

## Hixon Parish Council

### Minutes of Parish Council Meeting Tuesday September 17th 2019

**In attendance for all or part of the meeting:**

Cllr. B McKeown (Chair), Cllr. A Murdoch, Cllr. Mrs S McKeown, Cllr. Mrs C Finlayson, Cllr. J Carmichael, Cllr. P Hopcroft

Members of the public: Seven people attended.

Ref	Item	Action
001/18	Apologies received from Cllr. Mrs H Lunn, Cllr. Mrs C Murdoch and from members of the public: Cllr J Francis	-
002/19	Declarations of interest: None	-
003/19	The minutes of meeting July 16th 2019 were accepted as accurate.	Clerk
054/19	Trent-Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB HS2 Group - Hazel McDowall from Natural England talked about the types of proposals the Action Group are interested in receiving and what sort of suggestions can be made with regards the Design Principles. Hixon Parish Councils representatives had attended two discussion groups and have put forward the following: Protection for the Control Tower, and RAF hospital buildings, Footpath/cycle path from Weston to Wolsley Bridge, protection of the Saltmarsh - Pasturefields and others in the area e.g. Ingestre, improve connectivity by establishing footpaths, bridleways and cycle tracks in the area e.g. improve Trent Drive, woodland area. Suggestions arising from discussions that will also be put forward are using the old railway line as a foot/bridle/cycle path and gaining some protection for the former airfield as a whole. Proposals to be put in by October 23rd, preferable with a ballpark idea of costs and assistance with identifying landowners etc. Health and Safety issues: the A51 will be badly affected by HS2 traffic - Hazel McDowall said the group will flag this up to Highways. The A51 also has too many changes in speed limit in our area.	Clerk
004/19	Public Participation:	
	Is HS2 going ahead? Answer - waiting to hear this. The outcome will be known before any money is spent on projects.	-
	Whereabouts is the woodland area planned? Answer: off New Road, down from bridge on right-hand-side coming in to village	-
	More speed bumps have been put in going in to Great Haywood - why can't we get any put in? Answer: these bumps have been put in as part of the permission for the new development.	-
	Hixon is likely to get HS2 construction lorries coming through, despite the weight limits.	-
	What was the outcome of the ward election petition? Answer: this was submitted to the High Court and then withdrawn 6th September.	-
	Motorists speed through the village: can we have a fixed speed camera? Answer: not much chance of that, the PC cannot legally put one in. With Speedwatch, 3 letters and then a police visit. A lot of HGVs come through the village when they shouldn't - could the bottom entrance to the Airfield Estate be used as main entrance? Answer: this is something the PC have wanted for years, owner didn't want this though.	-
	What toilet facilities will the caravan site have once the Green Man has gone, as currently the caravaners use the Green Man. - May be able to exist as is without toilet facilities.	-
055/19	Assets Inspection - proposals discussed in relation to environmental improvements (see report). Includes grass mowing contract and tree liability report: Report discussed and agreed. Proposed that prices obtained for works and list of work/actions put together Cllr. Hopcroft (Proposer), Cllr. Mrs C Finlayson (Seconder). All in favour.	-
056/19	Speed and Highway Safety Proposals and Village Gateways Features: Proposals presented again. Email from Highway Community Liaison Manager looked at. Agreed to go ahead with works, starting with Pasturefields.	Cllr. B McKeown/ Clerk

