr Chester
Cllr Winter
Cllr Barton

Finance, Audit & General Purposes Committee

Cllr Sands
Cllr Williams
Cllr Cutting
Cllr Gissing
Cllr Tildesley
Cllr Koroma
Cllr Dunkley
Cllr Mitchell

New Community Centre Project Committee

Cllr Williams
Cllr Tildesley
Cllr Sparks
Cllr Cutting
Cllr Styles
Cllr Gissing
Cllr Hopson
Cllr Dunkley

Personnel Committee

Cllr Williams
Cllr Styles
Cllr Fray

Representatives for Outside Bodies

Rural Liaison	Cllr Fray & Cutting
Footpaths	Cllr Tildesley & Wood
Village Hall	Cllr Styles
Police Liaison	Cllr Cutting & Gissing
Tree Warden	Cllr Pearce
Public Transport	Cllr Koroma
KALC	Cllr Tildesley
Neighbourhood Plan	Cllr Cutting, Styles, Fray, Chester and Winter
Allotments	Cllr Pearce

8. Financial Matters.

a. Financial Statement.

Members considered the circulated Financial Statement.

The bank balances and payments were considered by members, these were proposed by Cllr Fray, seconded by Cllr Gissing and agreed by all present.

Members also approved the transfer of £100,000 from the PC current account over to the high interest account.

9. Parish Council Committees.

To receive the reports and recommendations from PC Committees.

a. Environment Committee.

Summary of recommendations from the Environment Meeting to be considered by Full Council:

1. Pottery Road Recreation Ground security gates and fencing.

Recommendation to approve the quotation for the installation of the gates and fencing at a cost of £14082.

Approved (Styles/Dunkley, agreed by all present)

2. Burial Ground Ranch Style Fencing.

Recommendation to approve the quotation for the installation of the gates at a cost of £14916.77, subject to clarification being sought regarding the gate.

Approved (Fray/Gissing, agreed by all present)

3. Burial Ground TPO Inspection.

Recommendation to approve the quotation for the Oak Tree inspection at the cost of £400.

Approved (Fray/Pearce, agreed by all present)

b. Finance, Audit and General Purposes Committee.

No matters to report.

10. Planning Matters.

a. Planning Applications Received.

No applications to consider.

b. Other Planning Matters.

The following letter from Medway Council was circulated and noted by members. This issue was now in the hands of the Ward Councillors and members agreed that the PC would monitor the situation and make comments if necessary.

Letter from Medway Council

I am writing to let you know that at this evening's Cabinet meeting (13 June) the Leader urged Homes England and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to remain

committed to delivering the HIF project to improve local infrastructure on the Hoo Peninsula, as there is now a risk of the government's housing agency withdrawing its support.

You will be aware that earlier this year it was announced that we were in discussions with Homes England regarding our proposed HIF project as a result of the significant impact of the global recession and high inflation rates on anticipated construction costs and constrained public expenditure. As a result, we have paused our plans for rail developments on the peninsula and started to explore the potential for alternative transport options to improve access for residents.

At the time we also submitted a detailed remediation plan to Homes England in March which outlined how the scheme could be delivered to the budget originally agreed back in 2019, and first proposed in 2017, against a global backdrop of rising construction costs and high inflation.

Although no final decision has been taken, we have now been informed that there is a risk of central government pulling its support for our HIF funding which would result in the loss of £170 million of vital investment not going ahead in new infrastructure, including:

- The cancellation of a programme of investment in new roads;*
- The loss of opportunities to develop sustainable public transport solutions on the Hoo Peninsula to help improve connections throughout the surrounding villages and into the Medway towns;*
- The withdrawal of public access to 26 hectares of land currently under mixed ownership to create new community parklands and wetland reserves within an area of 111 hectares managed for nature;*
- The loss of significant employment opportunities on the peninsula that would benefit local residents across Medway.*

I would stress that at this point no final decision has been taken at government level and we are working hard to secure this critical funding for Medway. I have written to the Chairman and Chief Executive of Homes England raise our concerns and seek a way forward by identifying pragmatic solutions that will allow this much needed infrastructure to be provided. I have also written to ministers and colleagues from DLUHC and the Treasury to inform them of our position and to encourage them to work with us to secure a positive outcome for the delivery of HIF.

Our lack of progress on the Local Plan has undoubtedly been a factor in the situation we find ourselves in. However, it is vital to remember that stopping the HIF project would not stop new homes coming, as demonstrated in a great many appeal decisions within Medway, Kent and the Southeast. Our government housing targets remain unchanged. But it would stop the vital roads, public transport and public access to green spaces that current residents have been clamouring for. It will also jeopardise crucial new jobs coming to Medway. Importantly, the HIF funding unlocks other contributions from developers to support the delivery of vital community assets such as new schools, healthcare and community facilities as well as other important much needed infrastructure on the peninsula.

Please find attached a copy of the press release we will be issuing this evening.

We are in very sensitive negotiations with the government at the moment and it would be hugely disappointing to lose this funding that will bring important improvements to residents on the peninsula.

11. Neighbourhood Plan Report.

Cllr Cutting reported that the NHP had now reached the Regulation 14 Consultation, and this would run from 19th June 2023 for six weeks, until 31st July 2023.
The first consultation event would be held in the Village Hall on Saturday 30th June 23.
She stated that Medway Council were due to have 50 copies of the Plan printed for the consultation.

12. Date of the next meeting – Thursday 7th September 2023.

It was agreed by members that the September PC meeting would be held at Chattenden Community Centre.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting to the press and public at 9.25pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____