Parish of Castle Hedingham
Claire Waters (Parish Clerk)
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF CASTLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON MONDAY 8th JANUARY 2024, 7.30PM AT CASTLE HEDINGHAM CLUB

Present: Cllrs Allen, Deeks, Doe, Dover, Foulkes, Mowle, Smith, Southgate, Westrop
In the Chair: Cllr Southgate
Clerk: Claire Waters
Also present: Cllr P Schwier ECC (between items 8 & 9)
Cllr J Beavis BDC and Cllr W Taylor BDC (to item 8)
16 members of the public (to item 8)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
None

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
The minutes of the meeting of Monday 13th November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman
Proposed: Cllr Deeks **Seconded:** Cllr Doe Agreed unanimously

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Cllr Allen declared an interest in planning application 23/02752/LBC & 23/02751/FUL as the Post Office was a previous tenant of the property. Cllr Doe also declared an interest in planning application 23/02752/LBC & 23/02751/FUL as landlady of the Bell Inn, who have agreed a financial arrangement regarding refuse storage.

4. PUBLIC FORUM
16 members of the public attended to voice concerns about the diversion of Footpath 25 at item 6.1.
4 residents spoke on behalf of the group to express the strength of feeling locally about the diversion. A statement of case by Essex County Council on behalf of the landowner had been received at the end of December. Concerns of residents included deterioration of the surface due to lack of maintenance, reliance on neighbouring landowner for woodland maintenance alongside the new route, narrower width of the footpath including restricted passing for those walkers with anxious rescue dogs, reduced accessibility for wheeled buggies and less mobile pedestrians, greater susceptibility of the diverted route to wet weather and frost. All residents were encouraged to submit their own individual comments to the Public Inquiry – the details of the inquiry timetable are published here https://www.gov.uk/guidance/2023-rights-of-way-order-information-start-date-notices-inquiry-hearing-notices-and-rejection-letters#essex-county-council. Everyone who has made an objection or representation and anyone who wishes to give evidence at the Inquiry must ensure their statement of case is received by the Secretary of State by 30th January 2024. Any queries relating to this Order should be sent by email to rightsofway2@planninginspectorate.gov.uk quoting reference number ROW 3316971 on all correspondence. Alternatively, queries may be sent in writing to The Planning Inspectorate, Rights of Way Section, Room 3/A Eagle Wing, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN. Telephone: 0303 444 5136. All documents related to the diversion of Footpath 25 are available at https://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/opposed-orders Objections to a diversion will only be considered if they meet with the provisions of the **Highways Act 1980, s119** https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/section/119

5. PROGRESS CHECK
Village maintenance issues and update on actions from last meeting. The clerk gave a brief update:
5.1. Bowmans Park Grit bin: Village Maintenance has repositioned the bin and added some of the Parish Council supply of winter grit. This is not a Parish Council responsibility but it was felt important to take prompt action to prevent risk on the footpath in icy weather
5.2. Commonwealth War Grave: A sign denoting the war grave will be located at the Cemetery entrance

6. HIGHWAYS & PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Update on Highways & Footpath issues and any new problems to report

6.1. Footpath 25 Scotch Pasture ROW 3316971: 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. Its was agreed that all Councillors would attend if available.

Action: Cllrs Doe, Deeks, Mowle and Westrop will meet to scope out the Parish Council response.

Action: Clerk to follow up contact with Ramblers Association and Open Spaces Society.

6.2. Footpath 2 Pye Corner to Scotch Pasture: Fallen trees had been reported to Hedingham Castle who had promptly cleared the obstruction

6.3. Luces Lane: Restricted pedestrian access due to parked cars and wheelie bins left out between collections had been reported to the appropriate authorities

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 Bus subsidies**: Following a recent public consultation, it has been approved by ECC that subsidised bus services will continue for 150 routes across the County.
- **Winter Highways work**: Cllr Schwier reported on winter gritting and also tree clearance across the county following Storm Henk, which required the hire of 12 additional tree surgery crews.
- **Roadside ditch lines**: These are mostly not owned by Essex Highways but are the responsibility of the landowners adjacent to the road. Landowners are urged to check ditches and keep them clear.
- **Planning Consultations**: Essex Highways are a statutory consultee in larger planning applications, totalling around 65,000 across the county in the last year. This includes assessing Highways impact and considering the impact of any development including during extreme weather conditions.
- **Footpath 25 Public Inquiry:** Cllr Schwier will try to attend the inquiry in March.

