



# Parish of Castle Hedingham

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## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF CASTLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON FRIDAY 2ND MAY 2014 AT THE MEMORIAL HALL AT 8.00PM

**Present:** Cllrs Hart, Higgins, Moffat, Philp, Pewter, Scrivens, Southgate, Worley  
Cllr D Finch (ECC) Cllr W Scattergood, & Cllr J Beavis (BDC)

**In the Chair:** Cllr Worley

**Clerk:** Claire Waters

**Also Present:** 9 parishioners

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr S Allfrey, Cllr H Johnson (BDC), Brooks Newmark MP & Halstead Police

### 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2014 were approved as a correct record of events.

Proposed: Mr K King Seconded: Mrs J Ripper Signed by the Chairman

### 3. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Worley thanked the Parish Councillors and District and County Councillors for their hard work in support of the parish over the year, and highlighted the following points from the Annual Report:

The new Castle Hedingham Parish Council website is in operation at [www.castlehedingham.org](http://www.castlehedingham.org). Village groups and societies are urged to use the website to publicise news and events. Contributions can be emailed to the clerk.

A survey has been carried out by local supplier County Broadband which indicates a level of around 25% interest in the parish in high speed broadband. They are seeking a faculty from the Diocese of Chelmsford to install a wireless service transmitter on St Nicholas Church. Parishioners will be kept informed of progress.

National Grid's Bramford to Twinstead Tee project with proposals for a substation in the parish has now been put on hold and is unlikely to proceed before 2020.

Castle Hedingham Club had a difficult time this year, but is now being run by volunteers and is progressing well. The Parish Council provided support by paying for the Club's insurance policy.

2014 marks the Centenary of the outbreak of World War I. The Parish Council is working to conserve the War Memorial in St Nicholas Church and is applying for a grant from the War Memorials Trust.

The Parish Council has now taken over full responsibility from Braintree District Council for the Public Toilets at the Memorial Hall, including all the running costs. The intention is to maintain them to their current high standard.

Potholes are continuing to be a problem in the village and are reported regularly by the Parish Council to Essex County Council Highways department. Parishioners are encouraged to report Highways problems direct on <https://secureweb1.essexcc.gov.uk/Highways/Report-a-highway-problem.aspx> or by calling 0845 603 7631.

#### **4. STATEMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2013**

The clerk reported that the Parish Council has strong reserves. Steps have been taken during the year to improve financial security by changing to a new current account and spreading investments between three new deposit accounts. The new current account also operates an electronic banking procedure which meets the requirements of Parish Council financial regulations.

Income will not increase and expenditure is likely to be higher in the coming year due to the costs of running the Public Toilets, and other items which include the War Memorial renovation and other village infrastructure repairs. The Parish Council precept was calculated this year to represent a 0% increase in our share of the Council Tax.

#### **5. ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

**Cllr David Finch reported** that ECC continues to respond to the austerity drive by improving efficiency, with a variety of different actions to provide value for money. £150million has to be saved between now and 2016-17. 22% of residents are now over 65, and the over 85s will almost double from 18,000 to 36,000 people. He gave an overview of the new Care Bill which is likely to be in place by May 2015 and May 2016. ECC has also established a Health & Wellbeing Board, to reduce the gap between the NHS and social care in order to provide a more seamless, joined up service.

#### **6. BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT**

**Cllr Beavis reported** on the positive feedback BDC receives from satisfaction surveys. The District is growing with 15,000 people currently, 54% of them between the age of 25 and 64. The area has a high proportion of microbusinesses, with 85% of business in the District employing fewer than 10 people. Areas of concern include the low educational attainment in children, the high level of clinical obesity (68.2%), the number of hip fractures in the over 65 age group and the need for affordable housing to encourage young people to live and work in the District.

*Economic Development:* the development at the Premdor site in Sible Hedingham will have a new business hub and a professional business start-up adviser.

*Health:* Massive changes are ahead, as the Department of Communities and Local Government is funding the County Council to provide more services. Cllr Beavis continues to work closely with ECC, local doctors and the Clinical Commissioning Group to achieve the best healthcare outcomes for residents.

*Housing:* BDC Core Strategy faces new parameters from government, with a significant increase in the number of houses required.

*Recycling:* At almost 60% of waste recycled, BDC is very proud of its achievement but is still aiming for more.