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051/10	<p>JBMI Liaison Committee: Next meeting is December 5th 2019. Large blocks are in place at the New Road entrance to stop lorries from parking there. There are new signs in place to help drivers go to the correct entrance. There is now a turning circle at the New Road entrance so lorries don't have to reverse on to Church Lane. Cllr A Murdoch to ask JBMI if they will put gabions with plants/trees in place of the large blocks, as more aesthetically pleasing. Suggest involving Gospel Hall in improvements to this area. <i>July-19</i>: Ask JBMI to go ahead with gabions. <i>Sept-19</i>: No feedback on gabions, there are other suitable alternatives that could be considered. A grass area as well as the gabions or similar would be preferred.</p>	Cllr. A Murdoch
050/12 and 032/12 (Plan for Stafford)	<p>Neighbourhood Plan: Background: The Neighbourhood Plan was considered by Cabinet on 3 November 2016 and adopted by Council on 22 November 2016. The Neighbourhood Plan is now part of the Borough's development plan for making planning decisions. It was agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan Scrutiny Committee (comprising the original Steering Group members) meet 6-monthly starting in June 2017, to review the plan and its effectiveness. <i>March-19</i>: Questionnaire is with printer. Plaques - now suggest they have name of property and date built plus the PC website address - put all the details on the website so they can be updated easily. Have section dedicated to the heritage buildings. Hixon PC will be consulted in 3-4 years time by the Borough re future development plans. There is no intention to puncture the NP boundary. CIL information is being chased up. <i>April-19</i>: Blenheim Manor (BM) Questionnaires had gone out and waiting for a few more to come in. Analysis will be available for the next meeting. Plaques not done yet, gathering in the research on the properties for the website. <i>May-19</i>: Analysis still ongoing, lots of information back from one heritage property, waiting for information from 3 more (starting with 4 properties.) <i>June-19</i>: Green Man being added to list, others are: Yew Tree Farmhouse, Jubilee Cottage, High Cross, Scout Hut, Bath House, South View Cottage, Control Tower. Cost now approximately £25 per plaque - agreed. Suggestion that QR codes could be added to the plaque so person could be taken straight to the information on the website. BM questionnaires still being analysed, approx. 33% returned. <i>Sept-19</i>: Plaque design presented on screen. Questionnaire results need tidying up. Plaques ca. £25 each when on 1 or 2 purchased - agreed to purchase 2 at ca. £25 each.</p>	Cllr B McKeown
055/15	<p>IT and Using Cloud Storage on G-mail for PC documents: IT sub-committee formed. <i>Oct-18</i>: Group met 3rd Oct. Has drawn up document on functional for website. Advert for "Expressions of Interest" placed in Compass, contact local web developers for same, press release in local press. Ask Borough and county if they have IT web developers in-house that could help. Look at "Clerk and Councils Direct and local radio. Draft Timetable: <i>Feb-19</i>: Request made for names of interested companies to be distributed to IT Group members. <i>March-19</i>: Have 4 companies wanting face-to-face discussions, 2 wanting a conference call and 2 don't need anything. It is proposed to have a design contract and a service contract - companies may have their own. Should any contracts be passed by the Solicitor? <i>April-19</i>: Have met with 3 companies, all local. Arrange a short meeting to decide next actions and plan. <i>May-19</i>: Clerk to arrange conference calls with the remaining 3 or 4 companies. Update the functional specification, decide what to do about a contract. Meet after the calls finished, add Cllr. Carmichael to the group. <i>July-19</i>: Report from IT group looked, propose going out to tender with 6 companies and discussed strategy for going forward. <i>Sept-19</i>: Report discussed - agreed to approach Town and Parish Websites with regard to awarding contract. Proposed Cllr A Murdoch/seconded Chair. All in favour.</p>	Clerk /IT Group
097/07	<p>Allotments: <i>May-19</i>: Proposed compost heap - need to know how much it will cost, where it will go and more details of the scheme, how it will be constructed etc. WFAA representative present at meeting and will pass on the questions etc. <i>July-19</i>: Compost storage area plans look OK in general - check with SBC Planning as to whether Planning Permission is required. Check with insurer as to any implications. <i>Sept-19</i>: Following discussion, the position of the proposed new compost storage area is being moved in to the corner so it is tucked away. The risk assessment will be performed for the PC pro-bono.</p>	-
062/18	<p>Defibrillator maintenance: The operations manager at the Bank House has asked what to do about the defibrillator there as it is not working the alarm keeps going off. Clerk to contact EMAS (who own the defibrillators) to find out what servicing etc. is needed and who pays for it, if required. Who is responsible for arranging it? Also, if further basic first aid and defibrillator training sessions can be put on. <i>April-19</i>: No feedback yet from WMAS. Check if defibrillators are on the asset inspection list (yes they are). Check with Bank House and Central Fasteners that everything is OK with them prior to asset inspection. Follow up with WMAS. <i>May-19</i>: the defibrillators supplied to us by WMAS have a long guarantee (ca 7 years) and any faults will be dealt with by the manufacturer. Cllr. Mrs C Murdoch to find out if the Bank House are checking their machine is now working properly. <i>Sept-19</i>: The defibrillator at The Bank House is being looked after by Hixon Airfield Services.</p>	Cllr. Mrs C Murdoch
017/19	<p>Best Garden etc./Children's posters: Cllrs. Mrs C and A Murdoch offered to judge the gardens etc. again this year - think of any new categories that are wanted. <i>June-19</i>: Wildflower area? Best designed/themed garden? Think of more categories. Children's posters distributed. <i>July-19</i>: Poster prizegiving completed, went well. Garden judging: posters being prepared - will be front garden, hanging baskets and unusual garden features. <i>Sept-19</i>: Presentation will be Monday 7th  October at The Green Man dining room, 7pm for 7.30. Light buffet as normal. Cllr. Carmichael will prepare certificates and presentation. Cllrs. Murdoch to provide results and photos. Clerk will sent out invitations.</p>	Cllrs. / Clerk

