

Hixon Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting Tuesday February 18th 2014

In attendance for all or part of the meeting:

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

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

Ref	Item
001/13	Apologies received from: Cllr R Tonge (dispensation) and from members of the Public: Cllr. Len Bloomer.
002/13	No declarations of interest were made.
003/13	Minutes of meeting of January 21st 2014 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. Revised layout has been provided, PC has no problems with the small change, that pushes the houses slightly further up the hill. PC needs to determine the local connection criteria: sub-group of Cllrs B McKeown and Tummey formed to look at this. Clerk to send e-mail from Charlie Riley to Cllrs McKeown and Tummey. See planning application section.
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. Report from engineers provided. 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 was held on November 23rd in Memorial Hall: attendance wasn't high but most people attending gave their opinions and ideas. Len Bloomer will ask Chris Michell for an estimate of costs and timeframes - design costs and construction costs. Meeting held 11th February to discuss taking the High Street proposal forward, Steve Knott will visit site with an engineer and road safety expert to look at the best solution, will have proposals in place by end of financial year.
As above	Speedwatch Campaign: No further sessions held due to weather, camera van has been back in village.
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. Boarding around 4-swing bay has been repaired. The bad weather has made the surface to the Jolly Gerald and the junior swings quite bad. Discharge Fitness Trail & New Play Equipment for now, as situation re paint and rust is stable.
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 has been permitted. A structural engineer (with full liability) needs to be appointed to check the building, Locality Brokers are assisting with finding a suitable person at a reduced cost. Gateway specification agreed and plan drawn up, put out for tenders..

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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. Contact person for change to PC name and address has been sourced. Paperwork for change in Parish name has been sourced and will be dealt with in near future.</p>
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 - postponed. 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. Consider approaching neighbourhood schools re inhaler use survey - consider next meeting. Clerk to look at Public Health England website to see what they actually do - didn't look very useful from preliminary look, could contact them to ask about survey if thought necessary.. Try and get info. from EA on 24/7 working and whether any permission is required for it - EA says working hours is a matter for the Borough Council. Borough Council have been asked for information on permitted working hours at JBM and also why the permissions had clause removed that prevented JBM from making nuisance dust, noise, odours etc. Ask St Peter's about their monitoring of inhaler usage - KS1 recorded by adult, KS2 recorded by child. Ask Headteacher for meeting to discuss if using St Peter's data in a survey of inhaler usage in schools in the area is feasible.</p>
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 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. Typing of Standing Orders has been started. Hixon PC current version has many changes from Model, Cllrs. need to decide what they want in revised version. Sub-group of Cllr. Mrs S McKeown and Cllr Sephton to consider, meeting 24th February.</p>
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 - 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. Examination of Plan has taken place, a few tweaks required, there will be further consultation. Will probably be adopted Spring/Summer 2014 (around June likely). Plan of 2001 is still the adopted plan and is still a point of reference. Any housing approved since April 2011 and started within 2 years of approval will count towards the allocation. SBC want to engage with KSVs re apportionment, settlement boundaries etc, Clerk to respond to Alex Yendole asking for dates for a meeting.</p>

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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, four held so far. Group is enthusiastic and progress being made. Looking at available funding. Have a volunteer to help with website. Forms for bank account for NP (plus ring-fenced funds) signed. Residents questionnaire ready, should be out Mid-March, business questionnaire very nearly ready. Application for funding (mainly printing costs to start with) about to go in. Working group is doing a good job. People are required to deliver and collect questionnaires. Training sessions will be held.</p>
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. Clerk took schematic of play equipment to school for children to comment on. Need to include the new surfaces under existing equipment on the application, price for the whole lot obtained from Wicksteed. Chair has put in the grant application to Awards for All, hope to hear in 2-4 weeks..</p>
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. Chair outlined a draft letter to Boundary Commission with proposed ward change, ward to include Hixon parish, Stowe by Chartley parish and Gayton parish (and not Great Haywood, Little Haywood or Colwich): this proposal was agreed unanimously by Councillors. Letter has been written to Boundary Commission, awaiting results of consultation.</p>
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. Amalgamate with 052/12 above.</p>

