

Minute Ref HPC10/22

**HOTHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held**

**on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7.00pm in Bluebells Centre Hothfield**

**1.Note of Persons Present:** Cllr Lloyd, (Chairman) Cllr Merrion (Vice Chairman), Cllr Sutcliffe, Cllr Pollock, Cllr Cox, ABC, Cllr Bell  
Mrs M Norris, Clerk to the Council.

There was 1 member of the public in attendance.

**2.Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Cook prior to the meeting, and agreed by the Chairman.

**3. Co-option of Mr S Brock to Hothfield Parish Council**

Mr Simon Brock applied for the vacant position of Parish Councillor and confirmed that he was qualified to stand on the grounds that he lives within the Parish and is on the electoral register.

Mrs Sutcliffe proposed Mr Brock for the vacant position of Parish Councillor, seconded by Mrs Merrion. Mr Brock completed his Declaration of Acceptance for return to ABC with a copy held by the clerk.

Proposed: Cllr Sutcliffe

Seconded: Cllr Merrion.

**4.Declarations of Cllrs Interest in items on the Agenda**

Relating to the planning application at the Granary, Cllr Brock expressed an interest in item 8 Planning ref 2022/2645 as the tree in question was located in his garden. Cllr Brock signed the Declaration of Interest Register held by the clerk.

**5. Public discussion and Parishioners questions.**

As a result of the residents meeting and a suggestion for use of some of the solar money being used to tidy up the triangle of land that sits between the junction of Park Drive and The Street. Mrs Barton had been invited to the meeting to discuss her ideas further. It was suggested that clearance of the fauna already there and possible replanting of the area with low maintenance bushes and perennials would enhance the look of the space. The PC were in agreement and were happy for Mrs Barton to contact a local gardener for advice and provide a quote for clearing the area in the first instance with the aim to replant and up keep

the area going forward. Mrs Barton agreed to look into this on behalf of the PC and return to the PC in future weeks when a plan of work and costs had been devised.

Whilst discussing this particular area, Cllr Brock and Cllr Pollock also raised a concerns about road safety in respect of sight lines whilst emerging from the junction of Park Drive to turn left on to The Street with traffic already on the Bethersden Road. The PC suggested that this matter be considered along with other road safety measures in the village although a mirror was considered as a workable solution. The Clerk agreed to raise this with Kent Highways along with the other traffic matters currently under consideration as part of the HIP plan.

Action: Clerk

## **6. Acceptance of Last Meeting & Matters arising.**

The draft minutes were corrected to show Mr Collins in paragraph 4. The chairman signed the minutes as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Sutcliffe

Seconded: Cllr Merrion

Matters Arising: Cllr Merrion confirmed that, following the October meeting, a letter was sent to the chairman of the village hall regarding the locked fire doors. The letter confirmed that under no circumstances should the fire doors be locked whilst anyone was on the premises. In addition, Cllr Merrion had also arranged for Ashford Security to attend the village hall and provide the PC with a quotation for fixing the doors. This quote had now been received and sent to all councillors for approval prior to the meeting. The PC accepted the quote and a date for the works to be completed was being arranged. The Chairman suggested that an addendum to the October minutes was raised to include a copy of the letter to the Village hall. All members were in agreement.

Action Clerk

Cllr Merrion also raised questions concerning the buildings insurance for the hall. The current policy is for contents only and paid for by the Village Hall however, as the building is owned by Ashford Borough Council, the PC questioned as to whether it would be reasonable to expect that the buildings insurance was arranged and paid for by the Freeholder (ABC). Cllr Bell agreed to follow up the enquiry and establish who is responsible for the buildings' insurance.

Action: Cllr Bell

In addition, a copy of the lease between ABC and HPC had been provided to Cllr Merrion however this appears to be the same as the copy that is currently held by the clerk and has a page missing. It was felt that as this was a historical document that it was unlikely that we would be able to locate a full copy.

Finally, when attending the Village Hall, it became apparent that the intruder alarm policy has lapsed. The PC felt that the policy could be reinstated with ease if the village hall committee would find this of benefit and were in agreement to pay the premium. The Chairman agreed to raise this item at the next village hall meeting.

Action: Chairman

## **7. Planning & Enforcement**

**OTH/2022/2645      The Granary, Church Lane**  
**T1- Silver Birch Tree – To fell located in the garden of the Granary**

The PC were in support of the application with 3 votes in favour and 2 members abstaining.

**PA/2022/2624      3-4 The Street, Hothfield, TN26 1EJ**  
**Single storey side extension, part two storey/part single storey rear extension and conversion of existing outbuilding to create additional accommodation.**

Following discussion between members it was agreed that the objections previously raised had not been satisfied and as such the previous comments were still current to this application and therefore HPC, following consideration, do not support the application.

CLlr Bell advised that the previous application for 3-4 The Street, had been called to the Planning Committee for further consideration and it was likely to be recommended that this new application should also be brought to the attention of the planning committee.

## **8. Borough Councillors Report**

CLlr Bell confirmed that a training session on the planning portal had been delivered for councillors. The course was beneficial and some of the problems with the portal have been addressed and rectified. Albeit that some of the requested changes from users cannot be delivered due to technical changes between the new system and the previous one however the new portal is continually being updated and all suggestions and feedback from users that can help embed the new system are being considered.

CLlr Bell also reported on the progress of Stodmarsh, the council have now identified some land which would be the strategic wetlands mitigation to Stodmarsh. The importance of this is for the entire borough as successful procurement of the identified land would then enable some of the planning application permissions that have been waiting for up to two years to be released and the developments can begin.

