

Hixon Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting Tuesday October 20th 2015

In attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Cllr. B McKeown (Chair), Cllr Mrs S McKeown, Cllr N Baxter, Cllr A Murdoch, Cllr. P Hopcroft, Cllr M Kelly, Cllr Mrs C Murdoch

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

Ref	Item	Action
001/15	Apologies received from Cllr Mrs M Aberley and from members of the public Cllr. Len Bloomer	-
002/15	Cllr Baxter declared an interest in item 032/14 and did not take part in any decisions made on this item,	-
003/15	Minutes of meeting September 15th 2015 were accepted as accurate.	-
039/14	Publicly Accessible Defibrillators: Paul Dadge attended the meeting to explain the situation with regards the British Heart Foundation (paid for by the Dept. of Health) now funding free publicly accessible defibrillators and cabinets providing the cabinet is unlocked. Applications for up to 5 defibs/cabinets will be considered, applications end in March 2016. Councillors to consider best locations to site them (electricity supply required) for next meeting. Clerk to look at the application form. Sites put forward include: BT phone box on corner of Sycamore Drive, Fresh Hair, Lea Heath phone box, Pasturefields (e.g. cattery), Swansmoor, Church/Guides HQ/School, McColls.	Clerk
041/15	Gospel Hall Trust site on New Road: representatives of the Trust to give an update: The planning application has been refused on the grounds of a flood risk issue. The County Officer did not agree with the person the gospel Hall Trust were using. A new application will be put in, with a new drainage layout and using a pond to take the surface water. The Highways safety feature has probably not been taken up with Highways yet - as the PC are going to be talking to Highways about the proposed Safety Features, the PC will bring the proposal up at the meeting, saying that there may be a sponsor for the New Road project. Discussed at Highways meeting (Richard Rayson, Len Bloomer), meet Richard Rayson again with Gospel Hall Trust representatives once application live again.	Clerk
026/10	Rural Exception Housing from Housing Plus and Stafford & Rural Homes: Application out in Dec 2013, validated Feb 2014. 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). Planning permission now granted (January 2015). Sampling going on, on-site, March 2015. Work has started, completion due for Spring 2016. Work temporarily halted, waiting for BT to put in a cable in the footpath, should be within the next 2 weeks. Youths had stolen the fire extinguishers from the site and discharged them, extinguishers now locked away more securely in main compound. Site manager is Mark Morris. Cllr Hopcroft is PC liaison person for the rural exception houses. Work ongoing on site, completion due	-
067&081/09 & 056/11	Speed and Highway Safety in Hixon Parish. Maps and details/proposals of highway safety measures have been sent to Chris Mitchell for comments and prices. Priorities as far as PC is 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). High Street now complete. Lorries still coming through village, Andy will take photos of the signage off the A51 and within the village for discussion. Meeting arranged with Richard Rayson and Len on 23rd October at 9.30am, to discuss more Highway Safety projects in Hixon, including gateway etc. feature on New Road (in conjunction with Gospel Hall Trust). Clerk to send Feasibility Report from 2013 to Cllr. Baxter and Highways.	Clerk/ Cllr. A Murdoch
As above	Speedwatch Campaign: Cllr Hopcroft is now running Speedwatch and needs police training, waiting for Steve Bird to ring him back. Cllr. Hopcroft has contacted the volunteers to check they want to continue. Aim to start Speedwatch up again in the Spring. The speed gun does not need calibrating, use of the tuning fork is fine. More volunteers required, put advert in Compass, website etc.. Have 6 people and training will be arranged. Still could do with more volunteers, include in Newsletter. Cllr. Hopcroft waiting to hear from Police (Steve Nelson) as to when they can arrange suitable training.	Cllr Hopcroft/Chair
021/09, 023/09, 074/09, 091/09	Playing Fields Report: Complaint received by Clerk re amount of bird poo on swings, suggested using bird repellent on bar at top of swings. Clerk has circulated details of this to councillors. Hedge at side of playing field is unruly, quoted £500 to sort it out, price agreed by PC. - hedge owned by PC (deeds). Clerk to contact Old Vicarage to check they don't mind the section of the hedge that borders their house cutting back to ca. 6 feet high. Contractor will do hedge any time. Cllr. Hopcroft has spoken to householder, willing for hedge to be cut but does not want to contribute to costs. Wait until nesting season ended. No report as Cllr Hopcroft away. Cllr Hopcroft has asked that Fresh Air Fitness to come and look at rust problem again, plus a few minor problems. Fresh Air Fitness have asked for photos of rust and any other problems, Cllr Hopcroft to take photos, provided to Clerk in July. More bottles are being left on ground, tennis nets have been an issue with people trying to remove them and causing some damage. Fresh Air Fitness say to get quote for repairs etc. and they will pay - Cllr. A Murdoch to get suitable quote. Cllr. Hopcroft to speak to Jed from FAF to ask for specification for work and to ask FAF if they will supply necessary parts (some bits are missing). Agreed to get side hedge cut for £250 + £250 (+VAT) as per previous quote, Cllr. Hopcroft to contact hedge cutter to confirm, Clerk to prepare purchase order. Top bar of main swings needs rubbing down and painting, Cllr A Murdoch to get quote.	Cllr. Hopcroft. Cllr. A Murdoch. Clerk

