

Castle Hedingham Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council of Castle Hedingham held in Memorial Hall Castle Hedingham on Monday 14 May 2012.

Present: Mrs S Allfrey (Chairman)
Mr R Worley
Mr I Higgins
Mr M Scrivens
Mr G Pewter (from item 7)
Mrs L Moffat
Mrs J Hart
Mr G Southgate
Mrs W Scattergood (from item 10.1)

Members of the public: Mr R Van-Dulken

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 & Acceptance of Office: All present completed their acceptance of office. Four Councillors completed their declarations of interest, witnessed by the clerk. Mrs L Moffat declared an interest in respect of item 15.

Item 3. Election of Chairman: Mrs S Allfrey was proposed by Mr R Worley seconded by Mrs Hart for the post of Chairman and was elected. She completed her acceptance of office witnessed by the clerk.

Item 4. Public Forum: Mr Van–Dulken raised two matters:

- a) With regards to the very high water levels causing flooding in recent week, he understood that there had been problems with opening the sluice at Hulls Mill. The Parish Council said that there was long history of problems with flooding along the River Colne. Sible Hedingham Parish Council had taken, and continues to take, the lead in liaison with the Environment Agency Essex CC and landowners on this.
- b) Sign on the old allotment land by the Memorial Hall denying public access. The Parish Council said that the old allotment land was privately owned and there was no public right of way or access and the landowner was therefore entitled to stop general public access.

Item 5. Police Report: A written report was provided by the Essex Police regarding crimes reported recently in the parish:

- a) Theft of a motor vehicle from Memorial Hall car park;
- b) Break in and theft of cash from shop premises in St James Street;
- c) Theft from a motor vehicle
- d) Theft of a pushbike;
- e) Attempted burglary.

Problems with noise at the Bell Public House and parking in Falcon Square have also been reported.

Item 7.3. Planting Queen's Jubilee Oak Tree in Cemetery: The plaque has been completed and will now be installed by June 4th to be unveiled as part of the Jubilee celebrations.

Item 7.4. Adoption of red telephone box in St James Street: The signed agreement has now been received from Bell Inn Phone Box Committee who is now managing the box. They have removed Perspex panels, ordered appropriate original glass replacement panels and have commenced cleaning and painting the box.

Item 7.7. New Bench on Forge Green: New bench has been installed. The old bench has been re-located to the playing field. This item now closed.

Item 7.8. Jubilee Beacon: The Beacon has been received. The official lighting time to coincide with beacons across the country will be 10:15 pm on 4 June. The beacon will be in Castle Field, Rushley Green Farm.

Item 7.9. Gutter Cleaning Sheepcot Road: This work has been commissioned.

Item 7.11. Web-site: The Parish Council decided that a very simple one or two page Internet site possibly linking to other parish interest sites would be most appropriate. Messrs I Higgins and M Scrivens will research options further.

Item 8. Briefing from Cllr Mrs I Parker on National Grid Proposals: Mrs I Parker said that much was still uncertain with the proposals. There are two bodies involved: National Grid (high level new line) and UK Power Networks (lower level existing line) and there seemed an evident lack of co-ordination between the two. She made the following points:

The lower 132 line is to be removed but only to Twinstead. The line beyond there through Castle Hedingham would remain in place, but would not be in use. Cllr I Parker is pressing for all of this line to be removed.

She has visited a sub-station of the type to be constructed locally. It was not as large as she had expected and can be screened.

Stour valley undergrounding "solution" that was being proposed to National Grid would involve sub-station at Rushley Green i.e. a fourth potential site to those already identified. She did not think the undergrounding/Rushley Green site was a viable consideration.

Item 9.2. Braintree DC report: Mrs W Scattergood reported that National Grid is now considering extension of options for a new sub-station on the line from Twinstead to Thaxted. It was therefore very likely that there were further potential locations for a new sub-station beyond the three currently identified.

In the year 2011/12 Braintree District Council dealt with more than 2,000 planning applications. 60 went to appeal of which 75% were won by the District Council. 300 cases were dealt with by the Enforcement Officers.

Mrs W Scattergood said she was currently very busy in her new role as Vice-Chairman of the District Council. The Parish council congratulated her on this appointment.

Item 13. Consideration and agreement of annual Accounts and return to Audit Commission:

The Parish Council's accounts have been independently audited. No issues or concerns were raised by the auditor. The annual accounts were accepted by the Parish Council and signed by the Chairman and responsible financial officer. The return to the Audit Commission was also agreed and signed by the Chairman and responsible financial officer.

The Parish Council approved the annual governance statement included within the Audit commission report for 31 March 2012.

Item 14.1. Death of Mr Arthur Carr: Since drawing up the agenda the Parish Council had learnt that Mr Arthur Carr, who had served the village as handyman for many years, had died. Arthur had served the parish very well, always cheerful as he diligently did his job. He will be much missed. The Parish Council has passed on its condolences to Mrs Carr.

Item 14.2. Consideration of Replacement of Mr Carr: It was proposed by Mr M Scrivens, seconded Mr R Worley that the village handyman should not be replaced and these duties should instead be performed by contractors. This was agreed by the Parish Council.

It was agreed that the existing council contractors, C Mortimers, be given the work for 2012 with a full tendering exercise carried out for awarding the contract for 2013. The Parish Clerk was instructed to draw up a schedule of the works- frequency/locations of litter picking for consideration and agreement.

Item 15.1. Repairs to tombs: The Parish Council identified a number of tombs in the graveyard that need repairs. It agreed that repairs were a) necessary b) should be of a good quality so as to be long lasting; and c) use appropriate materials/techniques.

From the quotes already received there will be a considerable cost. It was agreed it will be necessary to schedule the works over some months and/or years. The Parish Council agreed to accept a quote from RM Wilks for the most urgently needed repairs. The Parish Clerk was instructed to schedule further necessary works with RM Wilks. These will be considered and put out to tender if necessary.

Item 15.2. Trees: Several trees in the churchyard have been identified as needing attention. It was agreed that the Parish Council' tree surgeon will be asked to quote for the necessary works

Item 16. Consideration of request to erect 2 banners at entrances to villages advertising jubilee celebration week: It was agreed that the Parish Council were content for these to be erected.

Item 18.1. AOB: Mr R Worley said a parishioner had questioned ownership of land by Keepers Cottage, Rushley Green, where tarmac driveways have been constructed across the verge. It was agreed that the Parish Council understands that the land in question is owned by the Highways Authority and any issues should be raised with it.

Item 18.2. AOB: Mr G Pewter said that there had been a lot of mud left on Bayley Street by the Castle entrance/exit after the most recent Bank Holiday. It was agreed that it was the responsibility of the Castle to clean the highway of mud left by vehicles visiting.

Item 18.3. AOB: Mr I Higgins said that following various electrical cabling works in St James Street one pole was now unused and was an eyesore. The Parish Clerk was instructed to contact UK Power Networks.

Item 19. Date and Time of Next Meeting: 18 June, 23 July, at 07:45 pm.