

**MINUTES OF HINXWORTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 5th APRIL 2018 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 8PM**

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

Other Persons Present: County Councillor Steve Jarvis
District Councillor Janine Paterson
10 Members of the public.

1. The Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2018-2019: The Clerk facilitated this item. For the Chair Richard Cobb to remain as was nominated by Russel Lewis, seconded by Nicholas Tiffin. For the Vice-Chair Russell Lewis to remain was nominated by Eric Sore, seconded by Nicholas Tiffin. The Parish Councillors present agreed unanimously. The 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 6th 2017 were circulated. Gary Johnson proposed and Patrick Forbes 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 Chairman Richard Cobb gave his report for the benefit of the attendees. See copy attached includes for further details as per the items below.

5. Matters Arising from the Chairman's Report: No Matter arising.

6. County Councillor Steve Jarvis's Report:

- **Herts County Council**

HCC continue to allocate their resources prudently. Their main priority is the care of the old and vulnerable along with Children's services. The budget for this is £500 million. Unfortunately these are "unseen services" with costs increasing annually. HCC continues to try to improve services cost efficiently in all areas without compromising service.

- **Highways**

Potholes are continue to be high on the HCC agenda. The annual Highways budget is £100 million. To enable potholes to be repaired efficiently, within the financial constraints, additional more practical ways of working are in place with more long term maintenance. More potholes were notified to HCC this past winter 1K in December and 3K in February.

Most are now reported by the public. Steve is trying to get HCC to look at a trial that has taken place in other parts of the Country, for residents to be given the materials to mend their potholes locally.

Road surfacing works are planned for the Hinxworth area in the next financial year 2019/2020 for the High Street, Francis Road and New Inn Road.

In respect of the drain clearing HCC, instead of continuing their rolling programme, have initiated a plan to check what and where drains are sited that need clearing on a regular basis, therefore eliminating those drains that never or rarely need clearing.

It is intended, in this new financial year, for a "Smiley Face" speed sign to be installed at between the junction of New Inn Road and the Church. 50% funded by HCC- 50% by Hinxwoth Parish Council.

- **Questions from the floor:**

What is HCC doing to prevent the flooding within the area?: Steve reported this has been a particular problem this winter. Many ditches are kept clear by the local farmers in the Hinxworth area. The places where there the floods have occurred are usually where the ditches are higher than the road. Apart from one or two areas where the level of rainfall is such it takes longer to drain away.

The Chairman then thanked Steve for his report.

7. The District Councillor Janine Paterson's Report:

- **Update on the Local Plan.**

The Local Plan is still on going and is a priority at NHDC. Last Tuesday, after the two month extension for further comments to be received by NHDC, it was agreed the plan required further modification, with possible major changes, after which the plan will go out again for further consultation. Ultimately it should then be forwarded to the Inspector.

- **Questions from the floor:**

What work to A1 has it been include in the Consultation.? The A1 is not implicated in the Plan but it is planned for the Stevenage/Welwyn A1 (M) to have an additional lane.

With 2800 additional houses planned how will this impact on Baldock? It is planned that an additional bypass will be built to the east of Baldock.

The Chairman expressed his concern that generally it appears that there is to be 2800 additional built houses in Baldock, but with the Central Beds plan with approximately 2500 additional houses being built in the Biggleswade/ Potten areas nearby this could well be overload to the existing infrastructure.

The Chairman then thanked Janine for her report.

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 2017. Again there had been no increase to the precept. The largest expenditure was on the repairs to the War Memorial. The proposal to adopt the accounts was made by Geoff Burrows and seconded by Patrick Forbes.

9. Planning: Nothing to report.

10. Highways: Another "Walk the Village" initiative had taken place during the year and had been beneficial. All other information is recorded in item 6.

11. The Village Hall: The incoming Chairman again thanked the Village Hall Management Committee for their continuing work and he was pleased to see the refitting of the kitchen is underway.

12. The Recreation Ground: Plans are in place for the annual steam clean of the children's play area. The Basket Ball net had been highlighted as a safety issue in the Annual Play Inspection Report and therefore been removed.

13. Allotments: Hilary Perricone and the allotment team continue to enthusiastically tend their allotments. To date there are six vacant plots.

14. Any other Business:

Village Hall access road is in need of repair. The Chairman agreed, along with the other Parish Councillors to review the work that is required.

The Hinxworth Village Website: This is now up and running. Thanks Joe Perricone and Russell Lewis for their work on the project.

Flooding: It is hoped this will be a top priority for HCC to follow-up.

The Redundant Telephone Box in the High Street: There was/is a sticker on the box that box is due to be removed. This has yet to take place.

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

Chairman's Report 2017-2018.

I'd like to welcome everyone to this 2018 A G Meeting of the Hinxworth Parish Council.

Firstly I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillor's for their hard work and enthusiasm over the last 12 months. We are a mixture of characters, but we all have the same goal in mind to try to protect this small village and its' environment.

And also to encourage and support the many volunteers who do so much for this Community.

As I go through this report I will pick out some of these people who make our Village so special.

Also a big thank you to our Clerk Wendy who's support and guidance in my first year as Chairman has been most welcome, her experience gained though many years of service, is always useful.