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097/07	<p>Allotments: Decided that it may be preferable to take the financial running of the Allotments under PC control. Consider invoking clause 11 of agreement. Actual rent and water payments to be separated from the subscription charge and rent/water will be invoiced directly by PC. Water will be the previous year's amount. i.e. landlord invoices the tenant directly. WFAA Cttee. will send list of plot-holders and plots to PC in January each year, invoices to go out in February. WFAA can have its own subscription charges if it wishes. PC to meet with WFAA Cttee. in November and May each year. Appropriate documents will be produced. Write letter to WFAA secretary, copy acting chair. Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention. <i>June 2015</i>: The Clerk has complained about the content of e-mails and a letter she had received from members of the WFAA Committee, the language and tone used was offensive and inappropriate to the circumstances. A letter has been written by the Chair of Hixon PC to the Acting Chair of WFAA Committee, copied to the secretary, to advise the action being taken by the Parish Council to prevent this type of offensive communication. The WFAA version of the unapproved minutes have been posted on the WFAA website, these should be taken down or annotated as "Unapproved". <i>June</i>: At the AGM of Wellington Fields on 15th June, Cllr Mrs S McKeown gave a presentation on the anomalies in the current subscription charges made by WFAA Cttee. and this was praised as having got the point over (and the need for change) very well. The WFAA Chair was reported as having criticised the PC at every opportunity. <i>July 2015</i>: Letter received from new Chair of WFAA (same as previous acting chair) showing no contrition for his previous comments and adding to the problem by making false and unsubstantiated claims. PC decided it cannot work with the WFAA committee whilst these issues are unresolved - it is not clear whether the opinions/statements are just from the Chair or from the whole committee as this question was asked but not answered. Chair to write again confirming that the PC as a whole considers the comments and statements unacceptable and asking again for an answer as to who the comments etc. were actually from (Chair only or whole committee and plot holders). No clarification received. Planning application from 2013 covers new surface at gateway. <i>Oct 2015</i>: Councillors have met with landowner re the gateway situation and discussed which spec. (concrete or tarmac) is preferable, concrete preferred. Landowner confirmed he wanted the PC (as leaseholder) to invoice the rent and water payments directly to plot holders, rather than monies being passed on from WFAA. Still awaiting draft letter from solicitor. Letter from Chair of WFAA to HPC Chair asked for an informal meeting to discuss moving forward: Council discussed a draft letter in response and agreed minor changes, letter to state that the lack of an apology to the Clerk and to the PC as a whole for comments/statements made by WFAA Chair (and possibly WFAA committee) plus WFAA committee's resistance to the PC invoicing directly for rent and water is preventing the PC from working with WFAA. Once these issues are satisfactorily resolved, a working relationship should be achievable. Council also agreed a letter (draft letter reviewed at meeting) to plot holders detailing the rent and water charges (water backdated based on May 2015 meter reading) for the 2016-2017 season, payable in February 2016.</p>	Chair/Clerk
051/10	<p>JBMI Liaison Committee - County Council led liaison group is now set up (Sept 2013): Meeting with Gospel Hall Trust people threw up problems with litter and mess at entrance road to JBM (off New Road) by Gospel Hall Trust site entrance. Clerk has contacted JBM and they will talk to Gospel Hall Trust to discuss how best to sort the problem out. Site liaison meeting held 1st December 2014, mainly discussed the fire in June 2014. Next meeting June 1st 2015. Cllr Mrs M Aberley is the new PC representative and gave a summary of the things discussed at the June meeting at the June 2015 PC meeting. Next meeting is December 7th 2015.</p>	Cllr Mrs M Aberley
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. 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. Hixon PC current version has many changes from Model, Cllrs. need to decide what they want in revised version. Will be finalised by Cllr Mrs S McKeown and D Sephton. <i>July</i>: Cllr Mrs S McKeown has revised the SOs and circulated the proposed version, along with current, model and out-takes. All to read for discussion/approval in October. Does the PC need a constitution? Clerk to ask SBC - answer - not their area, ask SPCA. SPCA says No, covered by Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. <i>October 2015</i>: Proposed SO's looked at in detail, agreed content to bottom of P8. Continue at November's meeting. Cllr Mrs S McKeown stated that she thought the PC should have a Complaints policy, Clerk to look at.</p>	ALL
050/12 and 032/12 (Plan for Stafford)	<p>Neighbourhood Plan: <i>2015</i>: Plan to include: 20% of new housing as bungalows, 10% as self-design and build, separation of existing and new housing (preferably by woodland), design individuality of new developments using street furniture etc. Part 2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough went out for consultation first week of June. Hixon draft NP has been sent to SBC for comments, well received, meeting held 15th June to discuss finalising the plan, aim to go out for consultation end of June. Hixon NP went out for public consultation on Friday July 10th, consultation period ended August 21st. Not many responses, being collated. <i>Oct 2015</i>: Plan in final stages now, NP meeting on October 28th to review all comments and agree any changes/additions. To be submitted to SBC ASAP after this meeting.</p>	Chair