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019/19	Purchase of strimmer for Millennium Green Trust: The Millennium Green Trust (MGT) have accepted this offer, Cllr. Hopcroft will liaise with the MGT as to type of strimmer required and proposed maximum spend of £200 - seconded Cllr. A Murdoch and agreed unanimously (the 3 MG Trustees did not take part in the vote, Cllrs. McKeown x2 and Carmichael). <i>July-19</i> : Cllr. Carmichael will look at PC strimmer and see if it is suitable for MG. <i>Sept-19</i> : Cllr. Hopcroft to purchase another strimmer the same for MGT.	Cllr. Hopcroft
037/19	Church Lane Bus Shelter: The original contractor has proposed a solution to the problem of the bus shelter leaning - Clerk to write to him and ask for a formal quote and specification for the work proposed. <i>June-19</i> : Verbal quote received - needs to be in writing along with specification of work. Should anyone else be asked to quote? Put names of any suggested contractors forward. <i>July-19</i> : Written quote received - it is for work assuming the posts are not rotten. Ask for a quote to include new posts and fitting them as well. Will need concrete put in underneath the posts in the holes (for existing or new posts). Bus route: contact D&G and SCC and ask if bus route can be amended so that the bus goes along Church Lane to the A51 and turns right through Pasturefields. <i>Sept-19</i> : Bus route won't be changing in near future. It was decided to sort out Church Lane bus shelter properly - take the roof off, take the 4 posts out. Ivy is affecting the roof. Cllr. Hopcroft proposed/Cllrs. Carmichael and Mrs C Finlayson seconded. All agreed.	Clerk
027/19	Sub-committee meeting frequency: meeting frequency decided as below:	
	Human Resources Group: twice yearly	
	IT Group: monthly or more if required	
	Community Engagement Group: Three times per year	
	Administration Group: Once in March	
	Communications: four times per year	
	Dogs: three times per year	
	Christmas: As required	
	Write terms of reference for new groups, arrange meetings. Use a standard agenda and minutes format for all of the sub-group meetings.	Councillors
041/19	Voluntary Transport Scheme: Include item in next Newsletter - people in need and volunteer drivers.	Chair
049/19	Uneven pavement/change in level of ground outside The Chop Shop: As yet, no-one seems to know who owns this land. McColls Area Manager in shop tomorrow (18th) morning, Cllr. Hopcroft will go and talk to him	Clerk
050/19	Situations regarding future of Green Man and Bank House Pubs: The sale is going through. Thistlewood Properties are buying and developing the site. Will then rent long term to Co-op. Bank House lease is for sale, want to sell it to a reliable, experienced couple. In good state now to move it on. Consider putting in an ACV on it - discuss with Cllr. Mrs C Murdoch and Joules.	-
039/13	Walk Leaflets: No update	
065/17	Welcome to Hixon signs: Re-establish the original sign on the "grassy knoll", in a brick or stone surround. Put planting around it if possible. Chair to get costs and take forward.	Chair
005/19	Chairman's announcements:	
	The 550 school bus that goes through Hixon is a safety risk to the children on board. Select Bus Company who run it are not responsive to criticism/comments. Lots of the children have to stand due to there being insufficient seats - this is a service bus as well as providing school transport.	
006/19	Councillor Questions	
	Items requested to be included on the next agenda: Agenda Layout/Order of business, Litter Picking, Christmas lights, Provision of maps for trees and grass mowing.	Clerk
	Have Wicksteed done their inspection yet? - No. Landowner next to Playing Field is cutting back overhanging trees so that his sheep can't get under them. The Playing Field hedge was cut today and the hedge next to the Old Vicarage needs taking out.	-
	What is the budget for the Garden Awards? - £150. Query on One-way system - proposed is No entry from the top. Residents can go up or down but cannot enter from High Street.	-
007/19	Date of next meeting: October 15th 2019.	Clerk to book Memorial Hall
008/19	County and Borough Councillors Reports:	None

