Parish of Castle Hedingham
Claire Waters (Parish Clerk)
[redacted]
07845 056597 castlehedinghamparishclerk@gmail.com

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF CASTLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON MONDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2023, 7.30PM AT CASTLE HEDINGHAM CLUB

Present: Cllrs Deeks, Doe, Dover, Foulkes, Westrop.
In the Chair: Cllr Doe
Clerk: Claire Waters
Also present: Cllr P Schwier ECC (between items 8 & 9)
Cllr J Beavis BDC and Cllr W Taylor BDC (between items 10 & 11)
4 members of the public (2 to item 6, 2 to item 7)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Allen, Mowle, Smith & Southgate
1.1. RESOLVED: Cllr Doe was elected to chair the meeting
Proposed: Cllr Dover **Seconded:** Cllr Deeks Agreed unanimously

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of Monday 9th October 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman
Proposed: Cllr Westrop **Seconded:** Cllr Foulkes Agreed unanimously

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Westrop declared an interest in the Planning Appeal at item 8 as a near neighbour of the site. Councillor interests in item 6.1 Footpath 25 public inquiry were considered but would not be a disclosable pecuniary interest and no decision was to be taken at the meeting.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

2 members of the public attended to express concerns about the diversion of Footpath 25 at item 6.1. One outlined their reasons for objecting to the proposal, which include a less accessible route alongside overgrown brambles and trees on neighbouring land, as well as the loss of the view. With permission of the Chair, item 6.1 was brought forward and discussed during the public forum. The members of the public then left the meeting after item 6.
2 parishioners attended to inform the Parish Council about plans for a Youth Club at item 11. With permission of the Chair, this item was brought forward and discussed before item 7. The parishioners then left the meeting.

5. PROGRESS CHECK

Village maintenance issues and update on actions from last meeting. The clerk reported briefly on the successful appointment of our new Village Maintenance operative and Public Toilets operative during their first month of employment.

6. HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Update on Highways & Footpath issues and any new problems to report
6.1. Footpath 25 Scotch Pasture: Planning Inspectorate inquiry to be held at 10.00am on Tuesday 5th March 2024, at Gosfield Village Hall (Maurice Rowson Hall), Church Road, Gosfield, Essex CO9 1TL. The Gosfield venue has been selected because it meets the all but one of the accessibility criterial for public inquiries, whereas the Memorial Hall does not meet a number of them. It is confirmed by Essex Public Rights of Way that all the documents for the public inquiry will be available on a publicly accessible website in the near future, and residents are asked not to request paper copies from Essex Public Rights of Way unless absolutely necessary as this increases their already busy workload preparing for the inquiry. A landowner is entitled to divert a footpath if they have a legitimate reason for doing so. Objections to a diversion will only be considered if they meet with the provisions of the **Highways Act 1980, s119**

Action: Clerk to chase the publication of the documentation pack online and check deadlines for registering to attend and speak. *Agenda item for January meeting*

Action: To raise this with District and County Councillors and seek other sources of advice and support to ensure the parish is properly represented.

6.2. Footpath 38 New Park to Sheepcot Rd: A resident complaint was noted and a number of actions taken by Village Maintenance to clear the footpath. Some property owners bordering the footpath had responded positively to a letter from the Parish Council requesting they attend to vegetation at their boundary. The resident had been directed Essex Public Rights of Way https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us/public-rights-of-way-issues to report any remaining overhanging trees from privately owned property

6.3. Footpath 19 & Delvyns Lane verge: Footpath 19 missing waymarker signs will be replaced by Village Maintenance, although this section of the footpath is in Gestingthorpe Parish. The special verge at Delvyns Lane has now been cut by BDC verge cutting contractors and will be raked as soon as possible by Village Maintenance to allow the rare flower species to grow in spring.

