Minutes of Parish Council Meeting Tuesday December 15th 2015

In attendance for all or part of the meeting:

ClIr. B McKeown (Chair), ClIr Mrs S McKeown, ClIr N Baxter, ClIr A Murdoch, ClIr M Kelly, ClIr Mrs C Murdoch, ClIr Mrs M Aberley.

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

Ref	Item	Action
001/15	Apologies received from Cllr. P Hopcroft and from members of the public: Cllr. Len Bloomer, Cllr. S Learoyd	-
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 November 17th 2015 were accepted as accurate.	-
097/07	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 Citee. will send list of plot-holders and plots to PC for I January each year, invoices to go out in February. WFAA can have its own subscription charges if it wishes. PC to meet with WFAA Citee. in November and May each year. Appropriate documents will be produced. Write letter to WFAA sceretary, copy acting chair. Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention. June 2015: 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 westion of the unapproved minutes have been posted on the WFAA westion of the unapproved minutes have been posted on the WFAA westion of the unapproved minutes have been posted on the WFAA westion of the United States of the United Sta	Clark
	December 2015: By prior arrangement, discussions were held with representatives of WFAA - Chris Hilton asked that the PC listened to what WFAA wanted and not just keep to decisions previously made. Chris was very keen for the PC to move on from the problems it had had with WFAA and try to put them behind it. WFAA intend to correct the allocation of the subscription/admin. fee at next billing period and make it pro-rata to plot size (and number of plots held), as per Cllr. Mrs S McKeown's proposals. WFAA were not prepared to sign the addendum to amend the payment system (invoices for rent/water sent out by HPC) as they did not consider this necessary. HPC explained why it wanted these changes made - to make it transparent to the plot holders how much they were paying for rent and water and who the money actually went to. Having these items plus the subscription all on one invoice has caused confusion and may continue to do so even if split out (i.e. lacking transparency). The issue of the lack of an apology being made/refusing to apologise to, the Clerk (by the Chair of WFAA) for offensive statements/comments he made via e-mails and letters was raised - following a short discussion on this and the Clerk pointing out to the WFAA Chair that some statements he had made concerning her were completely incorrect and fictitious, the WFAA Chair apologised to the Clerk for causing offense. Discussions held after the departure of the WFAA representatives led to the decision to compromise in an attempt to mend/improve relations with WFAA and move forward. Propose that rent and water invoices prepared by HPC (for payment to HPC i.e. cheques made out to HPC) but distributed by WFAA Secretary and money returned to her. HPC money then passed on to HPC. This proposal was agreed by all councillors present. Addendum will still be required to cover change to water payments wording. If not accepted then may still have to take measures to change the agreement as above. Clerk to put forward compromise proposal to Secretary and Chair	Clerk

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. Blithfield PC have been asked how they got permission to place a defib. in the Newton phone box reply was that they bought the out-of-use phone box from BT for £1. The Hixon phone box is still in use.	Clerk/Chair
041/15	Gospel Hall Trust site on New Road: Gospel Hall Trust application is live again, arrange to meet Richard Rayson with Gospel Hall Trust representatives.	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. Road sweeper has been out to try and reduce the mud on the road.	-
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 to chase up costings.	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. Dec 15: SBC use their own Streetscene staff for all painting work, Phil Gammon asked if he would quote for our work - no reply. FAF have now said they will do the work on fitness trail, can't give a date at present. Still need quote for swings.	Cllr. Hopcroft. Cllr A Murdoch.
051/10	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. Cllr Mrs M Aberley gave a summary of discussions from meeting of Dec. 7th, all councillors and all residents invited to look around JBM site, by appointment. Next meeting June 6th 2016.	Clir Mrs M Aberley
015/12	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. July: 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. October 2015: 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. Nov-15: 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. Dec-15: Complaints Policy signed off, finalise SOs, Code of Conduct	Clir. Mrs S McKeown/Clerk