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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. 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. Chair to meet with solicitor to provide more paperwork. Solicitor advises that there is sufficient evidence of a trail of payments made for car park use for the contract to be enforceable. He will write to Joules Brewery. Clerk has sent evidence of car park registration and details of split of PCs. Solicitor has everything he requires and will pursue payments with Joules Brewery. Clerk to chase up solicitor - Joules still saying no agreement so don't need to pay. Replied to solicitor along Precedent Set lines. Joules still saying there is no contract, so no payments will be made by them, individual tenants may have decided to pay in the past. Chair to speak to solicitor. Need to try and find reference to car parking spaces as part of approval for restaurant extension, Chair to arrange to go to SBC in New Year, Clerk to find out planning application numbers and find out how easy it will be to get access to records, plan for March. Clerk has found further information online and passed this to solicitor, who will decide if this is sufficient evidence to proceed again. Solicitor advises that Joules still not accepting that a lease agreement has been in place with them or their tenants. Solicitor suggests serving a Section 25 notice, as the original lease from 1986 has never been terminated. Clerk to circulate details. June: Cllr Kelly believes a Section 25 notice would not be relevant in this situation - decided to talk to the tenants (Colin and Simon) about making the payments for the car park, Cllrs. Murdoch to follow up. Cllr Mrs C Murdoch has spoken to Simon and explained the situation, a meeting will be arranged with Clare, Simon and Neale from Joules brewery, to try and come to an agreement about an arrangement. July: Clare spoke to Steve Nuttall by phone on 8th July. Position unchanged following discussions, Chair has asked solicitor to draft a letter to Joules, awaiting sight of letter. Pursue soak away for drainage route - Cllr. A Murdoch will take this on. No solicitor's letter forthcoming, Try and arrange a meeting in Hixon with Steve Nuttall and councillors. Cllr. A Murdoch had spoken to Steve Thomas about putting in a soakaway - best place would be by the plinth on Millennium Green, cost should <£1000. Clerk to contact Severn Trent Water to discuss design specification for soakaway, practicalities, reduction in charges to PC.</p>	Clerk
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, could take 2-3 months. Chair to work on these over the winter. Send copies to Cllr. Carmichael again, he will walk them. Currently waiting for better weather. Cllr A Murdoch has offered to take on the re-vamp of the walk leaflets. Clerk has contacted Ramblers association to ask if they know of any problems with the walks around Hixon, nothing known about. Send a list of any problems to Rights of Way people at SCC. Clare has noticed some problems on walks, will make a note of positions and report back. Clerk to send footpaths map to Cllrs. Murdoch. Andy has revamped 1 walk using a template, it is looking good. Quote received for printing, awaiting second quote via Chair. Second quote cheaper, Cllr A Murdoch to tidy up the leaflets ready for printing.</p>	Cllr A Murdoch
004/14	<p>St Peter's Children's poster competition and garden competition 2015: Garden judging etc. was the same categories as previous years, Cllr Mrs M Aberley did the judging, with photos taken. Presentation was on Monday 12th October at Bankhouse, prizes and trophies as usual (plaque, trophy, £20, £15, £10 and £10 for hanging baskets). £50 for food buffet. Presentation was well attended and some of those present volunteered to form a team to do the preliminary judging and take photos (including their own gardens, baskets etc.) and then pass on the councillors for final decisions.</p>	Chair
032/14	<p>Hall Farm Close Open Space: Cabinet decided not to sell the OS and to maintain the recreational use covenant - cannot be used as access to development unless SBC overturn this decision in the future. request received from residents of Hall Farm Close for PC to take on the lease of the HFC OS and possibly Vicarage Way. SBC would prefer PC to lease (rather than residents) and will offer a longer lease to PC. No legal costs from SBC and peppercorn rent. SBC would like PC take on Vicarage Way OS as well, to avoid them coming out to mow just one OS. Agreed to take on HFC OS if costs not too onerous. Clerk has got mowing and legal costs, PC considered costs acceptable - if PC takes on Vicarage Way OS as well then ask SBC to cover both parties legal costs and LR fees. Contact with SBC will be via Alistair Welch. Heads of Terms details now provided for lease, Clerk has queried the reference to the water course, full repairing basis, maintenance regime and amount of peppercorn rent. Awaiting response. Cllr Baxter mentioned that the fence along the Vicarage Way OS is rotten and the gate catch broken leading to potential safety hazard as people can access the swale. Clerk has reported the problems to SBC. SBC want PC to pay for advert, await clarification on water course/swale etc. before giving permission for this. July: SBC appear to want to include the swale as part of the Vicarage Way OS - the PC does not want to take on the swale. It is fenced off and not publicly accessible and so is not amenity "land". Clerk to ask SBC if they are currently liable for damage to properties if the swale flooded. Clerk to ask Roly Tonge if he maintains his side of the swale at all (cut weeds etc.) - answer No. Clerk to arrange meeting with SBC to discuss the situation, once relevant people at SBC have been identified - no-one at SBC seems to want to take ownership of this. Ask SBC if the PC can just lease the HFC open space, as it is the Vicarage Way OS that is causing the delay. Clerk has chased this up, still waiting for response. It was suggested that the HFC Residents Committee should write to the leader of SBC saying that they are aware that the situation seems to have stagnated and that HPC are finding it difficult to progress and ask if there is anything they can do to help ... Alan Perkins also offered to chase SBC up on this. Alan said that there was more work to be done on the fencing etc. on the OS on Vicarage Way, the long grass/weeds need to be cut back so that the full extent of the problem can be seen. It was described as a "work in progress".</p>	Clerk

