

# Hixon Parish Council

## Minutes of Parish Council Meeting Tuesday July 25th 2013

### In attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Cllr B McKeown (Chair), Cllr D Sephton, Cllr G Tummey, Cllr Mrs S McKeown, Cllr P Hopcroft.

Members of the public: See list of people signing as In Attendance.

| Ref                    | Item  | Action |
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| 001/13                 | Apologies received from: Cllr J Carmichael, Cllr Mrs C Hassall, Cllr R Tonge (dispensation) and from members of the Public: Cllr A Stafford-Northcote, Cllr J Tabernor, Cllr A Perkins (afterwards).  | -      |
| 002/13                 | No declarations of interest were made.  | -      |
| 003/13                 | Minutes of meeting of June 18th were accepted as accurate.  | -      |
| 050/12                 | Neighbourhood Plan: The Community Council can provide help with Community Engagement and sourcing funds. A lot of community engagement will be required. Up to £7K per community should be available from Locality. There is a local Locality person in Stoke - Andy Parsons. Planning Aid will give free time on planning issues. Community Council charge if they come out to give help, phone calls and e-mails are free. Neighbourhood Plan needs to go along with Local Plan, therefore need to work with SBC planning. Clerk attended meeting of local parish councils to discuss Neighbourhood Plans on Thursday March 28th. Need to include members of public (Hixon Parish residents) in group to draw up the Plan, ask for help on website, FB Community page and in Newsletter. Four residents and two Councillors have come forward at present. Chair and Clerk meeting with the Neighbourhood Plan person at SBC on June 24th, ask her to speak at next PC meeting. Need to get working group sorted and plan started. Need to sort out a working party and make progress. July 25th - Raj Bains from SBC gave a talk on the best way to get going with the Neighbourhood Plan and who can help. Need to produce a survey and include businesses and school children in it. Things to cover include: housing, shops, employment, schools, doctor/pharmacy, transport. Keep records of what is being done. Once survey results are known, hold a public event. Having a local NP website is a good idea. Hold meeting towards end of Sept for people interested in being part of the NP working group so progress can start to be made. Sept 26th at 7.30 in Memorial Hall Back room. | Clerk  |
| 026/10                 | Survey on Rural Exception Housing from Housing Plus and Stafford & Rural Homes: Landowner is willing, local authority and Highways are in discussions, feasibility to be assessed. Once site has the go ahead, go public on the site and engage the community - likely to be late April/early May to consult with the public. Housing proposed is 5 rented properties (2x 2-bed bungalows, 2x 3-bed house, 1x 2-bed house) and 2 shared ownership properties (1x 2-bed and 1x 3-bed houses). Names of people interested in the houses can be passed on to Charlie Riley at Housing Plus. Exhibition on June 24th, 3-7pm Memorial Hall. S&RH/Housing Plus requested permission from Hixon PC to apply for planning permission: vote taken, unanimous Yes.  | Clerk  |
| 067&081/09<br>& 056/11 | Speed and Highway Safety in Hixon Parish. Cllr. Tummey to find out details of Homezone requirements. Maps and details/proposals of highway safety measures have been sent to Chris Mitchell for comments and prices. Some feedback received. Priorities as far as PC in concerned are: High Street, then all 3 entrances to the village (New Road, Lea Road and Church Lane - County Council should pay for safety measures on Church Lane outside school). Chris Mitchell agreed with revised plan for High Street to build out on one side, to allow pedestrian footpath. Will discuss with his engineers and kick start the design of plans as discussed. Clerk to write to Chris Mitchell to thank him and ask for plans by end of April. Report from engineers provided shortly prior to meeting, needs to be looked at in some depth. Sub-committee met Wednesday June 5th and Chair will provide report of meeting, most of the proposals in the engineers report were approved. Clerk to advise Chris Mitchell of the situation, send report in, and ask what needs to be done with a view to having a public exhibition on the proposals in Autumn. Chairs report sent to Chris Mitchell, awaiting information from Chris on when he can provide plans and when we should hold a public meeting, best way to advertise this etc.   | Clerk  |
| As above               | Speedwatch Campaign: Four sessions have been held since the June meeting. There was an incident of a car travelling at 62mph on New Road.   | -      |