050/12 and 032/12 (Plar for Stafford)	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	
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 Clir Hopcroft, seconded by Clirs Mrs S McKeown and Clir Tummey). Contact has been made with solicitor and agreement OKf and signed at meeting. Chair to meet with olicitor 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 solicitors 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: Clir 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, Clirs. Murdoch to follow up. Clir 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, awating sight of lett	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 revamp 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 has tidied up the leaflets and with a few more changes they will be ready for printing, all to give feedback at January meeting.	ALL

032/14	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. I	Clerk
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 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. <i>Nov</i> : nurse clinic working well, looking to appoint another GP.	Cllr. Hopcroft
050/15	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.	Councillors
051/15	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. <i>Dec 15</i> : Cllr. Bloomer says lots of villages have this problem. Cllrs. to take notes of problem lorries (reg. no., company, place, date, time) and report back to Clerk. Remove from agenda.	Clerk
052/15	Discuss budget and precept for 2016-2017, including projects etc.: Arrange an extraordinary meeting on January 12th to finalise budget and precept and finalise documents (see also 015/012). Gateway improvements will be a priority. Suggestion made that the PC should try and make the village as nice as possible to live in (improve footpaths etc.)	Chair
053/15	Consider whether to join the new Sector Led Body for procurement of external audit services or opt out: agreed to join/opt in to the Sector Led Body.	_
054/15	Consider Amenity Skip for 2016-2017 at £82 per 1 hour visit (currently £75) at buy 2 get 1 free (normally have 6 visits per year, Sat 10 - 11 am): agreed to have buy 4 get 2 free as usual at £82 x 4.	Clerk

012/15	Chairman's announcements:	None
013/15	Councillor Questions:	
	Litter is piling up on New Road and Church Lane, since the volunteer who used to litter-pick every weekend went away (probably to university). Rubbish most likely due to workers/visitors on the industrial estates throwing their food rubbish/wrappers from their cars/vans - Clerk to ask Streetscene to undertake regular litter picks.	
014/15	Date of next meeting: January 12th 2016 - (see 052/15)	Clerk to book Memorial Hall
015/15	Public Participation:	None
	John Martin mentioned that the entrance to Yew Tree Farm is owned by him.	
	John Martin stated that he will take down the old RAF derelict building on the allotment site when the planning permission expires if funding to refurbish it hasn't been obtained by then.	-
	Alan Perkins stated that residents opposition to planning applications, as shown by sending in letters and turning up to planning committee meetings, can have an effect on the decisions made.	-
016/15	AOB	None
017/15	Planning Applications:	
	15/23274/FUL Resubmission of 14/20900/FUL for proposed Gospel Hall, New Road, Hixon	No objection (but traffic movements issue needs to be addressed.)
	14/22766/FUL Variation of condition 2 of 14/20548/FUL (floor levels)	Insufficient information to make decision
	15/23294/FUL Detached dwelling with extended shared pavement crossing, Land Adjacent To 8 Martins Way, Hixon, Stafford	No objection
018/15	Planning Reports	
***************************************	15/22195/OUT Outline application for up to eight dwellings Land East Of Church Lane Hixon	Refused
019/15	Bank Reconciliation:	Done
020/15	Schedule of agreed payments	
	C Gill salary December (net for Q3). Local Gov act 1972 s111.	£692.34
	C Gill allowance (costs: working from home) - December. Local Gov act 1972 s111	£53.50
	Reimbursement C Gill Stamps, (20x2nd class stamps £10.80) Local Gov act 1972 s111	£10.80
	Reimbursement C Gill mileage (22 miles @ £0.45p/mile). Local Gov act 1972 s111	£9.90
	Brierley Printers for defibrillator/1st aid training leaflet (third session)	£70.80
***************************************	Chairman's Allowance	£100.00
	Donation to Jelly Beans Baby and Toddler Group	£50.00
	Re-imbursement of Cllr. B McKeown for bin and padlock at Allotments	£24.67
	Fenns Stationery ink & paper	£44.04
	HMRC Employer (£11.52) and Employee (£11.46) NI payment for Q3	£22.98
021/15	Documents Received:	

Meeting finished at 9.45 pm.