



# Castle Hedingham Parish Council

April 2014

## Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Report

The Parish Council invites you to attend the Annual Parish Meeting on Friday May 2nd at 8.00 pm at the Memorial Hall, Castle Hedingham. This report summarises Parish Council activities during the past year:

### Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings are held monthly on a Monday evening at the Castle Hedingham Club, starting at 7.45pm. There is a Public Forum as the first agenda item at each meeting, when parishioners are very welcome to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any matter that they wish to bring to the Parish Council's attention. Alternatively you can contact the Clerk on [castlehedinghamparishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:castlehedinghamparishclerk@gmail.com) or on 07845 056597 to report any items or concerns. The agenda for each meeting is posted a week in advance on our village noticeboards, and on our website at [www.castlehedingham.org](http://www.castlehedingham.org)

### Parish Council Website

Our new Parish website has been launched at [www.castlehedingham.org](http://www.castlehedingham.org). Agendas and minutes of Parish Council meetings are published monthly, as well as a calendar of village events and news items of interest. Any contributions from village groups and societies are very welcome, as well as local photographs which you would like to share. Businesses with a Castle Hedingham postcode are also welcome to post a short description of their services and a link to their own website - there will be an annual administration charge of £10 for this service to businesses.

### High Speed Broadband

Broadband is now regarded as the 4<sup>th</sup> utility, and slow broadband speeds can be a real problem for the development of rural communities. The Parish Council has been looking into alternative methods of supplying broadband to the village so residents and businesses can all have access to better speeds if they wish. County Broadband, a local supplier of wireless broadband, presented at a public meeting in February, and local volunteers have conducted a door-to-door survey to assess the level of interest.

### Planning Applications

The Parish Council reviews and comments on all planning applications made within the parish boundary. They make recommendations to Braintree District Council Planning but all final decisions are made by Braintree. If you wish to view or comment on a planning application, you can write to Braintree District Council or contact them via their website: <http://publicaccess.braintree.gov.uk/online-applications> Braintree District Council's Local Development Framework will enter its final stage of consultation this summer before being sent to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. This will determine areas in the village which can be used for building development over the next 15 years, and areas which are kept as public open spaces. Plans can be found at <http://braintree-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/> where your comments can be submitted, or you can send comments to the Parish Council.

### St Nicholas Churchyard

The Parish Council is responsible for maintaining our churchyard at St Nicholas. Essential repairs were undertaken to the wall at Church Lane and Church Ponds this year, and a tree which was damaging the wall at Church Lane was removed.

### War Memorial

Our Grade II listed War Memorial received a grant from the War Memorials Trust for a conservation survey this year. The next stage is to apply for a full grant from the War Memorials Trust to carry out conservation work - this may amount to 75% of the cost of the project. However, to preserve our War Memorial for future generations will be a costly project so additional fundraising may be needed.

### National Grid

Plans to develop the "Bramford to Twinstead Tee" connection, which included a consultation on building a substation in Castle Hedingham, have been put on hold as the new connection is not needed until the early 2020s. The Parish Council and Braintree District Council strongly objected to a substation in Castle Hedingham and will continue to do so when the project is recommenced.

### Highways Matters

The Parish Council regularly reports potholes, drainage problems and other maintenance issues to Essex County Council Highways. Repairs are not always completed as quickly as we would like. Please help us by reporting problems yourself on Essex County Council's website at: <https://secureweb1.essexcc.gov.uk/Highways/Report-a-highway-problem.aspx> or by calling 0845 603 7631.

### Village Maintenance

Mortimers, the Parish Council's village contractor, has continued to provide good service this year looking after litter picking, grass cutting and other village maintenance jobs. Litter picking is carried out weekly between May and September, and fortnightly between October and April.

### Castle Hedingham Club

Following a difficult year, the Castle Hedingham Club is now being run by a group of volunteers. The Parish Council hopes that with your support, the club continues to grow in membership and thrive as a social amenity for our village.

### Police Support

There has been a change to our local PCSOs this year, which means that they have not been able to attend Parish Council meetings. However, the Parish Council is now receiving a written police report monthly from PC Jim Carter at

Halstead. Halstead Police can be contacted by telephone on 101. Opportunist burglaries during the day continue to be a problem in the area; residents are reminded to lock up even if they are only away from the house for a short time. Sheds and outbuildings are also a common target.

#### Donations

The Council made the following donations in the 2013/14 Financial Year: Halstead & Colne Valley Scouts for 2015 World Jamboree fundraising - £200; British Legion Remembrance Wreath - £60; Essex Air Ambulance - £100; Magna Carta 2015 - £10.

#### Public Toilets at Memorial Hall

At the beginning of April, the transfer of responsibility for the Public Toilets from Braintree District Council to the Parish Council was completed, which means that all supplies, utilities and rates will be met from the Parish Council budget. We aim to continue to maintain the toilets to their current high standard.

Yours sincerely,



Sonia Allfrey  
Chairman

#### Accounts

The Parish Council precept was calculated this year to represent a 0% increase in our share of the Council Tax. The budget agreed by the Parish Council this year reflects current economic difficulties, and priority will continue to be given to matters of importance to our parishioners. Copies of the full accounts are available at the Annual Meeting, are displayed in the St James Street notice board near Buckley's Tearooms and on the website at [www.castlehedingham.org](http://www.castlehedingham.org).

Summary of Parish Council income and expenditure for 2013/14:

#### **Income:**

Precept and Localism Fund	£28,667.00
Other Grant Income	£5,516.23
Cemetery Income	£4,013.00
VAT recovered	£2,461.76
Other Income	£2,910.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>£43,361.82</b>

#### **Expenditure:**

Village Maintenance	£15,782.32
Administration	£13,568.32
Donations	£370.00
VAT	£2,454.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£32,174.64</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>£11,187.18</b>
	<b>£43,361.82</b>

#### **Contacting the Council:**

##### **Chairman**

Mrs S Allfrey  
Southern  
37 Bayley Street  
Castle Hedingham  
CO9 3DG  
Tel. 01787 461108

##### **Parish Clerk**

Mrs Claire Waters  
25 Bayley Street  
Castle Hedingham  
CO9 3DG  
Tel. 07845 056597  
castlehedinghamparishclerk@gmail.com

#### **District Councillors:**

Mrs J Beavis	07771 984365	cllr.jbeavis@braintree.gov.uk
Mrs. W Scattergood	01787 267800	cllr.wscattergood@braintree.gov.uk
Mr H Johnson	01787 463991	cllr.hjohnson@braintree.gov.uk

#### **County Councillor**

Mr David Finch	07834 252070	cllr.david.finch@essex.gov.uk
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#### **Other useful Numbers**

Braintree District Council	01376 552525
Braintree District Council Environment (Fly Tipping)	01376 552525
Essex County Council	08457 430 430 or 01245 430 430
Essex County Council Highways	0845 603 7631 (24 hours)
Street Lighting Outages (Bowmans Park)	Greenfields: 01376 535 400
Street Lighting Outages (Abbey Cottages/Allfrey Court)	Flagship Housing Repairs: 0808 168 4555
Street Lighting Outages (4 street lights along New Park)	please contact the Parish Clerk
Halstead Police	101 ext. 407102