

**HAWSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL
ON 21st March 2013.**

Present: Cllrs John West (Chairman), Clive Robinson, Henry Brewis, Christabel Carr, Jayne Robertson & Ros Alexander (in part). Catherine Hibbert (Clerk).
Borough Cllr Angela Rushen, PCOS Ryan Wilson and sixteen members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES: Cllr Michael Harrison.

The meeting recessed for Public Forum at 7.30pm, during which time Cllr Alexander arrived.

The following items were raised under Public Forum:

Village hall update: the village hall play area is in need of refurbishment.

Poor state of the verges in the village: comment from member of public.

Pheasant shooting around Bells Lane: complaint from member of public.

Rural Profiling pilot: see agenda item 5.1.

Presentation: by Taf Gillingham about proposals for development of Great War Experience at Hawstead.

The meeting reconvened at 7.50pm.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Cllr John West declared an interest in item 5.2 (suggestions for village improvements from G West) and Cllr H Brewis declared an interest in item 6.1 (as neighbour to the planning appeal site).

3. MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS DATED 17TH JANUARY 2013 AND 28TH FEBRUARY 2013.

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2013 were approved as a true and accurate record and signed accordingly. **Proposed by Cllr J Robertson and seconded by Cllr H Brewis – all in favour.** The minutes of the meeting held on 28th February 2013 (subject to an amendment to the effect that Cllr M Harrison was present at this meeting) were approved as a true and accurate record and signed accordingly. **Proposed by Cllr C Robinson and seconded by Cllr Carr – all in favour.**

The meeting recessed to hear the following reports.

4. REPORTS

4.1 County Councillor; no report submitted.

4.3 Police report (taken out of turn). PCOS Ryan Wilson tabled his report, a copy of which is attached, and highlighted the following:-

- 4 crimes of note for Hawstead 21/9/12-21/3/13 (not all crimes are logged);
- An increase in dwelling burglaries across the 32 village group. Villagers are urged to be vigilant, lock up carefully and report any crimes;
- Change in police personnel working in Hawstead;

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- Police priorities for this area are set at a quarterly public meeting (next meeting 11 June 2013 at Ixworth fire and police station). Villagers are invited to attend/submit representations relating to those priorities.

Cllr Carr left the room briefly.

4.2 Borough Cllr Rushen –B Cllr Rushen tabled her March 2013 Report, a copy of which is attached, and highlighted the following:-

- The ongoing restructuring proposals at Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury District Councils;
- The current review by the Arts Council of the Apex/Theatre Royal;
- Changes in calculating the tax base may reduce the amount that can be raised by precept in the future;
- Vision 2031;
- No charge car parking in Bury St Edmunds on certain days.

Cllr Carr rejoined the meeting.

The meeting reconvened.

4.4 Communications –Cllr Brewis reported that:-

- (i) the village website is being used;
- (ii) take up of the village email list is increasing; and
- (iii) Suffolk County Council have confirmed that pursuant to its contract with BT, upgraded Broadband connection will be delivered to 90% of Suffolk by 2015, with the remaining 10% receiving improved service by that date. More will be known about the areas to benefit under this contract after May and it was **AGREED** that Cllr Brewis would review the outcomes for Hawstead after that date. **It was generally AGREED that consideration should be given at the next meeting to whether (1) there is any merit/ interest in the installation of CCTV in the village as a crime prevention measure and (2) anyone else would like to become involved in the website.**