6.4. Station Rd verge: BDC appointed new verge cutting contractors in 2022. Following correspondence with BDC and the contractors, they have now cut the verge at Station Road. The Parish Council is grateful for their co-operation. Village Maintenance is in the process of clearing the side growth on the footpath.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Police/PCSO/Neighbourhood Watch. Monthly police reports and Neighbourhood Watch weekly newsletters are published on the website www.castlehedingham.org/community/neighbourhood-watch/

7.2. Essex CC report – Cllr Schwier ECC arrived and reported after item 8. He then left the meeting

- **ECC updates**: These are emailed regularly to the clerk. Those relevant to Castle Hedingham residents are now shared on the new Latest News page on the Parish Council website https://castlehedingham.org/latest-news/. Castle Hedingham residents are encouraged to request membership of the website and opt in for weekly email updates on new content that has been added.
- **Highways**: Drain jetting crews have been working ad hoc to clear drains following heavy rain
- **Sandbags**: These are not supplied by ECC, householders needing a supply should contact the Environment Agency. ECC provides funding help for residents with flooding concerns, call Essex County Council general enquiries on 0345 743 0430 Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm or use the general enquiries online form at https://www.essex.gov.uk/general-enquiries
- **Winter operations:** pothole repair work is not effective when carried out in freezing conditions. Crews are redeployed on winter gritting and there are now 49 gritters, with 2 smaller electric ones for accessing narrower rural roads. 40% of highways are covered, spreading around 21,000 tonnes of grit. The electric gritters are unlikely to cover Castle Hedingham and bus routes are the main priority
- **Police, Fire & Crime:** The commissioner has a current consultation on increasing the budget, see . https://castlehedingham.org/latest-news/ for details
- **ECC Consultations:** Draft Waste Partnership consultation ends on 22nd November, and the Vehicle Booking for recycling centres consultation ends on 19th November
- **Highway repairs in Castle Hedingham:** The recent overnight repairs through the village which took place outside the scheduled dates were raised by Cllr Doe.
- **Crime in Castle Hedingham:** Following recent increases in local crime, Cllr Schwier offered to contact Roger Hirst, PFCC to request his attendance at a meeting. The clerk reported recent contact with local PC James Draper who has also offered to attend a meeting.

7.3. Braintree DC reports – Cllrs Beavis and Taylor BDC arrived and reported after item 10. They then left the meeting.

- **Hedinghams Parish Magazine**: Cllrs Beavis and Taylor are strong supporters of the magazine being free and delivered to all households in the Hedinghams. Sible Hedingham PC is taking over responsibility, supporting the current editor and subsidising the cost in the early stages until it becomes self-financing through advertising. There are no longer-term financial commitments planned for either Parish Council. The re-launch is planned for March 2024, with plans for a 50:50 advertising to editorial mix and a maximum of 52 pages. The copy deadline for submissions will be 15th of the previous month which will enable the latest Parish Council minutes to be included.

- **Planning**: Cllr Beavis confirmed she is aware of the latest planning appeals and has been contacted by residents about Rosemary Lane and Footpath 25 at Scotch Pastures. Cllr Beavis will be attending the Footpath 25 Public Inquiry in March
- **BDC Budget**: The Independent and Green group at BDC is still challenging green bin charges and pushing for free bins for people with assisted collections.
- **BDC 4-year Corporate Strategy**: Consultation feedback shows rural deprivation, crime and open spaces are seen as a priority by residents, as well as congestion in Braintree. Cllrs Beavis and Taylor have asked the CEO and Neil Jones of BDC to visit Hedingham ward to see the issues for themselves, including reviewing Hedinghams Medical Centre progress and the Riverside Walk.
- **Wethersfield Airfield**: Cllr Taylor had attended a Home Office follow up meeting via video conference. It had been a short meeting due to the news of MP James Cleverly being appointed Home Secretary. Monthly meetings are scheduled to follow up a visit to the asylum centre. Cllrs Southgate, Foulkes and Doe are representing Castle Hedingham Parish Council on this issue.
- **Parish Council meeting times**: A time change for both Parish Councils is being considered, with Sible Hedingham starting earlier and Castle Hedingham slightly later so that Cllrs Beavis and Taylor can attend both.