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009/19	Planning Applications:	
	19/30896/FUL Removal of existing gas cylinder storage compound/cage and the installation of a 1200ltr Calor Gas storage tank with protective barriers. Bank House Inn High Street Hixon	Agree with Conservation Officer over need for planting to screen
	9/31025/FUL Enclosing a small porch to the main customer entrance to the site for added security Meadowfields Care Home Pasturefields Lane	No comments
010/19	Planning Reports	
	19/30565/FUL Babbage Building Hixon Industrial Estate Church Lane Hixon - Amended plan	Permitted
	19/30305/HOU Proposed first floor bedroom extension. Retrospective permission for a conservatory. 10 The Croft Hixon	Permitted
	19/30602/FUL Proposed industrial unit to replace the existing unit which was destroyed by fire. Unit 1 Hixon Airfield Industrial Estate Hixon	Permitted: stated likely use - light engineering and associated storage
	19/30348/HOU Construction of first floor accommodation over existing bungalow and ground floor extension, Almondbury Puddle Hill Hixon Stafford Staffordshire ST18 0NG	Permitted
011/19	Bank Reconciliation:	Done
012/19	Schedule of agreed payments	
	C Gill salary September (Net tax/NI). Local Gov act 1972 s111.	£801.07
	Reimbursement C Gill (costs: working from home) - September. Local Gov act 1972 s111	£59.50
	Reimbursement C Gill mileage (57 miles @ £0.45p/mile). Local Gov act 1972 s111	£25.20
	Reimbursement C Gill stamps 6x£1.06 = 6.36 (for website tender documents)	£6.36
	Reimbursement C Gill for wildflower seeds	£24.00
	drs for newsletters	£98.00
	Acer for July mowing	£1,240.06
	Acer for August mowing	£1,240.06
	Information Commissioner - Data Protection Annual fee	£40.00
	HMRC for income tax (£5.40) and NI payments (employer £13.72 and employee £11.93) September = £31.05	£31.05
Documents Received:	Documents Received: Stowe by Chartley newsletter	

Meeting ended 10.00 pm

HIXON PARISH COUNCIL  
REPORTS IN SUPPORT OF AGENDA  
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 17<sup>th</sup> 2019

### Assets Inspection

- The Clerk, together with Cllrs Carmichael; Finlayson; Hopcroft (Vice Chair) B. McKeown (Chair) and S. McKeown met on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September at 10.30am. The group viewed all Parish Council assets within the 30mph zone.