7.3. Braintree DC reports – Cllrs Beavis and Taylor BDC reported and left the meeting before item 9.

- **Parish Council meeting times:** Cllr Beavis was pleased to be able to attend the Castle Hedingham meeting from the start time. It is likely that Sible Hedingham Parish Council will re-consider the start time of their meetings at the May Annual Parish Council meeting to enable District Councillors to attend both Sible and Castle meetings. *Agenda item for May Annual Parish Council meeting*
- **Footpath 25 Public Inquiry:** Cllr Beavis has experience of the process having prepared the statement of case for the Public Inquiry into Halstead housing development. She provided useful advice and a contact who may be able to support the objectors.
- **BDC Planning committee**: The Hedinghams Medical Centre is closer to achieving a financial business case. It is also hoped that an update will be coming soon on the Riverside Walk
- **BDC Budget**: This is still in progress, and is taking into consideration the cost of living crisis. Cllr Beavis is keeping an eye on the green bin charge roll out, including what happens to those who don't sign up.
- **BDC 4-year Corporate Strategy**: Cllr Beavis is keen for this to be more community-led rather than led at corporate level. She and Cllr Taylor will be meeting with local police in the near future.
- **Wethersfield Airfield**: Cllr Taylor had attended a Home Office meeting via video conference. There are currently 530 asylum centre residents. Donations of warm clothes and shoes are appreciated. David Butler is the new on-site lead at Wethersfield and will host the next meeting on 12th February.
- **Hedinghams Parish Magazine**: This will be relaunched in March and distributed free to 2365 homes in the two Hedinghams. There will be 10 magazines per year, with double issues in December/January and July/August. The copy deadline for each issue will be the 15th of the previous month. Advertisers are essential to keep the magazine going-; Sible Hedingham Parish Council is supporting the relaunch with a £3,500 loan until advertising revenue achieves its target level.

8. PLANNING

Applications received:

23/02752/LBC & 23/02751/FUL Proposed conversion of existing building into 3 holiday lets
Buckleys And The Magnolia Tea Rooms 7A St James Street CO9 3EJ *Objection to loss of community amenity and impact on village economy. Request the application goes to Planning Committee*

23/03007/VAR Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of approved application 21/00422/FUL granted 21.04.2021 for:Erection of new barn to replace demolished barn following a fire. Variation would allow: the introduction of concrete panels at low level instead of the box profile cladding extending all the way to the ground, this will also mean the steel stanchions will be on show at low level too.
Milestone Barns Sudbury Road CO9 3AD *No objections*

Applications received: Decisions ratified

23/02880/TPOCON Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area:- T1 1 x Cherry reduce by 0.5-1m T2 1 x Portuguese laurel reduce away from building by 1m
Goston Mount Pottery Lane CO9 3EU *No objections*

23/02852/TPOCON Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: T1 - Lime Trees x8 - Re-pollard to previous pollarding points (approx. 2m off), trees on roadside boundary. T2 - Yew Tree - Rear of parking area - Reduce by 2m around the neighbours tv aerial to give clearance T3 - Yew Tree - Rear Boundary by Summer House, reduce by approx. 2m overall. T4 - Yew Tree - Rear Boundary to the left of T3, reduce height by 4m and sides by 2m. T5 - Silver Birch - Left hand boundary - reduce by 2-3m overall. T6 - Goat Willow - Left hand Boundary, re-pollard to previous cutting points, approx. 4-5m off
The Vicarage Queen Street CO9 3EZ *No objections*

23/02843/TPOCON Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: London Plane (T1) Crown reduction of 4m to previous cuts. Poplar (T2) Pollard to 10m, Poplar (T3) Pollard to 8m in height.
Binghams Pottery Lane CO9 3EU *No objections*

23/02943/TPOCON Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area: False Acacia - Prune the overhanging branches. To be cut back by up to 2 metres
High House 2 St James Street CO9 3EJ *No objections*
Comment: Request significance of False Acacia as Mark Catesby import is noted by Landscape Services.