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| 021/09,<br>023/09,<br>074/09,<br>091/09 | Playing Fields Report: Fresh Air Fitness have had a team out to sort out the problem with the rust again. If problems re-appear, take Fresh Air Fitness up on replacement offer. Clerk has tabulated prices received for repairs from the 3 contractors that are quoting. Cllr Hopcroft to provide information on problem with seat backs on Pull-Down Challenger. Cllr Hopcroft and Clerk to write letter to Fresh Air Fitness re rust (coming back again) and seat backs (they are defective and should be covered under warranty). Letter sent: new seat backs arrived and have been fitted. Still minor problems with rust, Cllr Hopcroft will monitor. Some cracking of tarmac by tennis net posts has occurred again. Cllr Hopcroft to check on graffiti reported by Wicksteed inspector. | Cllr Hopcroft/Clerk |
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| 097/07 | <p>Allotments: Allotment paths are to be kept weed free by allotment holders. Derelict building: Clerk has established that Parish Councils pay half the normal fee for a planning application, current fee is £195, PC fee would be £97.50. Fee money (from PC) would come out of ring-fenced allotment money. Plans for derelict building have been finalised. Planning permission is required, look for external funding for works. Allotment Committee have been contacted re their request for works required - committee should organise the routine, day-to-day jobs themselves. Allotment Society have agreed (verbally) to pay for half the planning permission costs. PC agreed to pay up £50 towards planning permission costs. Landowner has seen the plans. Invoices for water (£94) and rent (increased by May RPI of 2.4%, from last year) have been raised for Allotment Society. Chair has prepared application for planning permission and this will be sent in to SBC with cheque signed at meeting. Clerk to remind Chair of Allotment Society that the Annual Report and audited accounts need to be presented to the PC at the September meeting.</p>  | Chair/Clerk |
| 094/09 | <p>Land Registry: Checking which bits of land are registered as owned by Hixon Parish Council. Hammonds Croft and Sycamore Drive land title registers purchased - OK. Ridgeway OS is registered, Lauder Grove is unregistered, Church Road is unregistered, Meadow Glade is unregistered. Car Park is registered, Greenfields and Featherbed Lane are unregistered. Need to change some title registers from Stowe PC to Hixon PC. Clerk and Cllr Sephton have looked through old files stored at back of Memorial Hall. The original Playing Fields gifting document has been found, together with other paperwork on land. Most files from the cabinets have now have been discarded. Clerk to look through files and liaise with Land Registry - will be worked on as and when time permits. Clerk having difficulty locating evidence of Stowe PC split in to Hixon and Stowe by C PCs - nothing in PC files and nothing in Stowe by C files. Suggestion made to ask SBC for copy of their minutes from 2000 where it should be minuted.</p>   | Clerk       |
| 051/10 | <p>JBMI Liaison Committee - County Council led liaison group is now being set up: request made for Parish Councillor to volunteer for committee - Cllr Mrs C Hassall had volunteered and was voted for unanimously. Three close-by residents also required for group.</p>  | Clerk       |
| 064/10 | <p>Community Transport - Cllr Mrs S McKeown and Cllr B McKeown attended a meeting discussing a combined bid for funds for Community Transport from County Council (awarded by the Lottery Fund) on January 25th. It is a Ring and Ride scheme with volunteer drivers. Person requesting the ride pays the volunteer, volunteer passes money to the organisation and the organisation pays the volunteer's mileage plus a little bit over. Could operate as different schemes with one (paid) co-ordinator. Article in November Compass, 2 replies received so far: one wanting transport, one offering transport. PC to leave until end of year (time permitting) and re-assess whether there is time to progress with this. See if volunteers and those requiring transport can be matched up. Clerk has contacted volunteers.</p>  | -           |
| 046/11 | <p>Encampment at side of canal in Pasturefields: Canal boats set up a camp on the canal at Pasturefields, a Romany caravan is also there. SBC Planning are looking in to this and also static caravans parked at the side of the canal. SBC have asked for help from residents to record movements etc. at the encampments over a 28 day period. Two possible volunteers to do this. Chair will ask one person to keep a log. Planning Enforcement are following procedures with a view to enforce planning permission application - boat owners say that boats are not in the water as the bank has eroded and the boats are on land. British Waterways have not given permission for boats to be moored. Enforcement action is going ahead, certain items have been removed. The legal department of SBC have written giving intent of a summons. The time ran out Monday Sept 24th. It is believed that a summons has been served. SBC planning enforcement have advised that the agent will be meeting with a Senior Planner on 25th June 2013.</p>  | Clerk       |
| 015/12 | <p>Revised Code of Conduct: Code of Conduct from the Borough Council has been published - can use this draft version for Parish Council. Main difference from previous code is that the pecuniary interests of spouses/partners now have to be disclosed. Draft model 2012 and current Hixon Code of Conduct (2007) circulated to all councillors. List of changes as such not available from SBC, appendix 1 to report that states the main changes has been circulated. Sub-committee agreed to look at the paperwork and report back as to what needs to be done - Cllrs: Mrs S McKeown, Mrs C Hassall, D Sephton. New disclosable interest forms need to be completed by those Cllrs. that haven't already done so. Summary etc. of Localism Act has been circulated to Councillors for review. SBC website has information from the old disclosable interest forms on it (no Spouse details etc.), need to find out if this is changing. Point 8.2 - need to change the Standing Orders to say Councillors will leave the room when discussing an item they have an interest in. Clerk to circulate list of points made by Cllr. Mrs S McKeown on the new code again. Cllr. Mrs S McKeown to finalise New PC code ASAP. Clerk to revise the Standing Orders and finalise and circulate revised Code of Conduct.</p> | Clerk       |