I would also like to thank Steve Jarvis our Herts County Councillor since winning the election last year, he attended nearly all of our Monthly Parish Council meeting. He must be bored stiff but we are very gratefully of his support.

The Parish Council Finances.

The Precept.

For the 13th Year in a row the Parish Council has managed not to increase the Precept. Given the rises we have all felt though our Council Taxes as a whole this year, this must be welcome.

As pointed out last year, grants are disappearing or not increasing, so a careful grip on our cash flow has given us a good balance sheet. For the year end.

Highways.

The ongoing battle with our Highways Dept and their Main Contractor Ringway continues as last year. We have had some success with Potholes. After reporting 12 plus pot holes and taking and uploading pictures using the Highways Website with little success.

By using the Website Fix My Road Russ Lewis has had more success.

We has had another Village Walk with Ringway this year along with Steve Jarvis and we have had some help with Cutting back Hedge Rows along The New Inn Road, and into the Village. Also we have had more regular Gully and Drain Cleaning which has helped.

Also by talking to a Local Farmer we have got the Hedgerow cut back at the Ashwell Bend on Cuckoo Corner.

As with the rest of the UK potholes and road maintenance is moving up the Political Agenda.

Speeding though the Village is a very sore point, with the rising amount of Traffic, due in part to the large development of Biggleswade and the surrounding area.

We have put aside £2,500 for this year as our 50% shared cost with Highways to install a Solar powered Speed Sign like Ashwell Village. The Plan is to erect this in the High Street between New Inn Road and the Church facing in-coming traffic from Ashwell.

The Village Litter Picking will run again this year on the 14th April .

Many thanks to Claire Hay for the organisation of this great effort, hopefully we will have another big turn- out of volunteers to clear the roads leading into Hinxworth.

Recreation Ground.

We have continued to maintain the Recreation Ground, This year we have had the hedges cut back and the grass cut usual.

The Children's Play Area passed its' Safety Inspection, we will pressure wash it as before in the Spring by ourselves.

The Tennis Court Surfaces is showing signs of age now, in the coming couple of years a decision will have to be taken to its' future given its' low use, and possible high cost of future repair.

Dog Fouling signs have been put in place on the Rec and they are having a positive effect so far.

The Hinxworth Archery Club have signed the Annual Agreement for the use of the Recreation Ground for 2018/19.

A big well done to them for another very successful year.

And the Caravan Club will be using the Recreation Ground again. On the 14th to the 16th September.

Which brings in welcome funds to the PC.

Allotments.

The enthusiasm of the Allotmenters is continuing this year. The PC helped with hedge cutting around the perimeter and help with a new lawn mower along with a Community Grant from Steve Jarvis .

I would like to thank Hillary Perriconi for her work and energy she is constantly filling empty plots with new people. We have 6 vacant plots at this time.

War Memorial.

No further work has had to be done since the refurbishment last year. We have had the clock serviced this Year.

We have started a fund which will be “ring fenced” for the War Memorial. Any Local people who wish to leave money in their wills or give a contribution to this fund can rest assured that the money will only be spent on the Memorial. We have already a donation of £250 from a Villager.

A very big thank you to Gordon Hayden who continues to wind the War Memorial clock up for us - 40 years service an amazing feat.

At this point I would like to thank Karen Mills and the Hinxworth Young Peoples Club, for the fantastic large Poppies they made and erected around the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday. It great to see the Young people of the Village getting involved, and getting an understanding of the sacrifice made by local people in the two world wars.

Community Access Defibrillator.

I am pleased to say it has not been used in anger so far, we had the training for it in the Village Hall which was well attended & received.

A refresher course funded by the PC for the coming year will be arranged.

Dog Fouling.

Continues to be a topic, but I feel the situation has improved around the village. With the large expansion of Biggleswade and other developments, no doubt more people will want to come out to walk the Village. Not a negative as this does bring trade to our local pub, which is dog friendly.

Village Hall.

The Village Hall Management Committee have had a great year. With fund raising events like the very successful Race Night and a very generous donation by a local household they raised over £6,000.

They have invested this in a new kitchen project, which is a great credit to them.

The Parish Council will purchase new kitchen flooring as our part of the Project.

A big thank you to the Chairman Barry Huber and his hard working members of this committee, and other villagers who have given their time to make this kitchen project a reality.

Planning

No major planning issues this year. The ongoing development of the land adjacent to Cotlebury is being monitored by NHDC and ourselves in the usual way.

Hinxworth Parish Council Website.

I am pleased to say our Website is up and running, hinxworth-pc.org.uk . All our minutes on there, including the AGM and signed off Financials.

This will make us compliant with The Transparency Code for a Parish Council with a turnover of less than £25,000 pa.

I would like to thank Joe Perriconi for his work and help putting this together with Parish Councillor Russ Lewis.

A thank you to Janet Fair for running the Hinxworth Christmas Card Scheme for many years , and thanks to Rachel Giles for taking over.

Finally a very big thank you to our very own Patrick Forbes. Celebrating 50 years as a Priest recently and being the editor and reporter and dogs body for the Village Voice Newsletter over 200 monthly editions, simply an amazing lovely man.

Thank you for your attendance.

Richard Cobb.