

Hixon Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting Tuesday November 19th 2013

In attendance for all or part of the meeting:

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

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

Ref	Item	Action
001/13	Apologies received from: Cllr R Tonge (dispensation) and from members of the Public: Cllr L Bloomer, Cllr. A Stafford-Northcote, Cllr. A Perkins.	-
002/13	A Declaration of interest was made by Cllr. B McKeown and Cllr. Mrs S McKeown for planning application 13/19473/HOU and they left the room for the discussion on this.	-
003/13	Minutes of meeting of October 15th were accepted as accurate.	-
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. Planning application expected to be put in by end of October but hadn't been at November meeting. Any changes to layout will come back to PC before putting in planning application.	Clerk
067&081/09 & 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. Meeting with Chris Mitchell on 27th Sept was quite useful in establishing his views. Exhibition of proposals to be held on November 23rd in Memorial Hall, 10am to 4pm, exhibition includes proposed new play equipment.	Clerk
As above	Speedwatch Campaign: No further sessions held.	-
021/09, 023/09, 074/09, 091/09	Playing Fields Report: Clerk has tabulated prices received for repairs to surfaces from the 3 contractors that are quoting. 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. 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. Graffiti present, Cllr Hopcroft has managed to remove it. Some of the boarding around the swings has been removed, quotes discussed 036/13.	Cllr Hopcroft/Clerk
097/07	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. Landowner has seen the plans. Chair has prepared application for planning permission and this has been sent in to SBC with cheque. 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. Copy of accounts not provided, report was read out by Chair. Quotes received for gateway from £1650 to £1880 (all plus VAT) depending on spec. Surface needs to be rough as gets icy in winter. Allotment Cttee.need to report back formally to PC with report and audited annual accounts. Agreement needs minor amendment to cover water charges and check for any other amendments required. Allotment Cttee to have their own accident book, Clerk will continue to keep spreadsheet of allotment accidents reported to her. Planning Application should be decided soon. Ask Karen and Colin to attend the next PC meeting to sort out the agreement etc.	Clerk

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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. Information required re split now available ex SBC.</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 is the PC representative. Publicise Cllr Hassall's e-mail address on website and Hixon Parish Facebook page to allow people to put forward questions. Talk to Headteacher re use of inhalers by children. First meeting held September 30th, went well. Cllrs. Hassall and Carmichael plus Clerk have site visit to JBM on November 29th, 1pm. Link to Public Health England re inhaler survey has been circulated. A Working Party is being set up to look in to the smells as they seem to have got worse. Planning are looking for any information on whether JBM have got, or need, permission for 24/7 working.</p>	Clerk/Chair
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. Code of Conduct has been circulated. Standing Orders will need to be typed up again (no electronic copy available) so this will take longer to finalise.</p>	Clerk
032/12	<p>Plan for Stafford Borough: 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. Consultation period in progress. Copy paperwork for Cllr Sephton (Chair has original). Chair will see if comments need to be made. Rename item as Plan for Stafford Borough. Examination of Plan has taken place, some changes required, there may be further consultation. Will probably be adopted Spring 2014.</p>	-
037/012 (&059/12)	<p>(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. Chair met DLA Piper on Sept 23rd - DLA Piper disappointed that JR wasn't successful, suggested two approaches: Complain to Lord Chancellor re capability of original judge and his lack of knowledge of planning law. Write to Chief Exec. of SBC indicating the anomalies between the application and The Plan for Stafford Borough.</p>	Chair

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	<p>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. CPRE NP meeting attended on 17th Sept and a SBC NP meeting attended on 1st October. Hixon NP meetings held Sept 26th and October 10th. Questionnaires moving forward - residential and business. Logo being produced. The airfield is an un-designated heritage asset, English Heritage are interested in it, may be able to get some protection for it. Meetings currently being held on an at least monthly basis. Group is enthusiastic and progress being made. Looking at available funding.</p>	Clerk
053/12	<p>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 has nearly finished the grant application. Clerk to take schematic of play equipment to school for children to comment on. Need to include the new surfaces under existing equipment on the application, get price for the whole lot from Wicksteed.</p>	Chair
052/12	<p>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. Waiting for update from Boundary Commission, due on October 23rd. Decision made to reduce numbers to 40. Hixon very unlikely to get single ward status, need to join with another parish(es) to boost numbers. Proposal made to join with Stowe by Chartley again as there is a historical association, clear geographical boundary etc. According to Boundary Commission, Hixon's population is set to decrease! However, it is likely that planned growth will bring the combined numbers within the limits for a ward. Need to agree approach and write to Boundary Commission.</p>	Clerk
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 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. See 052/12 above.</p>	-
066/12	<p>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. Consultation is open now. Jeremy Lefroy attended the October meeting to give an update on the current situation: Jeremy Lefroy is against HS2 altogether and thinks there are better ways to increase the numbers of passengers able to travel such as altering the line of existing main line to take out sharpest bends, allowing trains to travel faster. Thinks costs will rise in excess of the £50 billion estimated. The preferred route will cause damage to Ingestre, part of Great Haywood and also Hopton etc. Moving the line to either of the alternative routes would have a great impact on Hixon and Weston. Jeremy Lefroy does not want the preferred route to change - he does not want it built at all. PC needs to make a decision on its response, deadline January 31st 2014.</p>	Chair