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| 032/12            | Local Development Framework: response to most recent consultation: Response has been sent in to SBC planning. It has been proposed that some villages are removed as Key Service Villages due to lack of facilities, Hixon has less facilities than some of these. Further correspondence has been circulated, can comment on whether plans are legal and safe - need to format a response. Hard copy of documents received, Paul to copy and distribute to Cllrs for comments. Letter sent in re-iterating previous responses - No additional employment land is required in Hixon and housing to be allocated proportionately across all the key service villages. Stafford Borough Council is in the process of preparing the new Plan for Stafford Borough to cover the period to 2031 with the Publication version published in January 2013 and formal adoption expected in early 2014.   | -                 |
| 037/012 (&059/12) | (Public meeting for) 12/16714/OUT Building for Use Class B1(Business) and/or Use Class B2 (General Industry) and/or Use Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) (outline) - access, appearance, layout and scale to be determined - Air & Ground Aviation Land Off New Road, Hixon. Planning Committee gave permission for the outline planning application to go ahead. A large number of Hixon residents have indicated their disgust at this decision at the planning meeting, at the PC meeting and via e-mail etc. The decision was based on inaccurate and mis-leading information. A resident has agreed to lead the complaint on behalf of other residents against Stafford Borough Council's decision and take the case to the ombudsman if necessary. Signatures collected at the meeting and a door-to-door flyer produced that residents completed and returned, stating support for the complaint. It was suggested by a resident that advice from a planning consultant may be useful. Letter of complaint has gone in to SBC, together with >ca. 300 residents signatures supporting the complaint. Pre-Action Protocol letter sent to SBC and response received - considered unsatisfactory by Cllrs. Next step would be application for judicial review - costs of up to £5000 total for this stage agreed unanimously, pre-action protocol letter charges have been waived by solicitors. Application for judicial review has been filed, comments received from SBC and Jonathan Lloyd. Resident has taken forward the complaint to the Ombudsman and this has passed the first hurdle. Application for Judicial Review has been refused by judge, costs awarded to defendant and IP. JR Decision Notice dated 30th April but not received until 10th May, having been collected by hand from Court following 3rd party information. Written representations have been made against costs. Maximum liability for JR application if full costs are awarded should be ca. £19557 + VAT. Ombudsman has requested further information. Agreed that the 300+ people who supported the complaint to the Ombudsman be contacted re Ombudsman requiring individual complaints of injustice sent in. July: Judge has overturned award of costs to IP, PC liability now SBC costs of £1787.50 plus own legal costs. Decided to use Newsletter to communicate Ombudsman situation (plus cost situation) to residents. Also put cost situation on website and FB page. | Clerk             |
| 038/12            | Correspondence received as a result of public meeting (037/12): no discussion required.   | -                 |
| 053/12            | Discuss play surface repairs/renewal and roundabout/alternative equipment: Prices and details obtained, looking at grants. Proposal is to purchase a Solar Spinner, double zig-zag Twister and a Buddy Board. Clerk has let school know.  | Chair             |
| 052/12            | Discuss separation of Hixon from the Haywoods/Colwich in local election. Residents at the meeting agreed that this should be taken forward - to be progressed in New Year. Clerk to write to Alistair Welch asking for the ward boundary to be re-drawn making Hixon a single member ward. Ask about shortest timeframe possible and what the PC can do to help. Public feedback and support is required, campaign locally. Boundaries are due for review every 10 years, last review was 2003. Reply received from Jane Peat - in hand. Presentation at SBC offices on Monday March 25th was attended by Clerk and Cllr. Tummey. Cllr Tummey gave a review of what was said and what needs to be done. Cllr Tummey agreed to be the person keeping up-to-date with timetable and tracking what the PC need to do and when. Full SBC meeting on Thursday 23rd May to finalise revised number of Councillors - vote was for 40 councillors. Clerk to write again to Alistair Welch asking for Hixon to be separated from Colwich/Haywoods to form a 1-member ward. Reply received referred to the consultation process on number of councillors by the Boundary Commission. PC to reply asking for number to remain at 50 to avoid reduction in representation, ask on website and FB page for residents to do the same. If reduced such that 1-member wards are unlikely, ask to be with Stowe/Weston rather than with Colwich/Haywoods.  | Cllr Tummey/Clerk |

