

Castle Hedingham Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council of Castle Hedingham held in Memorial Hall Castle Hedingham on Monday 24 September 2012.

Present: Mrs S Allfrey (Chairman)
Mr R Worley
Mr I Higgins
Mr M Scrivens
Mr G Pewter
Mrs L Moffat
Mr G Southgate
Mrs J Hart
Mr J Philp
Mrs W Scattergood
Mr H Johnson
PCSO Mrs K Chapman (to end item 4)

Members of the public: Mrs T Harper, Mr D Rulten (both to end item 4)

In attendance: Mr K M King (Parish Clerk)

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

Item 3. Public Forum: Mr D Rulten asked for details of any action the Parish Council was taking with regard to Four Winds, Kirby Hall Road. He mentioned that the landowner of that property was unhappy because he understood that some parishioners may have written to the Council in connection with his land. The Clerk responded that he was aware that there was an on-going Braintree District Council Planning Enforcement enquiry in respect of Four Winds but the Parish Council was not involved in this process.

Mrs T. Harper introduced herself as the village sub-post office mistress. She said that she has resigned from this post and had agreed a termination date of 23 October 2012 with the Post Office. If no replacement is found the sub-post office will close on the 23rd October. She noted that the Post Office has changed their terms and conditions and therefore if there was a break in the existing contract between 23rd October and the start date of the replacement, the new contract terms would apply to the replacement sub-post master/mistress.

Mrs Harper said that her initial potential replacement had decided not to go ahead. However a new applicant has come forward and their application is currently being considered by the Post Office. If approved by the Post Office, the earliest this replacement sub-postmaster could be in place is the end of December. Mrs Harper said that she was willing to remain in place until the end of December to maintain service (thus ensuring the existing contract transfers to the new sub-post master), and will train the new sub post-master. However as she had expected to leave at the end of October, she now has new commitments and is financially stretched. She sought financial help from the Parish Council to cover the rent on the premises for two months.

Item 4. Police Report: Police Report: PCSO K Chapman said that reported crime in the Parish remained relatively very low. Over the last 6 months there had been 15 reported incidents, of which three related to the same incident. These incidents included burglaries and attempted burglaries from commercial premises, domestic houses, sheds and outbuildings, as well as theft from vehicles and one assault - the offender in this last incident has been fined £1,000. She said that:

- a. Crime Prevention Officer and crime information advice was fully available and that just small preventative measures and actions could make a big difference; and
- b. Suspicious behaviour should always be reported (as a non-emergency!).

Item 6.1. Disabled Parking Provision in Falcon Square: The Parish Council has received copies of two letters sent to Essex CC by a Falcon Square resident objecting to the proposal. The objections

are that the proposed space is too far from the surgery door and its layout reduces parking spaces available in the Square.

Item 6.2. Registration of Village Greens: The Land Registry has omitted to send its Inspector to look at the land at Rushley Green. It has said that it will now instruct an Inspector to carry out the inspection.

Item 6.4. Web-site: The site is currently static pending a decision of the purchase of a Parish Council computer (see item 13 below).

Item 6.5. Repairs to Tombs & Tree works St Nicholas Churchyard: Tree works St Nicholas Churchyard: A detailed quote is still awaited for the identified works.

Item 6.6. War Memorial: A third quote has now been requested..

Item 6.8. Footpath New Park to Pottery Lane and Sheepcot Lane: A further complaint has been received about the overhanging vegetation on this path. The Parish Council's contractors have been asked to cut back the vegetation severely.

Item 6.9. Flag Pole: The Parish Council accepted a quote of £30 + VAT to take the flagpole down so that the extent of necessary repairs works can be determined.

Item 6.10. Storage of Rubbish Bags at the Cemetery: A bin store has been constructed and is now in use. Item now closed.

Item 6.11. Weight Restriction on B1058: This is to be discussed at the next meeting of the Local Highways Panel on 22 November. It is understood that approval to the proposed changes is still required from one parish - Gestingthorpe.