*Financial:* BDC continues to work at being a low tax authority. It provides a support grant for parishes and has committed £1million for local grants, including £200,000 to the Citizens Advice Bureau and £16,000 to BDVSA – the voluntary sector in Braintree is worth £2million a year. BDC has entered into a new partnership with a Fusion, a leisure provider. The aim is to get people fit and active to reduce obesity and the risk of hip fractures.

**Cllr W Scattergood reported** on her work as Chairman of the District Council this year, which is a non-political role. She has completed 150 visits around the District and raised £6,000 for charities. In April, 60 rural businesses attended a Small Business event at Earls Colne. From next week, she will return to chairing the Planning Committee.

*Superfast Broadband:* Survey work is being done by ECC and BT. A postcode checker is now available on [www.superfastessex.org](http://www.superfastessex.org), where parishioners can check what will be done and when.

*Boundary Review:* It is likely that the number of District Councillors will be reduced from 60 to 48. Castle and Sible Hedingham are likely to form a Hedinghams ward with 2 District Councillors.

*Local Development Framework:* this should have been approved by now, but there is the need to find greater numbers of new houses. On 30<sup>th</sup> June, BDC will decide whether to start from scratch or go out and find the extra numbers required.

*National Grid:* It is hoped that when the Bramford to Twinstead Tee project is reactivated, there will be no need for a substation in the local area. BDC will continue to fight for development of the existing substation in Braintree.

## **7. POLICE REPORT**

The Chairman read out the following written report from PC Jim Carter:

Police would like to thank all members of the community who assisted in the tracking and arrest of a burglary suspect who plagued the district with residential burglaries recently. Police received excellent help from members of the public re; sightings and domestic CCTV footage to allow the suspect no option but to admit numerous burglaries once in custody. Unfortunately there are still burglary offences being committed across the district. We urge people to keep garages/sheds etc locked have a record of machinery and equipment to assist in identifying property located in the future.

Nuisance from customers drinking at village pubs: Police urge anyone suffering any anti-social behaviour to contact Essex police on 101 at the time of the incident to try and determine exactly who is causing the issues and where the issues originate from.

Your local policing team would like to take this opportunity to welcome PCSO 72506 James GRAHAM to the team.

A large speed watch event is being planned for the 14th May by officers at Halstead. This event will see all of the local community speed watch groups taking part in a day of action fully supported by policing teams. If anyone would like to assist or see what is done with a view to setting up their own speed watch group please contact PCSO 71859 EDWARDS for more information.

## **8. PUBLIC FORUM**

The following matters of interest were raised by residents:

*Local Development Framework:* Where can the information be found?

This plan will determine areas in the district which can be used for building development over the next 15 years, and areas which are kept as public open spaces. Most of the development in the district will be in Halstead and Witham. A link to the plans on the Braintree District Council website and information about how to submit comments will be posted on [www.castlehedingham.org](http://www.castlehedingham.org)

*Lowest educational attainment level in Braintree District:* What is BDC planning to do about this?

Regular meetings are held to apply pressure on Essex County Council. Cllr Finch has allocated £1million to Ramsey School in Halstead.

*Increase in local population due to development of the Premdor site could cause more problems:*

The agreement with the developers involves some money for education. An area of the site has been put aside for the possible development of a new medical centre, and this is under consideration by the NHS.

*Village Maintenance:* Thanks were given to Mortimer's, the village contractor, for keeping the village tidy; however there are still many weeds around the village. Residents are encouraged to keep the front of their properties cleared, and report other issues to the clerk who can contact the relevant authority or instruct our village contractors, who are quick to respond to requests. Some

residents have weeded areas of the village voluntarily in preparation for Open Gardens, and their support is welcomed with thanks.

*Attendance record and activity report of Parish Councillors:* Could this be included in the annual report?

Parish Councillor attendance, absence and activity is reported monthly in the minutes, which are available on the website at [www.castlehedingham.org](http://www.castlehedingham.org). Consideration will be given to an annual activity report, and information about each Parish Councillor being added to the website.

*Introductions to the Parish Councillors:* Could Parish Councillors introduce themselves now?

A brief introduction was given by each Parish Councillor present.

Thanks were given by a resident to the Parish Councillors for doing a superb job. Cllr Finch and Cllr Scattergood also expressed their appreciation of the Parish Council and the clerk and wished them well.

Parishioners were thanked for their attendance. The meeting closed at 9.00pm.