

## DEOPHAM & HACKFORD PARISH COUNCIL

[www.deophamandhackfordpc.info](http://www.deophamandhackfordpc.info)

### Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 7.30pm at Gralix Hall

#### Cllrs present:

Jacky Phoenix – Chair (JP), Chris Chorley (CCh) – Vice Chair, Eliska Cheeseman (EC), Chris Coath (CC), Catherine Grand (CG),

#### Absent:

Martin Skidmore (MS), Cllr Josh Woolliscroft (JW)

#### Others present:

Jordana Wheeler (Clerk), Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (MD), Members of the public - 0.

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence
  - 1.1. Apologies were received and accepted from MS and JW.
  - 1.2. JP noted the recent death of Parish Councillor Chris Biggs following a short illness. Chris was a valued member of the Council, having been a Councillor since 2015, and will be greatly missed. Details of the funeral were shared.

A minute's silence was held in memory of Chris Biggs.
2. To receive any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda and consider any requests for dispensation
  - 2.1. JP noted an interest in item 11 as a current trustee of the charity. JP can partake in discussions as part of item 11.
3. To approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024
  - 3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 were received and read by Councillors prior to the meeting. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes.
4. To report on progress of matters arising from previous meetings
  - 4.1. The Clerk reported that the door from the noticeboard at the playing field has fallen off due to the wood being rotten. It is still useable for the time being if notices are laminated. The replacement of the noticeboard will be prioritised this year but will be dependant on timings of work in relation to the remaining actions for the play park project.
  - 4.2. A request has been received from a potential football team looking to hire the field and pavilion for matches next season.

**ACTION** – Clerk to arrange a meeting on site with representatives of the team to find out more about what they require.

Draft minutes until approved at the Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024

Chairman Signature:

Date:

5. Finance - To receive the bank reconciliation for May 2024 and to ratify or approve the following payments;

Payment 11.4 from the meeting on 1/5/2024 had not been able to be paid therefore a cheque was issued (see 5.1.5 below). The Clerk explained her expenses included the annual subscriptions for the website. Future payments of these will need to be reviewed upon the appointment of the new Clerk. The Council could consider the option of having a Council bank card for such expenses which require card details to be stored. This also applies to the subscription to Office 365. The Council considered the bank reconciliation, no queries were raised. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the payments.

	Payment Description – UNITY Trust Bank Current Account	Cheque Number	Amount
5.1.1	The Helping Hand Company – Litter Pick Equipment (Clean up & Bloom Grant)	BACS	£64.02
5.1.2	Clear Insurance Management Ltd – insurance 2024-25	BACS	£463.21
5.1.3	Sandra Lain – Internal Audit 2023-24	BACS	£80.00
5.1.4	Jordana Wheeler – Salary & Expenses (May 2024)	BACS	£181.19
5.1.5	Great Ellingham Parish Council – Donation for maintenance of war memorial	Cheque Issued 300001	£35.00

6. To consider matters in relation to the annual audit for financial year 2023-24
- 6.1. To consider the Internal Auditors report for the financial year ending 31 March 2024 and consider recommendations
- 6.1.1. There were 2 points to note in the Internal Audit report. The first is a government recommendation that all Councils adopt a .gov.uk website address. The Clerk was aware of this recommendation and suggested this should be investigated as to any potential costs involved prior to the next budget.  
**ACTION** – The Council agreed to research the options for adopting a .gov.uk website address.
- 6.1.2. The second note related to an incorrect entry for VAT on the expenditure spreadsheet. The Clerk noted that the entry on the spreadsheet is correct in relation to the specific payment (as seen on the bank statement) and original invoice but that a later credit note was issued changing the VAT. The correct VAT was reclaimed. The Council were happy with the explanation.
- 6.2. To agree the accounts and budget comparison for the financial year ending 31 March 2024
- 6.2.1. The Clerk summarised key points. The total income was £24,582 and the total expenditure was £34,309. This means that the Council cannot declare itself exempt from external audit.
- 6.2.2. Overall, the Council went over budget, spending £214 more than the precept of £9640.00. Reasons for this; annual payrise was bigger than expected, office costs increased due to additional bank fees and petrol, hall hire was greater due to paying some backdated hire charges at the previous higher cost and the play area inspection costs increased.
- 6.2.3. A large amount of the reserves was spent, mainly on the play park project. The closing balance for the year was £5638. A breakdown of reserves was provided. There was a small decrease in the general reserves to £4352. The Council had no

further questions and **RESOLVED** to approve the accounts and budget comparison for 2023-24.