Item 6.12. Redundant Poles in St James Street: UK Power has advised that the poles are not owned by it but are the responsibility of BT. BT has now been asked to remove the poles that are redundant.

Item 6.13. Problems arising from Beer Festival at Bell Public House: A reply has now been received from the Bell Public House to the concerns raised by the Parish Council:

- a. Litter: The proprietors cleared litter outside the Pub on the Saturday evening following complaints. It now has a cleaning rota for the area immediately outside the Pub. The Parish Council's litter clearing contractors has said that it did not note any increased litter around the Pub during the Bell's beer festival.
- b. Noise: The Pub recognises that live music can be intrusive. It also recognises that the extra music (a 3rd band) during the festival was unnecessary and will not be repeated. The Parish Council had noted that the live music did finish at the correct time.
- c. Car Parking: The Pub recognised that this had been an issue. The wet weather had prevented many from using the pub's large garden which had been available for parking. Other events in the village on the Saturday night had added to parking congestion. The Pub welcomed the Parish Council's offer to look at options to help with parking at future events.
- d. Other: Plastic glasses are now used for most drinks served at the festival and there is a strict policy of no service beyond midnight.

Item 6.14. Remedial Works to Tombstones in St Nicholas Churchyard: The Parish Council accepted a quote for £600 for repairs to four tombs/headstones.

Item 6.15. Footpath 15 - Nunnery Street to Station Road: As requested the landowner has cut back nettles on this footpath. The landowner made the following points:

- a. The problem with nettles was on a small section of the path only - by the old railway bridge – and this section was rarely used because walkers use the gap over the old bridge.
- b. Dogs running loose are a persistent problem on his land and his own dogs have been attacked.
- c. Some walkers do not keep to the footpath and therefore trespass on his land.

- d. Signs encouraging people to stick to the footpath have been kicked over.
- e. Willow trees planted have been vandalised.
- f. The landowner will now be fencing his land, whilst keeping the footpath open.

Item 6.16. Overhanging Vegetation on Sudbury Hill: The Clerk was instructed to ask the Castle to cut back this vegetation.

Item 6.17. Transfer of toilets to the Parish Council: The question of ownership of the freehold remains outstanding.

Item 7.1. Essex CC report: Mr D. Finch sent the following written report:

- a. Members of Essex Libraries can now sign up to **over 400 online courses absolutely free of charge**. Members can sign up to five courses at any one time, meaning participants can study a range of subjects, including computer skills, writing courses, workplace skills, cookery, alternative therapies, and psychology and business courses. All the courses are free of charge, making it a risk-free way of trying something new.

Each course consists of around 10-20 hours of video based learning, written assignments and exercises. Support will be given at any time by a tutor who will answer the learner's questions. Courses can be completed at home or on library computers at a learner's own time and pace. Learners have six months to complete each course and will receive a certificate upon completion.

Essex Libraries already provide free online language courses, access to Driving Theory Pro and preparation for the Living in the UK and British Citizenship Test. Many libraries also offer coaching in basic computer and internet skills, and the Learning Centres provide courses to obtain a qualification in ICT and skills for life.

To view the wide range of courses available or to sign up to a course visit www.essex.gov.uk/librarylearning

- b. **All spending by Essex County Council is being published online** from Wednesday 12 September allowing residents to see how the authority spends every penny of the Council Tax it collects. This makes Essex County Council one of the most transparent councils in the country as it exceeds the current government guidelines to publish any spending over £500 and its proposals to reduce this to £250 later this year. The information can be found at the following web address: www.essex.gov.uk/your-council/council-spending/pages

The information will be placed on the Council's website within two weeks of the end of each month. Where payments have been made to individuals, such as employees or foster carers, their names will not be published. Information about all of the Council's spending made between April 2011 and March 2012 will also be made available online.

