

Castle Hedingham Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council of Castle Hedingham held in Memorial Hall Castle Hedingham on Monday 16 April 2012.

Present: Mrs S Allfrey (Chairman)
Mr R Worley
Mr I Higgins
Mr M Scrivens
Mr G Pewter
Mrs L Moffat
Mr J Philp
Mrs J Hart
Mr G Southgate
Mr D Finch (from item 5 to item 7)

Members of the public: Mr A Crowther (until and including item 5), PCSOs Mrs B Ruffle and Mrs K Chapman and PC N Smith (until and including item 4), Mr J Lindsay (until and including item 5), Mrs D Lindsay (until and including item 5), Mr A Polley (until and including item 4), Mrs J Bishop.

In attendance: Mr K M King (Parish Clerk)

Item 1. Apologies for non-attendance: Mrs W Scattergood. Mrs J Beavis

Item 2. Declarations of Interest: Mr M Scrivens, Mr R Worley, Mr I Higgins - item 10; Mrs L Moffat - item 11.

Item 3. Public Forum: Mr A Polley outlined the work of the newly formed Solar Society. Its objective is to give educational talks and lectures in the village for all members of the community. It promotes social wellbeing and was particularly appealing to the retired. The first talk has been held and was well attended. He sought a donation from the Parish Council towards the expenses and fees of some lecturers. Sible Hedingham Parish Council had already donated £200. The ratio of members to date, and anticipated in the future, was 10 Sible Hedingham to 25 Castle Hedingham. Therefore based on the donation from Sible Hedingham, a donation of £500 was being sought from Castle Hedingham.

The Police Officers introduced themselves. They explained that they were the neighbourhood police team now covering the Castle Hedingham Parish and were based at Halstead. They said that there had been major re-structuring of organisation and procedures within Essex Police but there would be no change in operational delivery including response times. They said that the Community speed watch programme was being overhauled and they were encouraging parish participation. The Parish Council agreed to consider this. It was also agreed to have a regular police report as an agenda item to this meeting.

Mrs D Lindsay spoke as Chairman of the Friends of St Nicholas Church. She said the Friends were organising two events at the Castle to celebrate the Jubilee and to raise funds for the Church. The first event on 4 June was to be tied to the concert at Buckingham Palace and would involve relaying and projecting the concert from the palace onto the walls of the Castle Keep to a paying audience. Top quality equipment would need to be hired and the Friends sought a donation towards its cost.

Mrs J Bishop felt that the village envelope was unusual in that it dissected properties and did not appear logical to her.

Item 5.2. Planning - Review of Parish Council submission to Braintree District Council in respect of village envelope changes at Nunnery Farm: Mr A Crowther repeated the concerns made by him at the previous meeting about the village envelope changes proposed by the Parish Council in respect of his property at Nunnery Farm.

Mrs S Allfrey apologised on behalf of the Parish Council for not involving Mr Crowther when it had initially discussed its recommendations in respect of the village envelope. The Parish Council then reconsidered its recommendation that all of Nunnery Farm be placed outside the village envelope.

The Parish Council decided that part of the farm – land/structures previously developed - should be left inside the village envelope and will therefore be subject to planning consents for any re-development. The Clerk was instructed to notify Braintree District Council Planning of this change.

Item 5.3. Planning - Designation of Playing Field: Mr J Lindsay, the landowner, said he was very concerned and upset at both the lack of consultation and the decision by the Parish Council to place all the land around the Memorial Hall outside the village envelope and designate it as informal recreation along with the playing field on Sudbury Hill. He said that developing the playing field on Sudbury Hill in return for development of the land around the Memorial Hall into a recreation space/allotments/nature walk (opening up woodland to the rear of the land) was his objective and had been for some years. He felt that the village had to move forward and new housing was required and the development of the existing playing field would enable the release of the land at the Memorial Hall for excellent recreational facilities.

Mr R Worley apologised, on behalf of the Parish Council, for not advising Mr J Lindsay of its initial discussions regarding its recommendations in respect of the village envelope. He explained that in making its recommendations, the Parish Council wished to preserve the very limited amount of open space currently in the village. He also said that the Parish Council was not the planning authority and had no power to allow or not allow any development. The Council had only made recommendations to the body with the powers i.e. Braintree District Council. Braintree District Council will be consulting further and this will include representations from landowners.

The Parish Council decided that it did need to consider again, and in more depth, its recommendations in respect of this land. Therefore a separate meeting was arranged for 23rd April was agreed. It will then meet with Mr J Lindsay as necessary.