### Benches and Fences

- The Asset Inspection Group (AIG) agreed that all PC-owned benches (at Ridgeway and the Church Lane Playing Fields (picnic benches only) should be treated with appropriate preservative;
- AIG agreed that post and rail fencing at the Ridgeway open space should be treated with appropriate preservative;

### Trees

- Hammonds Croft: AIG agreed to raise the foliage/branches on the willow tree next to No. 7 Hammonds Croft to a height of 3m above ground level;
- Church Road: AIG agreed to plant new tree in centre are of open space next to ?? cottage;

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- Church Lane Playing Fields: AIG agreed to plant a publicly-accessible fruit tree orchard on the adjacent to Old Vicarage. Trees to be semi-mature not saplings;
- Orchard to be sown with wild flower seeds;
- Offer a free fruit trees via Jack Martin has fallen through;
- Tree Liability Report needs to be completed (locations of trees plotted on map);

### Footpaths

- No 1 (Hammonds Croft to St Peters) AIG agreed footpath should be cleared to a minimum width of 2m and overhanging branches to be cleared to a height of minimum 2m;
- All footpaths cutting through PC-owned open spaces (Ridgeway, Hammonds Croft, Meadow Glade) to be cut back to kerbs;

### Wildlife

- Cllr Mrs McKeown reported that Hixon Millennium Green Trust had created three hedgehog-friendly feeding stations on the Green at a cost of £10 each;
- AIG agreed to create other hedge-friendly feeding stations on HPC land;
- Agreed first three on Ridgeway open space as part of wild flower planting.

### New Wildflowers Areas

AIG agreed to create sweeps of wildflower areas at:

- Ridgeway open space (right hand side only when viewed from Ridgeway);
- Church Lane verge adjacent to playing fields hedge (on sloping areas only) and up to gateway;
- Grass mowing contract to be amended accordingly.

### 8 World War 1 Commemorative beds

- Chair informed AIG that a number of people had come forward with offers to 'adopt' one of the beds (Ridgeway: Mark & Mary Wibour) (Church Road: Rich Nicholls) (New Road: Jane and Charles Raby): (Hixon Millennium Green HMGT): (Sycamore Drive, 7<sup>th</sup> Stafford Scout Group)
- It was agreed to relocate the plaque at the Church lane flower bed to a new bed in Hammonds Croft where it can be more easily looked after.
- AIG agreed changing style of existing beds and new bed in Hammonds Croft to more formal (rather than wildflowers) and to plant winter pansies etc asap.

### Bus Shelters

- AIG agreed that Back Lane bus shelter brickwork should be painted (grey or green), Timber fascia needs treating.
- Church Lane bus shelter to be raised.

### Allotments

- AIG agreed that central access driveway needs to be maintained at 5m width and without clutter or trip hazards;
- AIG agreed that timber edgings should be inserted on left hand side of central access drive.

### New plant troughs and planting

- AIG agreed that areas around the mini island at Smithy Lane would benefit from the introduction of new flower beds and/or troughs.
- Troughs or beds under/alongside each of the road signs and on the blocked paved area by the HPC notice board.

### RECOMMENDATION OF ASSET INSPECTION GROUP

- That Hixon Parish Council puts together a list minor works and specifications to invite tenders for the above;
- That proposals for the Sycamore Drive open space (by Christmas tree) made by the former Community Involvement Working Group be brought forward and added to the list of minor works.
- That Hixon PC sets aside an appropriate budget and time frame for the above works;
- That Tree Liability Report is completed;
- That grass mowing contract is amended to allow for new wild flower areas;
- That Hixon Parish Council should reach out to increase community involvement to encourage more adoptions and general maintenance;

HIXON PARISH COUNCIL  
REPORT BY IT WORKING GROUP  
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 17th 2019

### Meeting

☑ The IT group (Clerk, plus Cllrs, Carmichael, B. McKeown, S. McKeown and A.

