

Hixon Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting Tuesday November 17th 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, Cllr Mrs M Aberley.

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

Ref	Item	Action
001/15	Apologies received 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 October 20th 2015 were accepted as accurate.	-
039/14	Publicly Accessible Defibrillators: The British Heart Foundation (paid for by the Dept. of Health) are 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 has looked 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. Ask Blithfield PC about how they got permission to place a defib. in the Newton phone box.	Clerk/Chair
041/15	Gospel Hall Trust site on New Road: 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). Site manager is Mark Morris. Cllr Hopcroft is PC liaison person for the rural exception houses. Work ongoing on site, completion due March 2016..	-
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 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). 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 held with Richard Rayson and Len on 23rd October to discuss more Highway Safety projects in Hixon, including gateway etc. feature on New Road (in conjunction with Gospel Hall Trust). Richard was very helpful, will ask engineers for some costs.	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. 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. Plan to start up again in Spring 2016	Cllr Hopcroft
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. and order raised - hedge owned by PC (deeds). Cllr Hopcroft has asked that Fresh Air Fitness to come and look at rust problem again, plus a few minor problems. 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). Top bar of main swings needs rubbing down and painting, Cllr A Murdoch to get quote. FAF equipment needs sanding, priming and 2 coats of paint. Ask SBC who they use - Clerk.	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. 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. <i>Nov-15</i>: An addendum to the agreement between the PC and WFAA had been drafted, to cover the rent and water payments being made directly to the PC and to clarify the Public Liability Insurance cover for the allotments - this only covers the public areas, it cannot cover the actual plot and anything on the plot as this has been "let" to the plot-holder and is outside the control of the PC. Addendum agreed, to be sent to Jane Garner at least one week prior to the PC meeting, with request that the WFAA attend the PC meeting to sign the addendum. If WFAA do not sign the addendum, consideration will be given to taking any necessary action with regards to changing the current agreement</p> <p>There is no intention to close the allotments, merely to ensure the payments made by plot-holders are transparent as to what they are for,</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. 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. <i>Nov-15</i>: Review of SO's completed, Cllr Mrs S McKeown to finalise. Plus tidy up Code of Conduct. Draft Complaints Policy had previously been circulated and was agreed at meeting. Sign-off in December. Financial Regulations had been circulated and need finalising for signing off at December's meeting.</p>	Cllr. Mrs S McKeown/ Clerk

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050/12 and 032/12 (Plan for Stafford)	Neighbourhood Plan: 2015: 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. Oct 2015: 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. Nov-15 No change, Raj has left SBC and Alex Yendole struggling for time to assist us finalise the documents.	Chair
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. 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, 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. 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, Oct-15: 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. Nov -15: Clerk has contacted Severn Trent Water to discuss design specification for soakaway, practicalities, reduction in charges to PC: if can prove that no water goes down the drains, then no charges. Meeting arranged with Steve Nuttall at 6pm Wed Nov.18th. Suggestion that Joules could pay for something e.g. soak-away, rather than pay for use of car-park.	Clerk
039/13	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.	Cllr A Murdoch