8. PLANNING

Applications received:

23/02552/HH Erection of single storey rear extension
27 Nunnery Street CO9 3DN *No objections*

Planning appeal:

APP/Z1510/W/23/3321252 Retrospective change of use from agricultural to commercial B2 use for the purposes of vintage vehicle and vintage agricultural machinery repairs and workshop
Workshop on Land South of Rosemary Farm, Rosemary Lane *Objections as for original application*

Applications determined

23/02478/AGR Erection of New machinery store adjoining existing agricultural building: Submission of details following Prior Approval Required (23/02215/AGR)
Rushley Green Farm Rushley Green CO9 3AH *Prior Approval Given*

23/01983/LBC Re paint exterior of property including front door and side gates, leaving all beams exposed
Blue Boar House 24 St James Street CO9 3EW *Application PERMITTED*

23/02431/TPOCON Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: Removal of Walnut tree as it is growing through the building
4 Falcon Square CO9 3BT *Application PERMITTED*

9. FINANCE

9.1. The monthly payments were approved for authorisation by two Councillors. The monthly bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Cllr Deeks – see *Appendix 1: Financial Report*
Proposed: Cllr Doe **Seconded**: Cllr Foulkes Agreed unanimously
9.2. Budget 2024-25: the 2023-24 budget progress and a forecast of the end of financial year status was reviewed in preparation for the January budget meeting, with the impact of the recent Local Government pay award (item 12) considered. Cost savings continue to be sought wherever possible.

10. COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

10.1. A successful £3,500 Community Gardens and Open Spaces grant application was noted, with thanks to Braintree District Council for this grant from the Levelling Up fund. A grant agreement was signed by Cllr Will Dover and the clerk.
10.2. In line with the terms of the grant agreement, initial spending on the items specified in the application was approved. This includes further raised beds at the allotment, equipment for developing a Community Orchard area and £500 for marketing to encourage more Castle Hedingham residents to participate.
10.3. Further actions to increase participation in the Community Allotment project were considered, including leaflets delivered to households and possible events at the Village Park.

10.4. A meeting date with the Village Park group was proposed for Tuesday 28th November, 3pm at Castle Hedingham Club. **Action**: The clerk will check availability of the venue and all attendees.

11. PROPOSAL - YOUTH CLUB - CASTLE HEDINGHAM

A proposal for a weekly Youth Club to be held at Castle Hedingham Club had been presented to the Parish Council. Two amendments had been added, including a change to the proposed meeting day following feedback from families. The two organisers who attended the meeting *(see Public Forum item 4*) were thanked for their thorough proposal and their efforts in meeting a need for younger village residents. The booking of the venue is a matter for the organisers and Castle Hedingham Club, but the Parish Council is generally in support of this initiative. The potential use of the outdoor space is Parish Council responsibility and can be considered further as the Youth Club develops, but in principle the Village Park is for everyone and young people are encouraged to use it and enjoy it. Organised events e.g. BBQs may need additional risk assessment and details should be submitted to the clerk for each event for Parish Council consideration.

12. PAY REVIEW 2023-2024

12.1. RESOLVED To hold this item in closed session due to confidential staff matters

Proposed: Cllr Deeks **Seconded**: Cllr Westrop Agreed unanimously

12.2. RESOLVED Village Maintenance & Public Toilets staff: the delayed pay review for 2023-2024 was approved in line with the NJC Local Government pay scales published in early November

Proposed: Cllr Dover **Seconded**: Cllr Doe Agreed unanimously

The clerk left the meeting

RESOLVED Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer: the delayed pay review for 2023-2024 was approved in line with the NJC Local Government pay scales published in early November

Proposed: Cllr Deeks Seconded: Cllr Westrop Agreed unanimously

The clerk rejoined the meeting

13. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE

- **CH Village Hall committee -** Monthly accounts are now being shared with the Parish Clerk and Cllr Deeks as Village Hall Committee representative. A joint working group meeting with Parish Council, Hall & Club representatives is being planned for early in the New Year.

14. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- **Budget and Precept** to be set for the 2024-2025 financial year
- **BDC Potential Open Space Improvements plan** (formerly Open Spaces Action Plan). Updates due by 26th January 2024
- **Public Inquiry Footpath 25 diversion –** preparation of case and arrangements for attendance

15. NEXT MEETINGS:

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER			
Monday 8th January 2023	**7.30pm**	**Ordinary Parish Council**	**Castle Hedingham Club**

The meeting closed at 9.43pm

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN) DATE