## **9. Financial Reports**

The bank reconciliation as of 13th October 2022 was £ 66,640.53

The following accounts were approved for payment

01726	M Norris	£546.01
01725	K Marden	380.80
01727	Printer Cartridges	318.63
01728	Printer	349.00
01729	HMRC	76.20
01724	Play Inspection Co	87.54
	Total	1768.17

A monthly payment via direct debit of £10.00 to EDF was noted. This will increase in December 2022 to £22.00 per month with a review set for April 2023.

### **Preparation and Adoption of Budget for 2023/2024**

The members of the Finance and Policy Committee had previously circulated their proposed budget for Councillors via email and those present unanimously agreed, following discussion to adopt the budget for 2023/2024.

Proposed Mr Lloyd                      Seconded Mrs Merrion

### **Setting and Adoption of Precept for 2023/2024**

Resolution: Councillors unanimously agreed to adopt the proposals, made by the Finance and Policy Committee to set the Precept at £15,500 for 2023/2024.

Proposed Cllr Lloyd                      Seconded Cllr Merrion.

### **Financial Maturity Requirements**

Cllr Cox requested permission to look into the possibility of the parish council earning interest through gilts/investments. The Chairman agreed to this and Cllr Cox will report back to the group with his findings on the subject. Cllr Cox requested further information from the Finance committee on the maturity requirements ie when the funds will be needed in year or beyond. Cllr Merrion agreed to look at this with an aim to identify if not when the monies are required in year but how much notice we would need prior to projects to release funds.

## **10. Future Events**

The Christmas Best Dressed house competition will take place on the 16<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm. The clerk will seek permission from the children's centre to use their kitchen for the event. The clerk will also provide carol sheets for printing to the chairman prior to the event. The event will be published in the newsletter. The PC agreed the quotation received from Flossys Bakes for the prizes.

Flower & Craft Show – Cllr Pollock had identified a provisional date as 5<sup>TH</sup> August 2023. Categories would look to include fruit and vegetables, Flowers, Arts & Crafts, Cakes & Bakeware and children's categories. Cllr Pollock will look to produce an item for the January newsletter to publicise the event and provide more details. The format for the day is to be decided and Cllr Pollock will update further at future meetings.

Coronation Celebrations – The date of the Coronation has been confirmed as the 6<sup>th</sup> May with Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May being a bank holiday. The village hall has been booked for the 8<sup>th</sup> May for a village celebration yet to be identified.

Annual Village Meeting – Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May (10.30 til 1.00pm) booking made at the village hall for the meeting. Agenda to be discussed at a future meeting.

## **11. Solar Proposals**

Speed Restrictions: We are awaiting a reply from Kent Highways as a new steward has been identified. It was suggested that when we hear from the steward that the clerk also mentions the safety aspect of the road where the triangle of land is and the possibility of having a mirror at that point.

**Action: Clerk**

**CCTV** – Ongoing

### **Path Connecting East & West Hothfield**

The clerk will contact Kent Wildlife to request a copy of the map that shows the path way from the bus stop. This will then be produced for publication in the newsletter.

**Action: Clerk**

## **10.General Council Business**

### **Correspondence received:**

**10.1** Play Inspection Company Report- Issued to all Cllrs prior to the meeting.

**10.2** Village Hall- Quotation received for the fire doors agreed, and also for the disabled toilet had been sighted by the councillors prior to the meeting.

**10.3** PCSO – No items had been brought to the attention of the PC.

**10.4** Further to an email from a local resident regarding fencing, it was agreed that the Clerk would write to the housing officer for Hothfield to seek advice on this matter.

**Action Clerk**

**10.5** MUGA – The clerk confirmed that the company that had been to the MUGA to quote on the job had decided not to quote citing that the job was too big for them to undertake. Cllr Cook suggested that we ask Mr Marden if he would like to consider quoting for the works to commence in Spring 2023. The councillors were in agreement and the clerk will raise this with Mr Marden.

**Action Clerk**

**10.6** Hothfield Newsletter –The Chairman agreed to contact the new contributors to the newsletter to thank them for their recent articles and to discuss any future articles that they may wish to contribute. Cllr Cox raised the question as to whether the advertisements in recent editions are current. Cllr Lloyd agreed to raise this question with the Editor.

**Action: Cllr Lloyd**

## **11. Forum for Exchange of Information between Councillors**

The Clerk confirmed that she would email the Church Treasurer regarding the increase to donation for churchyard maintenance for FY 23/24.

Cllr Cox confirmed that a letter had been received from the KCC about the subsidiaries paid to Stagecoach and how these will be stopped which in turn will affect services (outlined previously) some of which will be cancelled. A date for the withdrawal of services was not provided and for this reason Cllr Cox contacted customer services at Stagecoach who advised that they were unaware of this development.

Cllr Lloyd reminded all Cllrs that tasking of the clerk should come through the chairman. This will enable the PC to identify the clerks' workload. Cllr Cox requested that the Chairman publish all his contact details so that there would be no delays if needing to task the clerk. Although readily available, the chairman agreed to reissue his contact details to all PC members in case new members do not have them.

**Action: Cllr Lloyd**

Cllr Cox suggested that he would like to reinstate the January meeting. At present the Parish Council do not meet in August or January as agreed in the Annual Meeting each year. A resolution was not made at this meeting

## **12. Items for The Next Agenda**

Gilts & Investment Opportunities (Cllr Cox)

There being no other business the Chairman thanked all attendees and called the meeting to close at 21:09 hours

## **13. Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday December 14<sup>th</sup> 2022 at 7.00pm.

DRAFT