Item 6.1. Essex CC Report: Mr D Finch reported:

- a) Essex CC reached the end of the 2011/2012 financial year with an underspend of £8 million.
- b) Difficult financial climate but Essex CC in good shape.
- c) Substantial savings towards overall target of £330 million already made.
- d) Aiming for a zero increase in council tax for 2013/14.
- e) Substantial re-design and re-organising of services have been made to achieve savings.
- f) Between 1500-2000 staff has left. Some mistakes have been made – experienced staff in the Highways function left which has caused some initial problems with new highways organisation structure/system. A new Highways Cabinet Member now appointed.
- g) Essex CC investing in delivery of broadband across the County; CC is matching Central government funding.
- h) Essex CC has moved from having many contractors to just one for delivery of highways works.
- i) New contract to be awarded in respect of re-cycling; objective is to save money on landfill tax by improving re-cycling rates.
- j) New local area Highway panels set up with funding for local area projects.
- k) Continuing with apprenticeship scheme and looking to expand it.
- l) Essex and Suffolk CCs and local MPS jointly objecting to “over grounding” of power lines Bramstead to Twinstead project. Mr D Finch said that he thought that due to access difficulties on highways there was only one possible site for the proposed new sub-station and that was in Castle Hedingham on the A1071.

The Parish Council congratulated Mr D Finch on his recent national award.

Item 7.1. Disabled Parking Provision in Falcon Square: Essex CC Highways has confirmed that it has this matter on hand but is not yet able to give an installation date.

Item 7.2. Registration of Village Greens: Three greens - Forge, Pye Corner, and Chapel - have been fully registered with the Land Registry. Crouch Green is progressing with final registration papers waited from Land Registry. Rushley Green is outstanding.

The Parish Council has received from the Land Registry of application for registration of land adjoining village green land at Rushley Green. The application has been made by Mrs J Toocram.

Item 7.3. Closure of St James Street: Essex CC Highways has agreed that some damage was caused by contractors but in view of the length of time since the contractors were on site and the small amount of damage incurred, Essex CC Highways did not consider it cost effective to pursue the contractors for compensation and/or remedial work. The Parish Council had received a quote for £120 to carry out necessary remedial work. This was accepted. Item now closed

Item 7.6. Sight Lines at Nunnery Street Bridge: The landowner has said that he will cut back the tree that is causing problems. Item now closed.

Item 7.7. Adoption of red telephone box in St James Street: The box is now owned by the Parish Council. An agreement between it and the Bell PH Group which will renovate the box and run it as a community asset has been drawn up.

Item 7.10. New Bench on Forge Green: Bench is due to be delivered end of April.

Item 7.11. Jubilee Beacon: The beacon should be delivered end of April.

Item 7.12. Repairs to tombs St Nicholas Churchyard: Three quotes have been requested, one is still awaited. It was agreed that the Parish Councillors will have a look at the tombs that need repair prior to discussion of how to proceed.

Item 10. Consideration and decision on donation to the Solar Society: The Parish Council debated the presentation made. A donation of £500 to the Solar Society was proposed by Mrs L Moffat, seconded by Mrs S Allfrey, Voting on the motion was tied; it was carried on the casting vote of the Chairman.

Item 11. Consideration and Decision on donation to Friends of St Nicholas Church for Jubilee celebrations: The Parish Council debated the presentation made. A donation of £750 to the Friends of St Nicholas Church was proposed by Mr R Worley, seconded by Mr I Higgins and was carried.

Item 13.1. AOB: Mr R Worley said that he thought some trees in St Nicholas Churchyard needed attention. It was agreed to consider this at the next meeting.

Item 13.2. AOB: Mr G Southgate said that the pavements and gutters along Sheepcot Road needed cleaning. The Parish Clerk was instructed to ask the Council's contractors to carry out this work.

Item 13.3. AOB: Mrs J Hart said she was meeting with Greenfields on the 17 April in the village to identify any issues/concerns.

Item 13.4. AOB: Mr G Pewter said that there was overhanging vegetation on footpath 7 from Sudbury Hill to Rosemary Lane. Mr G Southgate said he would speak to the Castle about it.

Item 13.5. AOB: Mrs S Allfrey raised concerns about the quality of the Parish magazine to which the Parish Council had contributed financially. It was agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

Item 14. Date and Time of Next Meeting: 14 May at 07:45 pm, AGM 17 May at 08:00pm.