The Council will also publish summary details of top level contracts it has with organisations providing services on its behalf.

- c. From 1 October 2012, Essex will have **centralised system for bus pass applications**, offering residents an improved, consistent service across the county and saving £900,000 over 30 months (from October 2012).

From that date, Essex residents who are applying for an older persons or disabled persons bus pass for the first time; need to apply to Essex County Council. Residents can apply by;

- Downloading an application from www.canigetapass.org.uk
- Collecting an application form from their local libraries
- Calling 0845 200 0388 for an application form or for assistance completing one.

Current pass holders who have passes due for renewal will be automatically sent replacements, rather than having to reapply. However, if pass holders have moved since their

current pass was issued they should contact ECC on buspass.team@essex.gov.uk or by calling 0845 200 0388.

Bus passes can be used within Essex from 9am to midnight Monday to Friday and all day at weekends and Bank Holidays. Pass holders with severe disabilities are also entitled to a companion pass, allowing free travel on registered local bus services within Essex for one extra person accompanying them.

- d. Under an agreement made at the meeting of ECC's Cabinet on 4 September, **parish councils, charities and community groups will be able to take over unused buildings or land** on a leasehold or freehold basis to help develop and grow their organisations and support their local communities.

The new policy, which is in line with the government's localism agenda, will help groups rejuvenate unused buildings to provide services benefiting their local communities. Parish councils and charities with an annual turnover of more than £1million will be able to take over buildings and land on a freehold basis – with Essex County Council receiving 75 per cent of the value of any future redevelopment of the site.

Small community and voluntary groups will be able take over the premises on a lease of up to 999 years.

Sites that would fall under the new policy would include those assessed as not required by the Council to deliver its services and have a value of £50,000 or less. Interested groups would also need to draw up a clear business case for the running and use of the site.

The Council estimates there are around 300 sites across the county that could eligible for being transferred under the scheme. Any group interested in taking advantage of this opportunity should see the ECC website for more information (<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Your-Council/Council-Property/Pages/Council-Property.aspx>).

- e. ECC are investing an additional £11 million into **repairing as many potholes as possible** and since 31 May 2012 over 17,000 (17,185) have been repaired. ECC's pledge is to deliver frontline services and put our customers first, which is why we are making this significant commitment to improving our road network. The work will take place throughout the summer and finish in May 2013. During the summer months we will be repairing the outstanding potholes and from November onwards we will be treating some of the road network to ensure that fewer potholes develop in the future.

This week work has been carried out in the following parishes in the Braintree district: Greenstead Green, Shalford, Gestingthorpe, Bulmer, Wethersfield, Great Maplestead, Bradwell, Stambourne, Little Maplestead

- f. The **Braintree Local Highways Panel** met for the second time on 10 September and it was agreed that the following schemes would be taken to the next meeting on 22 November:
- Speed reduction in Bulmer at Bulmer Tye
 - VAS for Ridgewell
 - 20mph advisory sign in Church Road, Twinstead
 - Proposal to revise 7.5 tonne weight limit on B1058

Parish Councils are reminded that they need to complete a stencil for any schemes they would like to be considered by the panel and send it to Cllr Finch.

Item 7.2. Braintree DC report: Mrs W Scattergood had two items to report:

- a. The Leader of Braintree District Council is considering a reduction from 60 to 40 District Councillors as a cost cutting exercise. Central Government approval would be needed for this.

- b. Mrs Scattergood continues to hold meetings with National Grid. The proposal for an extension of the existing sub-station at Braintree to avoid the need for a new sub-station in and around Castle Hedingham is being vigorously pursued.

Mr H Johnson gave his strong backing to the action to the pursuit of the Braintree sub-station extension. He also said that the process was beginning for consideration of grants from Braintree District Council for village improvement projects.

Item 9.1. Planning Applications Received: Braintree District Council has advised that they have received the following applications:

12/01105/FUL. Erection of 2 storey rear extension at 96 Nunnery Street.

