

# Hessett Parish Council

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## MINUTES

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

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021 at 7.30pm**

Social distancing and other Covid-19 mitigation measures were in place.

**Present:** Councillors: Michael Poulter (Chair), Katie Mitcham, Andrew Pearson, Stuart Turvill and Debbie Willis.

**In attendance:** Maximilian Clay (Clerk to the Council),  
County Councillor Otton (part) and eight members of the public.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everyone for co-operating with Covid-19 protection measures.

### 11. Apologies

All Members were present.

### 12. Declarations of Interest

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

### 13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were agreed to be a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them as such.

### 14. County & District Councillor Report

County and District Cllr Penny Otton had submitted a written report and this was received. In addition she reported A meeting had been held on site by the small call park near The Green to discuss the possibility of extending the parking into the waste space to the east - the District Council officer in attendance will respond in due course.

C Cllr Otton also reported that permission had been given for volunteers to undertake work to the street-side railings in Drinkstone and guidelines had been issued. This means that a different response would now be likely to any request from volunteers in Hessett to do the same.

C Cllr Otton agreed to follow up on the request for sight of the report concerning flooding on and around Hubbards Lane as this had been requested from the County surface flooding team but had not yet been received.

The Chair raised the problem of changes to the information about future road works and closures as the policy had been changed to refer to roads by register numbers which made the reports unintelligible to those outside Highways. C Cllr Otton reported that this had been caused by a glitch related to data control but that she believed that the previous style of warning, which included the actual road number, would be resumed soon.

Cllr Pearson raised a question about School Transport, including concerns about the way in which the contract has been awarded, which C Cllr Otton will investigate and report back on.

### 15. Public Forum

The Chair opened the item and invited members of the public who wished to speak to indicate this. Three members of the public wished to contribute.

A member of the public spoke to say that he had been on the Council some years ago but that he had resigned because he had felt that there were too many barriers for action and because he felt that there was a lack of leadership in encouraging new ways to capture the views of residents

- although he had been pleased to see that that the Council had recently started a consultation on several matters and would like to see more of this. He felt that a number of projects had been static for too long and would like to see more progress - he cited matters such as the fencing around the play area, the installation of a defibrillator, work on one of the village signs and street furniture and notices to residents with riparian responsibilities to clear ditches. He would also like to see improved road speed deterrence, clear identification of responsibility for path cutting and greater use of the Green for community events. In concluding he asked three questions: Would the council consider creating and publishing a development plan; would the Council consider embracing greater feedback and input from villagers and would the Council consider reviewing the current year budget, particularly in relation to staff costs. He handed in a letter from another resident.

A member of the public spoke to complain as she felt that residents were being denied use of the village green for events; she also felt that space should be made for parking on it. The resident also understood that not every allotment holder had been paying their rent and felt that it was important Council income was maximised.

A member of the public, in recognising that Highways' policy had now changed in relation to works on the street-side railings, pointed out that if any works were to be done it may be easier to achieve these while the current works to Bridges are being carried out as the boundary to that property is generally difficult to access and some of the railings have been enclosed by the boundary fence.

## 16. Clerk's Report & Administrative Business

a. **Additional bank Signatories** - It was resolved to add Cllrs Mitcham and Willis to the bank mandate.

b. **Decisions under Delegated Authority** - Maintenance work to trees on The Green, Lime Tree green and the Heath had been approved in principle at a previous meeting, subject to confirmation of cost. As some of the works had been undertaken by Cllr Pearson on a voluntary basis and as the survey had been conducted free of charge, the total cost was £730 plus VAT. This was £130 more than the original budget for the survey and works but some of the works were urgent for reasons of safety and on this basis, and after consultation, the Clerk had been able to approve the works to go ahead and these had been completed in the previous month (16<sup>th</sup> July). Some of the works were near overhead power cables and so it had been necessary to disrupt the supply - the Clerk had advertised a warning of this on the noticeboard and the website. The Council resolved to ratify the decision.