Applications determined

23/02552/HH Erection of single storey rear extension
27 Nunnery Street CO9 3DN *Application PERMITTED*

23/02379/LBC Proposed removal of internal wall, and raising of ceiling height in kitchen
9 Pye Corner CO9 3DE *Application PERMITTED*

23/02371/HH Two storey side extension, changes in roof pitch to existing single storey rear element and porch, relocation of main entrance door and proposed provision of hardstanding to facilitate vehicle parking
41 Nunnery Street CO9 3DW *Application PERMITTED*

23/02174/LBC& 23/02173/FUL Conversion of Lippingwell's Farmhouse and Lippingwell's Cottage into a single dwelling
Lippingwells Cottage & Lippingwells Farmhouse Rushley Green CO9 3AH *Application PERMITTED*

21/01416/DAC Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3, 4 and 5 of Listed Building Consent 20/00134/LBC
Post Office 5 St James Street CO9 3EJ *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: Cllr Southgate on behalf of all Councillors proposed sincere thanks to the clerk for preparing a robust and thorough budget for consideration.
RESOLVED: The 2024 – 2025 Parish Council budget was approved. The full budget will be published on the Parish Council website www.castlehedingham.org.
Proposed: Cllr Doe **Seconded**: Cllr Deeks Agreed unanimously
9.3. Precept 2024-25: Councillors considered reduced government funding alongside increasing costs for residents and for the Parish Council. Reduction in numbers of properties and residents liable for council tax in the parish makes it a challenge to balance revenue income with necessary spending.
RESOLVED: A precept claim of £34,047 was approved for the coming financial year. This represents a Band D parish rate of £71.49 per year, a 5% increase over 2023-2024. This is an increase of 7p per week, or £3.40 per year.
Proposed: Cllr Southgate **Seconded**: Cllr Doe 8 in favour, 1 abstention
9.4. Parish Council Reserves: Earmarked reserves and the level of general reserve. It was agreed that the Community Projects reserve which stands at £8,500 should be increased to £10,000.
9.5. Npower energy supply: After months of difficulty since Npower first refused to supply the street lights at New Park in July 2023, they have at last agreed not to impose a 70p per day standing charge on the lights that were de-energised by UKPN at the end of August 2023. They have also offered to pay the electrician's invoice for disconnecting the lights and a £200 "gesture of goodwill" for the problems they caused. Pursuing a higher compensation amount would have to go through a dispute resolution process, taking up more clerk time. This was considered not to be worth the additional hours of work, at the expense of other Parish Council priorities.

10. COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT
10.1. The clerk reported that the £3,500 Community Gardens and Open Spaces grant from Braintree District Council under the Levelling Up fund had been received in the bank. S106 funding of £1,191 which was claimed from BDC in May 2022 had also finally been received, after being chased up a number of times. This amount will be allocated to the general reserve since it was already paid out during the initial groundwork preparation for the Community Allotment.
10.2. A working group meeting of the Village Park group and Community Allotment leaders will take place on Friday 26th January at 3pm to progress the next stage of the Community Allotment and Orchard project.

11. BDC POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS PLAN
Formerly known as the Open Spaces Action Plan, this document determines the use of any S106 funding available from housing development in the parish. Updates due by 26th January 2024 were approved, with most entries staying the same but an additional entry agreed for possible parking prevention measures at the New Park rewilding area. Castle Hedingham Parish Council has £2,623.21 balance of S106 funding remaining which is held by Braintree District Council. New S106 open spaces funding now only applies to housing developments of 10 properties or more.

12. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE - None

13. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- **Meetings calendar:** To agree a date for the May Annual Parish Assembly

14. NEXT MEETINGS:

Monday 12th February 2024	**7.30pm**	**Ordinary Parish Council**	**Castle Hedingham Club**
Monday 11th March 2024	**7.30pm**	**Ordinary Parish Council**	**Castle Hedingham Club**

The meeting closed at 9.28pm

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN) DATE