12/00223/TPOCON. Tree work at 1 King Street.

12/00225/TPOCON. Tree work at 3 Pye Corner.

12/00229/TPOCON. Tree work at Goston Mount, Pottery Lane.

12/01262/FUI. Erection of extension to side of dwelling and installation of dormer to front elevation at 4 Pye Corner.

12/01252/LBC. Proposed internal alteration and alterations to existing window and doors openings at 67 Nunnery Street.

12/00242/TPOCON. Tree work at Bayley Lodge, Bayley Street.

Item 9.2. Applications granted/refused:

12/00513/FUL. 26 St James Street. Appeal to Sec of State re. refusal of permission to demolish existing gate pillar/part garden wall and rebuild with new wooden gates.

12/00901/FUL. Permission granted for 1st floor extension at 6 Castle Close.

Item 9.3. Applications Other: Braintree District Council Local Development Framework sub-Committee will consider the Draft Master Plan for the Premdor/Rockways Regeneration site in Sible Hedingham at its meeting on 27th September.

Item 10. Neighbourhood Plans: The Council discussed the background of Neighbourhood Plans, the cost of production, and the need to comply with Central and County and /District Councils' policies. It was agreed not to proceed with the production of a Castle Hedingham Neighbourhood Plan at this time. This decision will be kept under review and re-visited when the Braintree District site allocations have been completed. The Clerk was instructed to tell Sible Hedingham Parish Council of its decision and to thank Sible Hedingham Parish Council for its assistance to date.

Item 11. Correspondence: The Hedingham Youth Council has raised concerns about the provision of play facilities in the village:

- a) Possible loss of recreation field on Sudbury Hill to development.
- b) Lack of play equipment for older children.
- c) Need for motocross course in the Hedinghams.

The Clerk was instructed to reply to the Youth Club with the following information:

- a) The Parish Council does not own the recreation field and the owner has not given permission for changes to the existing play equipment on the site.
- b) That whilst the landowner has indicated a wish to develop the site at some point no planning application(s) has been made.

- c) The Parish Council has been unable to find any other sites in the parish for a playing field or other recreation use.
- d) There was the possibility of discussing with the Castle provision of recreation facilities in the village in the future.

Item 13. Consideration of purchase of a Parish Council computer: It was proposed by Mr G Southgate, seconded by Mrs L Moffat that the Parish Council should purchase its own computer at a cost of £429.50. This was agreed.

Item 14. Highways: Mr G Southgate said that the give way/right of way road markings at the Sheepcot/Queen Street and Nunnery Street bridge had faded badly and needed re-painting. The Clerk was instructed to advise Essex County Council Highways.

Item 15. Consideration of investigating installing of CCTV in the centre of the village: After discussion it was agreed not to proceed with further action in respect of this.

Item 16. Consideration of potential Parish Office on site of former Sun Public House, Nunnery Street: There was an agreement in principle that the Parish Council will remain an interested party in the possibility of the provision of a Parish Council building at the Rising Sun Public House. Mr R Worley will continue to pursue this matter.

Item 17.1. AOB: St James' Telephone Box: Mr G Pewter noted that a light was on in the telephone box in St James Street and queried who was responsible for the resulting costs. The box is now run by the Bell PH group so it was considered that it was responsible for the electricity cost.

Item 17.2. AOB: Parking on St James' Street Verge: Mr G Pewter said vehicles parking on the verge alongside the tennis courts in St James Street were an increasing problem. The verge is owned by Essex County Council. The Clerk was instructed to approach Essex County Council Highways to explore possible preventative measures such as bollards.

Item 17.3. AOB: Redundant Poles: Mr I Higgins said Mr Buckley-Saxon was organising a petition calling for the removal of redundant telephone/power line poles in the village.

Item 18. Date and Time of Next Meetings: Special meeting: 29 September. Monthly meetings: 29 October, 19 November, at 07:45 pm.