**Murdoch met at Ferrers in Puddle Hill on Wednesday 28th August**

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### Tenders

- ☒ Six tenders were sent out in late July;
- ☒ Four were received and were unopened at the commencement of the meeting;
- ☒ Tenders were received from Netwise; eSterling; Vision ICT and Yellow Circle.
- ☒ Kanuka Digital in Stafford had declined to tender;
- ☒ There was no response received from Town & Parish Council Websites;
- ☒ **However, on checking the following day, it transpired the tender documents sent to Town & Parish Council Websites had gone to an incorrect address. They were still keen to quote so it was retrospectively agree to re-send them the tender documents.**

### **Tender compliance with Functional Specification**

- ☒ All four tenders opened at the meeting showed that all tenderers were suitably qualified and capable of delivering a website in accordance with the Parish Council's functional specification;

### **Costs**

- ☒ Members of the IT group noted the wide variances in website design and build costs, but never-the-less looked at each tender on its merits, irrespective of cost;

#### Website design examples

- ☒ It became clear that the tenders fell into two distinct groups; those that offered an off-the-peg website design and those that offered bespoke designs;
- ☒ Looking at examples of the websites designed by the individual tenderers, the group concluded that the 'bespoke' type website were more appropriate for business to business and digital marketing type organisations, rather than local authorities like Hixon Parish Council;
- ☒ With this in mind, the IT Group opted to eliminate eSterling (Birmingham) and Yellow Circle (Cheadle) from further considerations;
- ☒ For the record, the quoted build costs for eSterling and Yellow Circle were £ 4,200 and £ 3,500 respectively.

#### Netwise (Merseyside)

- ☒ Has designed websites for over 100 parish councils;
- ☒ Uses Wordpress as Content Management System (CMS).
- ☒ **Wordpress is dominant platform in CMS;**
- ☒ Netwise provides a choice of three levels of website content;
- ☒ All website content options essentially use the same template, just added functions for different price ranges;
- ☒ Netwise 'drop in' individual parish council images into standard template;
- ☒ Template appears to have limited number of images available on home page;
- ☒ However, site is easy to navigate;
- ☒ Access to Google Earth to have virtual walk around parish;
- ☒ Small information panel showing current time/temperature.
- ☒ Negative might be that template does not allow 'customise' for Hixon PC;
- ☒ Otherwise, simple and basic package that provides all the information a parish council needs to do.
- ☒ **Three price ranges: £399, £499 and £599;**
- ☒ Plus choice of three annual maintenance packages priced at £100, £250 or £300.
- ☒ Three weeks turnaround.

#### Vision ICT Exeter Devon

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- ☒ Has designed websites for over 700 parish and town councils (including Colwich);
- ☒ “Most experienced parish council website design company in England, we know visitors to website need to find what they are looking for quickly.”
- ☒ Uses own design CMS (could be an issue in data transfer in the future?)
- ☒ Examples of parish and town council websites show similar layouts but with greater flexibility to individualise;
- ☒ Vision ICT sponsors NALC Clerk of the Year awards;
- ☒ Clearly a company that could design a website individual to Hixon PC. specification and requirements.
- ☒ Build cost £ 1,765;
- ☒ Annual maintenance cost £285;
- ☒ Can provide individual councillor email addresses at £18 per councillor per year;
- ☒ Three days turnaround??
- ☒ Need to check if costs include transfer of existing HPC website content to background of new website;

### Town and Parish Council Websites (Stroud Gloucestershire)

- ☒ Appears to meet HPC Functional Specification requirements;
- ☒ Uses Wordpress Content Management System;
- ☒ Seven fairly basic templates, offering choice of one to three images on home page;
- ☒ Easy to update and easy to navigate;
- ☒ Offers 5 days per week personal support;
- ☒ Build cost £399 (Standard) or £ 499 (Ultimate) Check difference;
- ☒ Cost to transfer existing website content to new website £299;
- ☒ Annual maintenance cost £300;
- ☒ Can provide individual councillor email addresses;
- ☒ 21 days turnaround after all content and images supplied.

### RECOMMENDATION TO HIXON PARISH COUNCIL

Appoint Town and Parish Council Websites, either Standard package at £399 or Ultimate £499 (subject to further discussion). Plus £299 for transfer of existing website content