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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". Met Phil Gammon on Nov 6th, agreed that SBC would fully repair or replace fence and send details of this and the regime for strimming the swale to the Clerk, Clerk will then get quote for strimming.</p>	Clerk
037/15	<p>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.</p>	Chair/Clerk
054/14	<p>Situation regarding Hixon drop-in surgery and Hazeldene House Surgery Patient Participation Panel: 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. Nov: nurse clinic working well, looking to appoint another GP.</p>	Cllr. Hopcroft
049/15	<p>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. No equipment left. Chair had attended the first session and had been asked if a £50 donation could be made to Jelly Beans to help with set-up costs - agreed at meeting to donate £50.</p>	Clerk
050/15	<p>Consider pros and cons of entering the Best Kept Village Competition 2016: Hixon entered the Best Kept Village competition for about 30 years but despite trying very hard some years, didn't get more than highly commended, which it is believed that every entrant receives. Councillors decided to ask on the community Facebook page if resident had any interest in entering and whether residents would form a group to promote it and take it forward etc.</p>	Councillors
051/15	<p>Problems with lorries driving through the village: the signs to the Industrial Estates are unclear due to the estates having such similar names - it would be particularly difficult for a foreign driver. Stowe by C is also having big problems with HGVs driving through. Decided to conduct a traffic survey when weather improves, add to January's agenda to plan a date. Clerk to raise with Len Bloomer, as SCC have been having meetings re problems with lorries in villages.</p>	Clerk
031/15	<p>Signing of bank mandate form for all councillors: paperwork was signed for second time, mandate rules agreed (all councillors can sign, 2 signatures but not married couples, all accounts the same rules). Clerk to send to Nat West.</p>	Clerk
052/15	<p>Quotes for Minor Highways work: Two quotes to consider, prices very similar - it was decided to stay with the usual contractor.</p>	Clerk

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012/15	Chairman's announcements:	None
013/15	Councillor Questions:	
014/15	Date of next meeting: December 17th 2015	Clerk to book Memorial Hall
015/15	Public Participation:	None
	John Martin wanted to let the PC know that he has been approached by O2 for permission to place a mobile aerial behind the hay barn on Puddle Hill	-
	Alan Perkins said the information on the marina application was due back by 27th November.	-
016/15	AOB	
	Gladman have appealed against the refusal of planning permission for 15/21806/OUT, any further responses must reach the Planning Inspectorate by 15th December. Agreed to print post cards for door-to-door, to include Stowe by C. Try to get Highways to raise objections, get a meeting with SBC to discuss.	Chair/Clerk
	Budget discussions start properly in December, finalise in January. All councillors to think of anything that they would like to put forward as an item for expenditure. Current expenditure to date to be circulated to councillors. Agreed that Clerk would ask the grass cutting and weedkilling/flower bed contractors for 2-year contracts, preferably at same prices as current.	All
017/15	Planning Applications:	
	15/23134/FUL Infilling/levelling of land adjacent 24 The Croft, Off Church Lane, Hixon	Object
	15/23133/FUL Proposed retaining wall and associated earthworks/ batters on site & on adjacent land, with reference to planning approval 13/19784/FUL Land Adjacent To 24 The Croft Off Church Lane Hixon	No objection
	15/23194/COU Proposed tennis court at Pasturefields Farm, London Road	No objection
018/15	Planning Reports	
	15/21668/FUL Retention of existing parking area and proposed extension to existing parking area to form hardstanding for vehicles Land Off Pasturefields Lane Pasturefields	Withdrawn
	15/22707/FUL Demolition of an existing bungalow and outbuildings and the construction of a four bedroomed , Land at The Bungalow, Pasturefields Lane, Pasturefields	Permit
019/15	Bank Reconciliation:	Done
020/15	Schedule of agreed payments	
	C Gill salary November (gross). Local Gov act 1972 s111.	£703.80
	C Gill allowance (costs: working from home) - November. Local Gov act 1972 s111	£53.50
	Reimbursement C Gill Stamps, (12x2nd class stamps £6.48) plus 2x large letters stamps 1st class (2 @ £0.95). Local Gov act 1972 s111	£8.38
	Reimbursement C Gill mileage (60 miles @ £0.45p/mile). Local Gov act 1972 s111	£27.00
	Brierley Printers for defibrillator/1st aid training leaflet (first 2 sessions)	£102.00
	SPCA for 2 councillors on planning training course 21st October 2015	£35.00
	Severn Trent Water for car park drainage (April 2015 - October 2015)	£230.04
	Acer Garden Landscapes - October mowing (£897.19), hedge cutting (£180) and withheld percentage (£330.11)	£1,407.30
	Fenns Stationery ink and wallets	£43.88
021/15	Documents Received: SPCA annual report and agenda for AGM, Fit for Farming - a men's health manual, Invitation to Borough Carol Service	

Meeting finished at 10.30 pm.