

**MINUTES OF HINXWORTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 6th APRIL 2017 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 8PM**

Present: Mr R. Cobb (Incoming Chairman)
Mr R. Lewis (Incoming Vice- Chairman)
Mr D. Osmond
Mr E. Sore
Mr N. Tiffin
Mrs W. Kitchener (Clerk)

Other Persons Present: County Councillor Tony Hunter
13 members of the public

Apologies: District Councillor Janine Paterson

1. The Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2017-2018: The Clerk facilitated this item. For the Chair Richard Cobb was nominated by David Osmond, seconded by Eric Sore. For the Vice-Chair Russell Lewis was nominated by Richard Cobb, seconded by Nicholas Tiffin. The Parish Councillors present agreed unanimously. The incoming Chairman Richard Cobb welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

2. The Minutes of the last Meeting: The minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday April 7nd 2016 were circulated. David Osmond proposed and Nicholas Tiffin seconded that the minutes were an accurate account and they were accepted unanimously.

3. Matters arising from the minutes: No Matters arising

4. Chairman's Report: The outgoing Chairman Russell Lewis gave his report for the benefit of the attendees. See copy attached.

5. Matters Arising from the Chairman's Report: It was reported there is wood deposited on the Recreation Ground area where the annual bonfire had been held in the past. The Councillors agreed this should be cleared away as the annual bonfire no longer takes place.

6. County Councillor Tony Hunter's Report:

- **Herts County Council**

Tony reported it has been yet again another a challenging year. Cost cutting and re-organisation continues. Savings of approx. £250 million have been made over the past seven years along with the additional staff cuts of 25%. Funding to vital services, child care and schools have had their funding secured including 3% ring fenced funds for social care. £3 million for extra road work projects. Funds are secured of £300 million for the elderly and vulnerable, £200 million for children's services, £100 million for ongoing upkeep of the roads. Salting and Gritting has continued to be successful with additional routes added. County has now to "look outside the box" for the way it manages its' funding and try to obtain additional revenue by various means. As Government funding can no longer be guaranteed this could be achieved by setting up "stand alone" companies outside of County. The Bus subsidy is £2.5million per year. The service providers are only interested in those that make money therefore some rural routes could become vulnerable.

- **Locality Budget**

Tony reminded everyone there is a current annual sum of £10K for projects/items within the area for small projects.

Tony then asked for questions from the floor:

What are the revenue and income ideas?- Firstly a feasibility study on any project has to be made. At present County is looking at Social Housing. With the reduction in Government funding, and with County holding a bank of land, instead of selling it as a one off to developers County could develop the land for Social Housing for rental to produce a revenue stream.

The Growth in Traffic. Due to the ongoing housing development in Biggleswade and likelihood of the expansion of Baldock the impact is being felt in the Village as it is being used as a “rat-run” for vehicles to get to the A505. Tony agreed that the road infrastructure needs to be improved. At present it appears there is a conflict at County how to improve its’ infrastructure. If speeding is a problem in the Village Tony an additional speed sign could be installed at the Ashwell end of the Village. This would be a solar induction device costing £5.5K. Tony will speak with Gary Henning.

Hinxworth Ashwell Road Potholes: Could this area, where there are number of large potholes, be surveyed and the pothole “patched”. Tony will speak with Gary Henning of Hertfordshire Highways for him to action. Any damage to cars can be reported to Hertfordshire Highways via their web-site.

The Chairman then thanked Tony for his report.

Additional Hertfordshire County Council Information forwarded to the Clerk by Tony after the AGM:-

Highways

Servicing and maintaining our 3000 miles of roads and pavements including street lights is a priority. The LED lighting programme continues this year and sympathetic heritage lighting in the villages is scheduled for this year. This will be a cost effective improvement, reducing maintenance and giving increased control.

Council Tax

The budget this year has required a small increase over last year due to the current pressures and Government changes. 3% being ring fenced for social care.

7. The District Councillor Janine Paterson’s Report:

The following email report was read out by Tony Hunter, in his capacity as a District Councillor, and at the request of Janine Paterson.

Apologies again for not being able to make the meeting tonight.

The main issue still is the Local Plan. It comes before full Council next Tuesday 11th for us to vote on sending it and all the representations received to the Secretary of State for him to appoint a Planning Inspector to hold an enquiry into whether the Plan is "sound". The inspector will look at whether we have met our duty to co-operate; so whether we have consulted with neighbouring areas and included any unmet need they have. In our case this is Luton. The Inspector will also look at the policies and the site allocation. The Inspector has the power to make modifications to the plan, which will be subject to consultation with the residents. If the vote is to send it to the Inspector on the 11th, the enquiry is likely to begin in the Autumn.

I have asked Tony to answer any specific questions on my behalf. As a District Councillor as well as a County Councillor, he should be able to help with district wide issues. If there are any specific to Hinxworth that he is unable to answer, please let me know after the meeting and I will look into them. Similarly if there are any issues/ideas that the Parish Council or the villagers want me to look into in the coming year, please let me know.

Tony added that all the arguments for and against the Local Plan had and will continue to be argued out at the NHDC Planning Committee. He had argued against the Plan but it appears it has a long way to run at this point.

8. The Adoption of the Accounts: The Clerk as Financial Officer responsible gave a brief outline of the audited accounts for the year ended March 2016. Again there had been no increase to the precept. The EIF Grant from NHDC applied for on an annual basis has now been withdrawn. It appears there are funds still available for one-off projects. The proposal to adopt the accounts was made by Russell Lewis and seconded by Eric Sore.

9. Planning: Nothing to report.

10. Highways: Another “Walk the Village” initiative will be beneficial. All other information is recorded in item 6and in the attached report.

11. The Village Hall: The incoming Chairman again thanked the Village Hall Management Committee for their continuing enthusiasm. Also see the attached report.

12. The Recreation Ground: Plans are in place to steam clean the children's play area. Likewise further dog fouling signs will be placed in the Village. Also see the attached report.

13. Allotments: Hilary Perricone has taken over from Jan Woodward as Chairman. To date there are seven vacant plots but two further plots are likely to be let in the near future. Hilary has asked if the Parish Council could fund a mower or cutter to cut the grass around the allotments. Richard Cobb and Russell Lewis are to meet with her to discuss further. Also see the attached report.

14. Any other Business:

Locality Budget: Tony Hunter again reminded everyone of the availability of these funds for local projects. Tony also thanked the Parish Council for their continuing endeavours and wished them well for the future.

Wireless Broadband Leaflets: Patrick Forbes reminded everyone of the leaflets available placed in the foyer of the Village Hall.

The Chairman then brought proceedings to a close. He thanked everyone for attending. The meeting then closed at 9.00 p.m.