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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 £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. Letter sent to Ingestre with Tixall PC re comments being made by vice-chair, reply saying they would continue trying to get the route changed, questioning SSSI status of Pasturefield Salt Marsh. PC needs to make a decision on its response, deadline January 31st 2014. Discuss at Extraordinary budget meeting on January 14th. Response has gone in to HS2, remove from agenda for time-being.</p>
068/12	<p>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. PC representatives met with Memorial Hall Cttee. on Tuesday November 26th: it was agreed that while the situation with the Bank House paying for the car park is undecided, the PC will be charged at a reduced rate for its hall bookings. Memorial Hall has offered a 10% reduction from January 1st, - accept 10% and ask that reduction is from the date of the meeting when the reduction was proposed i.e. November 26th. No response has been received to this request.</p>
069/12	<p>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 to 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). Contact has been made with solicitor and agreement OK'd and signed at meeting. Waiting for news from solicitor.</p>
039/13	<p>Consider best way of producing walk leaflets, £175 provided by Community Footpath Initiative: Decided Chair would get price for 100 and 200 copies of each walk, Clerk has sent walks to Chair. Prices: £240 for 100 leaflets, £420 for 200. Decided on 100 of each, Chair needs to redesign WORD document to get in "folding" format.</p>
044/13	<p>Consider request for information from "Making Parishes Better" including for information to be published on website: ask how Hixon Parish will be made better by them knowing this information.</p>
045/13	<p>Consider Cllrs Carmichael and Hopcroft attending SPCA planning training course "The Basics", cost of £20 plus £15: Agreed, date will be 14th April 2014.</p>
046/13	<p>Discuss the planning officer's recommendation to approve 13/19249/OUT, 81 Houses on land adjacent New Road, Hixon: Officers Report just lists the main reasons for objection from the PC and other objectors, no attempt to answer the points raised or justify the decision relative to the objections. Planning Committee meeting is 19th February.</p>

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009/13	Chairman's announcements:
	Matthew Winter-Wright has been nominated (with the help of Cllr. Amyas Stafford-Northcote) for the Stafford Borough Pride in your Patch Awards, for the excellent work he does in removing litter from Hixon.
010/13	Councillor Questions:
	The postbox on the corner of Walnut Crest has been removed: Jean Tabernor has started a petition and paperwork was provided to the PC for Walnut Crest residents to sign.
	The mobile SID device that the PC was told would be in Hixon on a regular basis (Church Lane) has not been there for a considerable time. The PC were also told that Church Lane would be getting a permanent SID but this has not happened. Clerk to follow up with Chris Mitchell.
	Is Hixon on a road sweeping schedule? Clerk to enquire.
	There are still some very smooth road surfaces in Hixon - e-mail has been sent to Chris Mitchell re bend at Church Road/Back Lane/Meadow Glade, he is getting this looked at.
011/13	Date of next meeting: March 18th 2014
012/13	Public Participation
	Where does all the flood water from Hixon go to? Not known.
	What is the normal amount of money kept as a reserve by Parish Councils? Hixon work on $1\frac{1}{2}$ x the precept but keep more in reserve if a big project is being planned.
	Highways improvements/Highway signage: where are we with highway safety improvements? Church Lane keeps getting blocked by lorries trying to turn around, an articulated lorry was doing a 3-point turn in to Sycamore Drive entrance at mini-roundabout to turn around. Lorries miss the signs in to the Airfield Estate, can signage be improved? Clerk to raise signage with Highways.
	Amyas mentioned that Jeremy Lefroy's submission on HS2 is well worth looking at.
013/13	Planning Applications: (13/19784/FUL not on agenda as received too late).
	14/19889/HOU 2 storey side extension, 1 storey front extension, 40 Ridgeway, Hixon
	13/19784/FUL Housing development of 5 no. houses and 2 no. bungalows, Land Off Church Lane Adjacent To 24 The Croft Hixon Stafford (Rural Exception Houses)
014/13	Planning Reports
	13/19676FUL In-fill of pond at Red Barn, Egg Lane, Hixon
	13/19542/FUL Replace dust filtration plant which is approaching the end of its useful life, with a more modern, efficient and larger capacity unit. JBM, Kingsilver Refinery Hixon Industrial Estate Church Lane Hixon
015/13	Bank Reconciliation:
016/13	Schedule of agreed payments
	C Gill salary - February. Local Gov act 1972 s111.
	C Gill expenses - February. Local Gov act 1972 s111
	Reimbursement C Gill mileage (26 miles @ £0.45p/mile). Local Gov act 1972 s111
017/13	Correspondence received: Invitation to Mayors charity event.

Meeting finished at 9.30 pm.

Action
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Clerk Cllrs B McKeown and G Tummey
Clerk
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Clerk
Chair/Clerk

Clerk
Clerk
Clerk to provide information to sub-group
Clerk

Hixon Parish Council

Clerk/Chair
Chair
Clerk
-

Hixon Parish Council

-
-
Clerk
Chair
Clerk

Hixon Parish Council

None
Chair/Clerk
Clerk
Clerk
-
Clerk to book Memorial Hall
-
-
-
No objection, query loss of car parking space
No objection
Refuse
Permit
Done
£686.40
£53.50
£11.70