4.5 Environment - Cllr Carr reported that:-

- (i) SWT have installed barn owl boxes around the village green at no charge, which it is hoped will provide some good opportunities for observing these birds;
- (ii) James Carr (tree warden), Cllrs Carr and West have identified necessary maintenance work on the trees owned by the Parish Council, including some preliminary work to ensure safety clearances around BT/power lines. **It was AGREED that (1) the PC would write to BT identifying those trees which are likely to interfere with their lines and inviting BT to trim those trees in the first instance; (2) Cllr West would contact the power line company on a similar basis; and (3) Cllr Carr would seek three quotes for the tree maintenance work.**
- (iii) one quote had been received for the village green grass cutting programme from a contractor who has been used in previous years. **It was generally AGREED that this quote would be provisionally accepted (in time for the grass cutting programme to commence in adequate time) but that in the meantime further quotes would be sought to check that the PC was receiving best value.** It was noted that any contractor instructed to proceed should be reminded of the need to take care with cutting equipment around the trees on the village green.
- (iv) a proposal to provide an area on the green where children can play ball games had been discussed with Natural England, who administer the grant scheme from which the village green benefits. Discussions referred to the possibility of swapping an area from the higher level scheme to the entry level scheme and vice versa as shown on a plan tabled at the meeting, which would allow a children's games area without impacting on the grant payable, as there would be no resulting reduction in biodiversity. **All present agreed that Cllr Carr (1) should formally submit**

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and progress this proposal to Natural England and (2) obtain the grant application form for 2013/14 from Natural England.

(v) all parish footpaths had been recently walked and were in good order, although in some parts there is some erosion/slippery conditions caused by the poor weather.

4.6 Highways & Safety – in the absence of Cllr Harrison, Cllr West reported that:-

- (i) the overflowing ditch on Bull Hill Lane (notwithstanding that it actually lies within the neighbouring parish of Nowton) has been resolved following intervention by the Council;
- (ii) a broken safety barrier by the church has been reported;
- (iii) SCC has agreed to move the incorrectly placed signage near Larkfield Corner;
- (iv) the Pinford End Bridge was repaired rapidly; and
- (v) new road direction signage has been requested.

4.7 Achieving excellence – Cllr Robertson reported that:-

- (i) the Quality Council initiative has been put on hold by SALC, whilst they reassess the scheme. Cllr Robertson will consider this further as and when the scheme revives; and
- (ii) the consultation regarding charging for dog waste disposal is ongoing and parish councils will be notified of the outcome in due course.

4.8 Planning & Legal matters –Cllr Robinson reported as follows:-

- (i) an alleged infringement of a Highways Act 1980 licence for landscaping had been reported at the Council meeting on 17 January 2013 which lead the Council to seek clarification from the appropriate authorities as to whether land drainage consents are required and/or had been issued. The Council has drawn attention to the works in question (infill of a pond outside 2 The Pound) and awaits a response from Suffolk County Council as Local Lead Flood Authority in this matter. **It was AGREED that an update would be provided at the next PC meeting.**
- (ii) the deed of easement formalising pre-existing rights over the village green is with the landowners' solicitors for final approval. **It was AGREED that an update would be provided at the next PC meeting.**

4.9 Clerk report – The clerk report (document 4.9) was received and noted.

5. TO CONSIDER

5.1 Invitation to join Rural Profiling pilot

The meeting referred to the invitation by St Edmundsbury BC to participate in a rural profiling pilot study. It was noted that there had been some inaccurate press coverage about the Council's involvement with this scheme. There was some discussion about the merits of participating in such a scheme, given that previous initiatives the Council has considered (such as the Parish Plan) have met with little local enthusiasm. B Cllr Rushen interjected to clarify that this desk top study would be at no cost in time or resources to the Council, but would inform the Council whether there is a need for affordable housing within the Parish. It would then be up to the Council to decide what to do with such information. **It was RESOLVED (4 in favour, 2 against) that the Council should participate in this scheme.**

5.2 Suggestions for the village from G West.

The suggestions put forward by Mrs G West were considered and **it was RESOLVED that:-**

(1) the proposal to pursue the creation of a safe pedestrian route between the Green and Cullum Cottage should be pursued and in particular Cllr Brewis would approach the relevant landowner to sound out whether he might agree to trim back the hedge on that stretch of route where there is no verge; and

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(2) Anglian Water should be approached by letter to explore whether the external appearance of the pumping station can be ameliorated in any way.

5.3 Invitation to join Community Action Suffolk (formerly Suffolk Acre);

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council should renew its membership (£30 pa) to this organisation.