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| 058/12 | <p>Discuss the lack of representation for Hixon by Borough Councillors: Ask Alistair Welch for clarification re planning committee members? It was decided to ask Alistair Welch if there are any restrictions on Borough Councillor's listening to PC and/or members of the public discussing planning applications: can they listen, can they express views? Seek clarification. E-mail sent, no reply. Follow-up e-mail and letter sent, plus copy of letter to Ian Thompson (Chief Executive) - still no reply. Keep chasing. As no response received from Alistair Welch, the information has been requested under under Freedom of Information. Reply due by 7th May (20 working days). Clerk has chased response. Reply received May 23rd - no restrictions are placed on Councillors on discussing planning applications etc. with the public - they are only governed by the Members Code of Conduct.</p> | - |
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| 066/12         | Consider HS2: Although Hixon is not directly affected by the proposed route of HS2, it was considered important that Hixon Parish Council and Hixon residents are kept up-to-date with what is going on and are invited to meetings etc., in case anything changes. Keep as an agenda item. The consultation on the preferred route ends in 2014. The decision will be made in 2026 whether the government can afford to build it, phase 1 will be complete by then. If phase 2 goes ahead, it will be finished ca. 2033. Need to ensure that if HS2 goes ahead, the preferred route is kept to. Residents can contact MP etc. Monitor situation with regards route, other villages are trying to get the route changed so that it runs through Hixon. Invite Jeremy Lefroy to September meeting. Consultation is open now.  | Clerk/Chair                     |
| 068/12         | Consider reply from Memorial Hall Committee re car park etc.: It was considered that the reply from the Memorial Hall Trust did not show any flexibility. Other PCs get the use of the local hall free of charge. It was decided that the Clerk should draft a response and circulate for comment. Letter sent, awaiting reply. No reply received, write again asking for at least 14 days notice of events at the hall that will require parking.   | Clerk                           |
| 069/12         | Bank House car park payments: Neither the new (since Dec12) tenants or the owners of the Bank House (Joules Brewery) want to pay the charge for use of the car park. Other suggestions such as a donation from the brewery as a marketing exercise have been suggested by the brewery, this was not considered a particularly good idea by the Council. Cllr Sephton to meet with a representative from the brewery to discuss the best way forward, regular payments have been made for use of the car park by their customers by the Bank House owner or tenants since 1997. Copy of letter to Bank House from 1997 given to Cllr.Sephton and Chair. Cllr Sephton has met with Neale Chandler from Joules Brewery - copy of letter passed on and the situation with the planning application for an extension discussed - the consultation by the Planning Department re the continued use of the car park by the Bank House for the planning application for an extension was considered of note by Neale Chandler. A copy of the original contract between Bass Brewery and the Bank House owners (March 1986) has been found, together with a letter from the PC's solicitor (March 2001) saying that the PC were entitled to increase the rent - if the Bank House owners didn't want to pay an increased rent, the PC should give them notice to quit the car park. Copy of contract passed on the Neale Chandler. Prepare a statement showing what is owed for Cllr Sephton to pass to Neale Chandler - if left unpaid, PC could take legal action in small claims court. Cllr Sephton has written to the Chairman of Joules Brewery at the situation, as no reply from Neal Chandler. If still no reply by September meeting, proceed with small claims court action. | Cllr Sephton/Clerk              |
| 074/12         | St Peter's Children's poster competition: Cllr. Mrs C Hassall will be judging the best garden, hanging basket, business premises and most unusual garden feature. Prize giving for childrens posters was on Monday June 24th.  | Clerk/Chair                     |
| 024/13<br>No.2 | Consider purchase of new printer for Clerk (one that is more economic with ink): Clerk to liaise with Cllr. Mrs C Hassall re printer model. Budget of £100. Cllr Carmichael is looking a suitable printer models. Cllr Carmichael recommended the HP Officejet 7500A wideframe, this is currently available at £99. Purchase of this model agreed.   | Clerk                           |
| 029/13         | Stafford Borough Council Planning Application Validation Criteria - Consultation: The Chair said he would take a look at this.   | Chair                           |
| 009/13         | Chairman's announcements:  | None                            |
| 010/13         | Councillor Questions:  |                                 |
|                | There are no longer any white lines at the junction of Back Lane and Stowe Lane and the road surface has a lot of loose stones and black marks. This is still the case at the time of July's meeting.  | Clerk to inform Highways again  |
|                | The fire engines attending the fire on Vicarage Way have damaged the road surface. Surface still damaged at the time of July's meeting.  | Clerk to inform Highways again. |
|                | The road outside Walnut Cottage has become very smooth.  | Clerk to inform Highways.       |
|                | There has been a smell of burning plastic coming from the airfield estate (source not known) and smell coming from the metal company next to the school. Environmental Health (SBC) are aware of the smell from metal company.   | -                               |