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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. Letter sent, reply received. Meeting to discuss situation is proposed, agreed by PC. Date proposed by Memorial Hall Cttee. for meeting is Tuesday November 26th at 7.30pm - agreed.	Clerk to confirm meeting date
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 stating the situation, as no reply from Neale Chandler. If still no reply by September meeting, proceed with small claims court action. Reply from Neale Chandler saying that he does not think there is a contract to pay between Bank House owners and Hixon PC but if there is, they would pay. Clerk to write to Joules saying PC is considering all the options. Contact solicitor with details to find out if contract with pub/brewery is still in force. Agreed to pay up to £500 for solicitor fees to sort out the situation re contract and precedent set. (Proposed by Cllr Hopcroft, seconded by Cllrs Mrs S McKeown and Cllr Tummey).	Clerk
034/13	Staffordshire County Council Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement Consultation: circulate link again to Cllr B McKeown and Hopcroft. Deadline for comments November 22nd.	Clerk
035/13	Draft Budget 2014 - 2015: All to consider any major expenditure items they want to put forward for budget.	All
036/13	Consider quotes for Minor Highways work: quote from usual contractor agreed (£380).	Clerk
037/13	Consider quote(s) for work on edging to swings on playing field: quote for repair to worst edge agreed (£50).	Clerk
038/13	Consider viewing planning applications online, rather than receiving a paper copy (request from SBC): decided PC needed to receive paper copy as does not have facility to print off large scale maps.	Clerk
009/13	Chairman's announcements:	
	Hixon came 17th (ish) out of 2400 place in England and Wales for the best place to bring up a family.	
	The asset inspection needs to be re-scheduled due to lack of availability of Councillors on 24th.	Clerk
010/13	Councillor Questions:	
	The road surface at the junction of Meadow Glade/Back Lane/ Stowe Lane is bald and this is likely to lead to an ice problem when the weather is very cold.	Clerk to inform Highways
	There are a lot of leaves (and crab apples) on the road and pavement in Church Lane, near the church.	Clerk to inform SBC
	The drainage channel in the field at the back of The Croft is getting blocked.	Clerk to inform SBC
	Water has been seeping out of the man hole cover set in to the bank just past The Croft (going out of Hixon).	Clerk to inform Highways (?)
	A car parking by the white bollards has broken one, needs replacing.	Clerk to inform Highways
011/13	Date of next meeting: December 17th 2013	Clerk to book Memorial Hall
012/13	Public Participation	
	The smell from Jesse Broughs has got worse and the noise, especially the constant background noise, has increased.	Clerk

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	There have been floodlights in use on the former runway on the Airfield Estae this week, this needs planning permission.	Clerk to inform Planning Enforcement
013/13	Planning Applications:	
	13/19268/OUT Demolition of bungalow and construction of 3 detached houses, corner of Pasturefields Lane, Hixon - amended plan	Object
	13/19473/HOU Retention of shed (max. 2 years) and construction of detached garage (to replace shed), 7 Grange Court, Hixon	Object
014/13	Planning Reports	
	13/19150/FUL land at Neptune Business Park, Pasturefields Industrial Estate, replacement office building for Air & Ground (not wholly within RIEB)	Permit
	13/18866/OUT, Land at Mount Farm, Stowe Lane, Hixon - Erection of 3 detached dwellings	Permit
015/13	Bank Reconciliation: Bank Statements checked but reconciliation signed at a later date.	-
016/13	Schedule of agreed payments	
	C Gill salary - November (Gross). Local Gov act 1972 s111.	£660.00
	C Gill expenses - November. Local Gov act 1972 s111	£53.50
	Reimbursement C Gill stamps (12x50p stamps plus 12x60p). Local Gov act 1972 s111	£13.20
	Reimbursement C Gill mileage (10 miles @ £0.45p/mile). Local Gov act 1972 s111	£4.50
	Fenns stationery: ink, paper, laminating pouches, punched pockets.	£118.16
	Acer Garden Landscapes - October mowing + hedge cutting (less retention)	£882.64
	Grant Thornton for external audit.	£240.00
	Poppy Appeal for Wreath for Remembrance service	£17.00
	Brierley Hill Printers for Autumn Newsletter	£159.00
017/13	Correspondence received: Invitations to Mayor's Carol Service and Sleeping Beauty, SPCA Gazette and Annual Report.	

Meeting finished at 9.05 pm.