

Hessett Parish Council

MINUTES

of the annual meeting held at Hessett & Beyton Village Hall, Hessett on

Monday 8th July 2019 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Michael Poulter (Chair), Graham Bauly, Andrew Pearson, Stuart Turvill and Debbie Willis.

In attendance: Maximilian Clay (Clerk to the Council),

18. Apologies

Councillors Simon Elsworth and Lynn Heymoz tendered apologies which were approved by the meeting.

19. Declarations of Interest

- a. There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests declared.
- b. There were no Other Disclosable Interests declared.

20. Minutes

The minutes of the annual meeting of the Parish Council held on 20th May 2019 were agreed to be a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them as such.

21. County & District Councillor Report

County and District Cllr Penny Otton had submitted a written report which was received by the meeting.

22. County Council Policy on Bus Subsidies affecting Hessett

The Council noted that the proposed cuts would lead to the ending of bus services in Hessett. In discussion a number of points were raised:

- ◆ Some residents rely on the early morning bus service to get to their work;
- ◆ The services on market days are especially well used;
- ◆ The residents most likely to be affected by this change are likely to be the least able to find or afford alternatives;
- ◆ Removing public transport services from a rural village such as Hessett flies in the face of the County Council's recent commitments concerning sustainability.

It was agreed that the change should be energetically resisted and that the Clerk would draft a letter on behalf of the Council and that other local councils affected by the proposals could consider using or signing and would also compose a petition header, directed to the County Council, that could be taken door to door by any councillors who wish. C Cllr Otton would send the Clerk a form of words that had been used elsewhere, as a starting point.

23. Highways Matters

The Council reviewed progress by the County Council on their promise to start dealing with Highways problems in an effective and efficient way.

The meeting was in agreement that, in general, matters were still unsatisfactory. A councillor reported that, in conversation with the driver of a crew lorry that had come to the village to repair a pothole, he had discovered that the crew had come from Milton Keynes specifically to attend to the hole and would then be travelling out of the County to another job. This provoked discussion about efficiency and cost and it was felt that either the profit margin of the contractor was too large or that the contract was not being managed effectively.

It was also noted that whilst it had been announced by the County that works would be carried out in a more efficient way (for example by attending to other works in the immediate vicinity of a reported pothole that was being repaired, even if the other works were not scheduled for repair on that day) in fact there seemed to be little change. The Clerk would write to Mary Evans (portfolio holder) and Mark Ashe (new director of Highways) to express the Council's concerns. The Clerk will also place a small advertisement in the Parish Magazine with an URL to the Highways problem-reporting page.

24. Public Forum

No issues were raised.

25. Clerk's Report & Administrative Business

a. Decisions under Delegated Authority - There were no decisions to report.

b. Correspondence - The Clerk reported the following correspondence from:

- ◆ Highways England - concerning night-time closures to A14 and diversions via the A143 and the A140 for about 5 weeks from Monday 15th July.
- ◆ The Information Commissioner's office - requiring the Council to re-register under new data regulations. The introduction of the European GDPR in May 2018 abolished the need for this and for the associated fee. Unfortunately further UK legislation was introduced to make registration mandatory again. The Council approved the £40 registration fee.
- ◆ Historic England - informing us that they intend to register the village War Memorial as being of special architectural merit or significance. There is no consultation and the outcome is likely to be that the memorial will become Grade II listed.

c. Progress on other matters - The Clerk reported as follows:

- ◆ Highways 'Self Help Scheme' - the Clerk had followed up on the Scheme and been told that works that involve being in the road are not covered and that therefore the painting of the railings would fall outside the scheme.
- ◆ Land ownership - The two small areas of green at the Heath Road end of Heath Close and at the south eastern end of the Close are both owned by Mid Suffolk District Council and they therefore have responsibility for any necessary tree works.
- ◆ Tree Survey - Haydens of Fornham will be submitting a quotation for undertaking a survey of the trees in the Parish Council' ownership in advance of conducting the Survey, assuming that the quotation is satisfactory.
- ◆ Defibrillator - the British Heart Foundation scheme has required much form-filling and they want an unlocked box which, given the experience of other villages, makes for a higher likelihood of vandalism. As there is a total of £2,350 to hand for the project, against a likely total cost of between £2,000 and £2,500 it was agreed to move ahead with the project without the BHF and without delay.
- ◆ Handyman Services Advertisement - Unfortunately the advertising deadline passed not long after the last meeting and so it was missed. The ad will be placed to appear in September.
- ◆ Drinkstone Road Footpath - There had been some complaints and feedback about this. The County cuts it twice a year and The Council have it strimmed twice a year to help keep it clear. However, ultimate responsibility lies with the land owners - of the land on which the path is situated and of the adjacent hedges. The responsibility for enforcement is the County Council's but in terms of hedges the land owner can not do anything until after the bird nesting season.
- ◆ Play Rota - A new rota was made available for subscription by volunteers and councillors were invited to sign up to two consecutive months.

- ◆ Extra Work Time - The Clerk reminded the Council that it had agreed two amounts of extra working time for the current administrative year - one amount of time for archiving records that will eventually go to the County Records Office and for catching up on anything in the back-log and the other chunk of time as contingency. He reported that the first part of the administrative year is very busy with all the annual return and annual finance and policy reviews etc and so he hadn't used any any of the extra time yet and, unless something very unexpected were to happen in relation to planning matters he would not do so over the Summer period. However, he plans to do all the archiving and catch up work in the Autumn with the aim of having both the inherited backlog and anything that has accrued since he was appointed cleared by the end of the year.

26. Planning & Environment

- a. **New Planning Application Consultations** - There were no new consultations to consider.
- b. **Updates on Planning Applications Considered Previously** - There were no updates available.
- c. **Five Bells Inn** - It was agreed that Cllr Turvill would approach the owners to ask them to clear the ditch.
- d. **Grass Cutting Contract** - The performance of the Contract since the beginning of the administrative year (1st April 2019) was reviewed by the Council. It was felt that the quality was not up to the standards of the previous contractor and the Clerk would discuss this with the contractor.

27. Marking the 75th Anniversary of the end of WWII in May 2020

The Council discussed whether a village event would be desirable. Not much enthusiasm had been found amongst residents but it was felt that, as consciousness of the anniversary grew, this may change. In noting that the early May bank holiday has been moved to Friday 8th May specifically to mark the event, it was resolved to discuss the matter again in November 2019.

28. Telephone Kiosk

The council discussed potential future uses of the Telephone Kiosk by the Green. It was noted that the electricity supply had been cut off at the time that BT handed it over to the Council and that it would be difficult to re-connect. It was also noted that some remedial works were needed.

It was resolved to use the Kiosk for a book exchange and that Cllr Willis would take responsibility for this. It was also resolved to allocate up to £100 for fitting it out with shelving.

29. Governance

To review the Council's key Governing documents:

- a. **Financial Regulations** - The Council reviewed and approved the Regulations, without change.
- b. **Standing Orders** - The Council reviewed and approved the Orders, without change.
- c. **Appointment of Internal Auditor** - The Council resolved to appoint Christine Fitzgerald for the year ending 31st March 2020 and to get SALC to undertake the audit every five years.
- d. **Strategic Planning** - The Council had an initial discussion about strategic guidelines and objectives for the new current council term (2019 to 2023). Several ideas for further discussion emerged including community building (including some form of annual event) and to improve communication, especially in relation to letting people know what we do. A fuller discussion will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

30. Responsible Finance Officer's Business

- a. The schedule of receipts and payments was received and the payments were approved.

31. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

Several items were reported: Cllr Pearson had cleaned the benches on the Heath; bin collections will be moving to Fridays and four Councillors had attended training provided by SALC in June and it was reported that this had been useful and well presented.

The meeting closed at 9.pm

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chair

Date