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| 011/13 | Date of next meeting: September 17th 2013  | Clerk to book Memorial Hall   |
| 012/13 | Public Participation   |   |
|        | Who decides who is on the JBM liaison committee: a list detailing numbers from each authority/company and local residents has been agreed with SCC? Residents will be decided on by rest of committee if more than 3 volunteers.                     |   |
|        | There has been a lot of noise from the new chimney, roaring noise, very loud and intrusive.  | Clerk to inform EA  |
|        | HS2: query was raised about what was happening - consultation process is now open, fears that other villages are pushing for route to be pushed over to Hixon. Jeremy Lefroy to be invited to attend meeting to give his views and answer questions. | Clerk   |
| 013/13 | Planning Applications:   |   |
|        | 13/18861/HOU 40 Ridgeway, Hixon two storey extension   | No objection (would benefit from being set back to avoid terracing) - application withdrawn |
|        | 13/18528/FUL Tower at adjacent Unit 1, Saturn Business Park, Airfield Estate, Hixon  | Object  |
| 014/13 | Planning Reports   | None  |
| 015/13 | Bank Reconciliation:   | Done  |
| 016/13 | Schedule of agreed payments  |   |
|        | C Gill salary - July (Gross). Local Gov act 1972 s111.   | £660.00   |
|        | C Gill expenses - July. Local Gov act 1972 s111  | £53.50  |
|        | C Gill salary - August (Gross). Local Gov act 1972 s111.   | £660.00   |
|        | C Gill expenses - August. Local Gov act 1972 s111  | £53.50  |
|        | Reimbursement C Gill stamps (12x50p 2nd class ). Local Gov act 1972 s111   | £6.00   |
|        | Reimbursement C Gill mileage (42 miles @ £0.45p/mile). Local Gov act 1972 s111   | £18.90  |
|        | Reimbursement C Gill for children's poster prizes  | £76.93  |
|        | Fenns stationery ink   | £48.16  |
|        | Acer Garden Landscapes - June mowing (less retention)  | £1,141.87   |
|        | SBC planning application for allotment building and entrance   | £97.50  |
|        | Memorial Hall hire to end of June  | £72.00  |
|        | SBC for amenity skip on 6th April 2013   | £72.00  |
|        | Abbey Landscapes - asset work (£425) and repair to Lea Heath notice board (£20)  | £445.00   |
|        | Abbey Landscapes - School footpath maintenance May, June, July   | £48.00  |
|        | Abbey Landscapes - Bus shelter cleaning August to March 2012   | £80.00  |
|        | Donation to Tuesday Club (ref. June's meeting).  | £250.00   |
|        | Donation to Compass (annual)   | £100.00   |
|        | Annual SLCC membership charge  | £114.00   |
| 017/13 | Correspondence received: Invitation to service to commemorate the Battle of Britain on Sunday 15th September.  |   |

Meeting finished at 9.45 pm.