- 6.3. To consider the assertions on, and complete, the Annual Governance Statement 2023-24 and authorize the Clerk and Chairman to sign
  - 6.3.1. The Council considered the Annual Governance Statement and suggested answers. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24. The Clerk and Chairman signed the form.
- 6.4. To consider and approve the Accounting Statements 2023-24 and to authorize the Chairman to sign
  - 6.4.1. The Clerk summarised the Accounting statement and noted why the figures are different to the budget comparison considered in item 6.2, noting the requirement to record figures under different groupings for the Accounting Statement. The Clerk noted the new assets gained this year through the installation of the new play equipment, leading to an increase in the total value of assets. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Accounting Statement for 2023-24. The Chairman signed the form.
  - 6.4.2. JP thanked the Clerk for her hard work on the audit, noting it was appreciated.
7. To consider a request for additional funding from St. Andrews Church, Deopham, and St. Mary's Church, Hackford
  - 7.1. JP read out the letter received which noted a recent change in legislation allowing Councils to fund churches. The churchwardens were requesting an increase in the donation the Council makes towards the maintenance of the two churchyards, noting the current annual donation had not kept up with recent inflation rises. The Clerk clarified the new legislation, noting it continued to be optional for Parish Councils to give funds to the church and was not under any obligation to do so. The Council must continue to demonstrate that it is spending public money effectively and for the benefit of the parish. The Clerk had requested evidence, such as invoices, of maintenance costs for the past financial year but it was not possible to obtain these.  
**ACTION** – Request evidence for maintenance costs for the next 2-3 months. The Council will then reconsider the request before setting the next budget.
8. To consider a proposal regarding fencing at the playing field
  - 8.1. JP noted there has been an increase in visitors to the playing field since the installation of the new play equipment but that this was leading to potential safety concerns with more people parking on the side of the road. The road is a main route for many local farmers and their farm machinery. JP proposed the installation of temporary fencing from the current gate posts to the corner of the play area fence, widening the current entrance in line with the approved planning permission and relocating the access gate for the field further into the field in line with the play area. This will create a small parking area on the grass on the right of the field, which currently has hard-standing under the grass. This will allow for safe parking off the road during the summer months until the funds have been raised to complete the rest of the planned car park at the north end of the field. The work would be carried out by the contractor already selected to do the fencing for the car park as part of the ongoing project. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed temporary fencing. This will be funded from the Replacement Play Equipment Reserve.

9. To receive an update on the new play area and agree to submit a grant application to the Community Action Fund
  - 9.1. The Council is eligible to reapply to the Community Action Fund, the closing date is the end of June and the maximum amount that can be applied for is £15,000. JW, the district councillor, is in support of the application and will submit it on behalf of the Council. The Council considered which of the remaining elements of the project to include in the application. The Council **RESOLVED** to submit a grant application for funding for two sets of swings, a mound slide and 2 benches. The original mound slide selected is no longer available, therefore quotes for an alternative provider will be sourced before submission of the application.
  
10. To consider the storage and future use of the litter pick equipment
  - 10.1. Options for storage were considered. A Councillor will store the equipment temporarily until long term storage can be confirmed. Once long-term storage is agreed the Council will consider appropriate arrangements for the lending out of the equipment for use by residents.
  
11. To consider appointing a new trustee to the charities of The Deopham Charity of the Reverend Henry Rix and The Poor's Allotment Charity
  - 11.1. The Clerk explained it was the Council's responsibility to appoint trustees to each charity but that the Council had no further involvement with either charity. Glenys Brown had expressed an interest in supporting the charities. The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Glenys Brown as a trustee to The Deopham Charity of the Reverend Henry Rix and The Poor's Allotment Charity for a period of 4 years.
  
12. To consider a response to the following planning applications:
  - 12.1. Application 2024/1369 – Two storey rear extension and alterations (Amended Scheme to Planning Permission 2021/2195), Boundary Farm, Hardingham Road, Hackford
    - 12.1.1. The Council considered application 2024/1369 and had no comments or objections.
  - 12.2. Application 2024/1474 – First floor extension and conversion of ground floor garage, Loke House, Church Lane, Hackford
    - 12.2.1. The Council **RESOLVED** to submit comments on the house being on an area of low-lying land and requiring appropriate drainage, and to note its planning policy on reducing external lighting.
  
13. Correspondance
  - 13.1. Hingham Neighbourhood Plan – Statutory Consultation – Details are available on the Council's website.
  - 13.2. South Norfolk Community Award – Details of how to nominate people for the awards are available on the Council's website.
  - 13.3. Complaint from resident regarding highways repairs – Repairs to the bank on the bend of Morley Road are not sufficient and have already started to wear away, leaving a resident's fence at risk from falling if hit by a car.  
**ACTION** – Clerk to contact the Highways Team and request a visit to site to discuss further repairs.

14. Opportunity for public participation

- 14.1. MD reported a resident from Hackford had contacted her regarding a terrible smell around Kings Head Lane. Badgers are living in the area and killing local wildlife. The resident is concerned about the spread of diseases and loss of animals. It was noted that badgers are protected. JP will liaise with the resident to allay any concerns.
- 14.2. Pye Lane has been flooded again following the recent continued wet weather. The Highways team have said that maintenance work has been scheduled but it is not known what work will be carried out or when. An additional flood warning sign has been temporarily put up.
- 14.3. MD shared details of a company providing sewerage treatment works which can earn credits towards the Nutrient Neutrality planning scheme aimed at reducing water pollution.
- 14.4. It was noted that there has been an increase in fly tipping with large lumps of concrete being dumped on verges and in ditches, sometimes in empty compost bags, around the parish and other surrounding villages. If this is dumped on private land the landowner is responsible for removing it. Residents are encouraged to report any sightings of fly tipping via the Norfolk County Council website.

15. To confirm the date of the next meeting

- 15.1. The next Council meeting will take place at Gralix Hall on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024. The press and public are welcome to attend. Please note there is no meeting scheduled for August.
- 15.2. JP officially thanked the Clerk for all her hard work and for steering the Council in a professional manner. This has allowed the Council to get up to date in its practices and move forward as a Council. The Clerk's final meeting will be in July.

The public meeting closed at 8.50pm.

16. To pass a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude members of the press and public for the following confidential items:

- 16.1. To receive an update on recruitment for the new Parish Clerk
- 16.1.1. The closing date has passed. The recruitment panel has shortlisted the applicants who will be invited to interview w/b 17<sup>th</sup> June.

The confidential meeting closed at 9.00pm.