5.4 Request from Air Ambulance dated 6/12/12

It was **RESOLVED** that a donation of £50 should be made to this body pursuant to s137 Local Government Act 1972.

It was **AGREED** that villagers should be asked as to their preferences for where the Parish Council should direct any future donations.

5.5 Approval of deed of easement.

See item 4.8 above.

5.6 Risk Assessment for 2012/13.

Documents 5.6.1 (asset risk assessment) and 5.6.2 (financial controls risk assessment) were tabled. It was noted that the asset risk assessment should make reference to the capped well on the green but subject to that, **it was AGREED that these risk assessments should be APPROVED and signed on behalf of the Council.** It was noted that it would be necessary to undertake a logged programme of inspection on the assets/ checks on the financial procedures in order to ensure that the Council discharges its duties adequately. The St Edmundsbury BC annual safety report on the swings owned by the Parish Council (dated April 2012 but received March 2013) was received. It was noted that no urgent action is required but that some monitoring is recommended. It was further noted that the next annual report is due shortly and should be reviewed more fully when received.

5.7 Arrangements for the Parish Meeting.

It was **AGREED** that the annual parish meeting would be held on the same night as the next Parish Council meeting (16 May 2013) in the same format as previous years, with the APM commencing at 7pm and the PC meeting following after a refreshment break.

5.8 Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr West reported that he had attended a presentation on the Neighbourhood Plan initiative, the purpose of which is to empower parish councils to identify a shared vision within their area as to matters including the location of new housing; the identification and protection of green space and the determination of what new buildings within their area should look like. The Parish Council does not need to make any decisions at this stage, but needs to be aware that this initiative is being developed.

5.9 Approval of clerk's contract plus side letter dated 21 March 2013

It was **unanimously AGREED** that the clerk should be appointed on the terms set out in the contract between the Council and the clerk dated 10 January 2013 as supplemented by the side letter between those parties dated 21 March 2013. *A confidential minute relating to this item 5.9.C follows.*

5.10 To receive suggestions for improvements to the village

A suggestion was made to improve the footpath provision in the village and in particular to link Whepstead Road with Church Farm. Consideration should be given as to whether any proposal could be upgraded to a bridleway. It was agreed that Cllr Robertson would discuss how to take such a proposal further with the Rights of Way Officer at Suffolk County Council and that it should

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be further considered at the next meeting. Other comments included that the reopening of the pub would be welcome.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS, APPEALS AND NOTIFICATIONS

6.1 To consider the appeal re application SE/12/1401 on land south of the Firs (erection of dwelling with access and garage). The meeting heard that the Parish Council had objected to the planning application which now forms the subject of this appeal. One Councillor was supportive of the proposals. The development proposals were discussed with consideration given as to (1) whether further representations should be made; (2) the issue of setting precedents and (3) the position of the appeal site in open space lying within a special landscape area. **The Council RESOLVED (4 against, 1 abstention, 1 in favour) to submit a more detailed letter of objection to the planning appeal addressing each of the grounds of appeal.**

7. FINANCE

7.1 To receive and review the summary of finances. The summary of finances dated 21 March 2013 (copy attached) was noted. The budget (originally approved by the Finance Committee on 6 December 2012 and subsequently amended to reflect confirmation of the precept, the clerk's wages and up to date quotes for the grass cutting programme) (copy also attached) was received and UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

7.2 To approve the clerk's expenses policy. The clerk's expenses policy was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

7.3 To approve the appointment of SALC to administer the clerk's payroll. The approval of SALC as payroll provider (£28 plus VAT pa) was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

7.4 To approve cheques to be issued. The issue of the following cheques was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED:-

M Harrison (mileage)	063	£15.30
SALC course 14/1/13	064	£57.60
SALC course 12/2/13	065	24.00
SALC course 14/2/13	066	30.00
SALC course 4/2/13	067	30.00
Ricoh inv87317525	068	199.16
Clerks exps Nov 12-1/3/13	069	285.55
Clerks net wages Nov- March inc	070	760
HMRC	071	190

The following receipts were noted:-

Donations

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