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037/15	Ownership of/registering the land at end of Greenfields: The PC does not own this land, the owner could not be traced previously and the PC has maintained the land for in excess of 12 years (since 2001). Clerk to check where PC bit of land ends and ask solicitor for a quote for getting the land registered to the PC. Discussed whether it was worth spending the money for legal work to get ownership - Clerk to approach Land Registry to see if we can establish ownership without involving solicitor. Reply received, we can do it without solicitor, will need Statement of Truth and preferably confirmation from other parties. Two statements required plus another form. Two pieces of evidence found. Cllr Mrs M Aberley has visited Mrs Collyer and the paperwork has been completed. Chair now to complete paperwork on behalf of the Parish Council.	Chair/Clerk
054/14	Situation regarding Hixon drop-in surgery and Hazeldene House Surgery Patient Participation Panel: a job offer has been made, new doctor hopefully starting in September 2015. In this case, the drop-in clinic in Hixon could start again in December 2015. A nurse, accompanied by a practitioner, should start again in March on Tuesdays in Hixon. The room used as the doctor's room in the hall is of concern, it must be kept at an acceptable standard. Cllr. Hopcroft to contact Hazeldene re situation with nurse and doctor's room. Nurse will start back in Hixon from May 5th for 3-month trial period, by appointment only. Mark Farrington has asked Sarah McGrady what needs to be done to the room to make it suitable for the doctor to use, no reply as yet. June: nurse clinic is well supported and will continue, new doctor, Dr Woods, starts at end of August. A salaried GP, Emma Wood, started early August. Dr Davies retired at the start of September but will return to do some locum work. There is now a minor illness clinic run by nurses, covering things such as ENT and water infections. The number of missed appointments has decreased again. <u>Oct</u> : no change, no further meetings held.	Cllr. Hopcroft
011/15	Consider damage to Pasturefields Bus Shelter: notify the insurance company and ask for a surveyor to go and look at the damage. Ask D&G buses if there is a bus route through Pasturefields now answer: No. Should PC have the bus shelter replaced with a new one? Cost to PC (insurance excess) will be £100. Cost of new shelter in region of £1800. Vote taken, 4 for replacement, 4 against replacement - Chair's vote was for the Replacement, Clerk to provide quotes to insurance company. 3 quotes received and passed on. Bus shelter out-of-stock, should be replaced late September. <u>Oct</u> : Now replaced.	Clerk
046/15	Consider items on the list for action following the Asset Inspection: Ask George for price for work, except the 2 notice boards and the posts around the car park, as Cllrs McKeown will do these next Spring/Summer - quote received for work on list of £215 - accepted.	Clerk
049/15	Consider request for PC to help with funds/equipment for the new Jelly Beans Hixon Baby and Toddler Group: the Chair will meet up with the organiser of the group to discuss their funding and find out what they are wanting and Clerk will find out if there is any equipment left at the Children's Centre that this group could use.	Chair/Clerk
048/15	In Camera discussion: Asbestos issue now resolved: Councillors met with Shaun Baker from SBC Environmental Health (and the landowner) on September 28th to clarify whether or not the pieces found in the allotments were asbestos and what should be done. Shaun Baker's advice will be followed. Let Jane Garner know the situation and write to all plot holders advising them of the situation and the measures the PC is putting in to place (draft letter reviewed at meeting) . Bin to be purchased (Chair offered to obtain bin post meeting).	Clerk
012/15	Chairman's announcements:	None
	The date of the December meeting was discussed and it was decided to leave it as scheduled on December 15th.	
013/15	Councillor Questions:	
	Cllr Baxter suggested that if in future someone asked to cut down a tree(s) that are on PC land, if permission is given they should be asked to plant a tree elsewhere - agreed this was a good idea.	Clerk
	Cllr Mrs S McKeown suggested that hot drinks should be available to PC members during PC meetings - it was agreed to bring in tea/coffee/milk (Cllrs Mrs S McKeown, Mrs C Murdoch and Hopcroft offered to bring in supplies).	Cllrs Mrs S McKeown, Mrs C Murdoch and Hopcroft
	Cllr Kelly stated that the road by the 7 houses off Church Lane was being churned up by the lorries etc. from the building site - Cllr Hopcroft to speak to the contractors about repairing the road.	Cllr Hopcroft
	Cllr Kelly reported that the Taylor-Wimpey houses are not selling well.	-

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014/15	Date of next meeting: November 17th 2015	Clerk to book Memorial Hall
015/15	Public Participation:	None
016/15	AOB	
	The pile of wood chippings is still on the OS by 1 Sycamore Drive, Clerk to write formally to householders to ask them about it. NB Householders contacted Chair shortly after meeting to apologise for the pile being left there by the contractors, householders had just got back from a holiday. Will be removed soon.	-
	HPC have been invited to enter the Best Kept Village competition again - discuss next month.	Chair
	Councillors have been invited to the Gala Performance of Jack & the Beanstalk on Monday 14th December.	-
	The minutes of the recent Parish Forum are now available.	-
017/15	Planning Applications:	None
018/15	Planning Reports	
	15/22623/OUT Erection of a one bed detached bungalow (outline application with all matters reserved), Land At Sunnyside Cottage, High Street, Hixon	Refused
	15/22642/HOU Second storey extension to side of dwelling, Honeysuckle Cottage Church Road, Hixon	Permitted
	15/22471/OUT Construction of new detached dwelling within existing domestic curtilage. Resubmission of application 14/21504/OUT. Ancient House Martins Way Hixon	Permitted
019/15	Bank Reconciliation:	Done
020/15	Schedule of agreed payments	
	C Gill salary October (gross). Local Gov act 1972 s111.	£703.80
	C Gill allowance (costs: working from home) - October. Local Gov act 1972 s111	£53.50
	Reimbursement C Gill Stamps, (24x2nd class stamps) Local Gov act 1972 s111	£12.96
	Reimbursement C Gill mileage (59 miles @ £0.45p/mile). Local Gov act 1972 s111	£26.55
	Reimbursement C Gill for plaque and trophy (Harvey's trophies)	£47.00
	Reimbursement C Gill for gift cards (Wyvale Garden Centre)	£55.00
	Queensbury Bus Shelters (replacement of damaged Pasturefields bus shelter)	£2,331.60
	EON for maintenance and energy for 1 lamp post	£56.23
	SBC for amenity skip (July 2015)	£75.00
	Hixon Memorial Hall room hire July to Sept inclusive	£43.20
	Acer Garden Landscapes - September mowing (less 5%)	£1,423.28
	Fenns Stationery ink and laminating pouches	£94.60
	Bankhouse Inn for Garden Awards Presentation buffet	£50.00
021/15	Documents Received: Invitation to the Mayor's Winter Wonderland Charity Ball on 4th December.	

Meeting finished at 10.25 pm.