As there had been a request for logs and chippings from residents, an amount of these had been left by the felled tree on The Green and would be picked-up if not collected by residents.

c. **Correspondence from:**

i. **County Council** - Asking for co-operation in a two year project 'Discovering Suffolk' to raise awareness of the countryside and promote local outdoor activity. As part of this, the project aims to add plaques to Rights of Way finger posts and install more signs. The Council resolved to indicate support.

ii. **District Council** - Asking for information about gaps in public transport. The Clerk had explained the village's position, with complete lack of public transport now, and this will be noted and included in a report to be presented to the County Council.

iii. **A resident** - Asking about what he had perceived to be a confusion between information on the noticeboard and on the web site about responsibility for maintenance of the footpath surfaces. The resident thought that the Council had stated in one place that it has responsibility for this and stated in the other place that the County Council has responsibility. In response, it was pointed out that there was no contradiction as the resident had confused information accurately stating that the responsibility does lay with the County Council with a comment that the Parish Council has topped-up the County's efforts with an occasional strip of one footpath.

- iv. **The Editor of the Parish Magazine** - Pointing out that he had been embarrassed that a leaflet, partly critical of the Council and partly asking for feedback and appearing to come from the Parish Council had been circulated with the Parish Magazine. He wished the Parish Council to know that he had no prior knowledge of the leaflet, did not know the source and certainly would not have permitted it to be circulated with the magazine if he had known about it.
- v. **District Council** - Informing us that the current arrangements for waste paper collection have been ended as the contractor no longer finds it viable. Alternatives are being considered by the District and the Parish Council will be advised as soon as possible. In the meantime the Clerk had investigated alternatives but had only been able to find options that would cost the council money, rather than generate income.
- vi. **District Council** - Announcing a drive-through 'Compost Give Away', on Saturday 11th September in Hadleigh (Old staff car park, Bridge Street) and on Saturday 18th September in Needham Market (Needham Lake, Coddendam Road). Staff will load compost sacks directly into people's car boots.
- vii. **District Council** - Announcing the annual Canvass of Electors (i.e. update of the electoral register) and asking for help in reassuring members of the public that this is genuine as it has moved to an electronic system, whenever possible, and is using a different email address for responses. The Clerk informed the meeting that he had dealt with a number of queries from residents about this already and asked that councillors offer reassurance as needed.
- viii. **A resident** - Raising a number of items that were on the agenda for discussion, and so would be discussed, but generally expressing discontent that much has been delayed during the pandemic.
- ix. **Two other residents** - Writing about the footpath which was to be discussed under Item 21a.

There were several other items of correspondence that would be raised under specific items later in the agenda.

#### **d. Other Matters**

The Clerk reported that recent weeks had been difficult as a result of the dissemination of a great deal of incorrect information around the village by a resident. As a result, a considerable amount of time had been spent on correcting false and inaccurate information which had given rise to concern and confusion amongst other residents. This arose partly from false notices posted around the village suggesting that the Parish Council had failed in its duties and partly from the leaflet mentioned at 16.c.iv above which had been distributed to most (but not all) households in the village. The leaflet had also generated a small amount of written correspondence (three emails or letters) complaining about the footpath to Drinkstone Road because people had been encouraged to write in about that. A number of phone calls were also received from people who were simply confused by the leaflet as well as some who had realised that it was bogus and who wished to bring it to the Council's attention and some whose response to the leaflet was to thank the Council for the work that it does.

The defibrillator had been delivered in the previous week (contrary to the false information disseminated to the village that it had been stored by the council for some time in a garage) and was due to be installed on the 9<sup>th</sup> August. The model of defibrillator that the Council had originally tried to buy needed an electricity supply but the one that had eventually been procured only needed a connection for the heated cabinet which is simply plugged in, enabling a simpler installation. Cllr Pearson pointed out that the Council had been let down by a previous supplier and another had gone into liquidation which had caused much of the delay.

The table of outstanding works as at July was presented to the Council alongside an updated version summarising the current situation; these were received. Reviewing the list, the Clerk

reminded the meeting that just before the Covid pandemic, he had expressed frustration that it was taking so long to deal with many of the outstanding matters. At the time that he had joined the Council he inherited a list of well over 40 outstanding items that had not been attended to and that little by little the list had been whittled down (albeit with some new additions being added) but that an annoying rump of matters had remained on the list at that point. Covid then hit but the lifting of Covid restrictions had allowed good progress on both the remaining historic items and current matters which meant that the Council was in a better position in terms of being up to date than it had been for well over five years. However, he noted that despite this there are still issues in relation to the availability and cost of some works and this was continuing to cause problems.

The list was reviewed:

- ◆ **Allotments** - It had been pointed out previously that not all plots were being used properly and that some rents had not been received. The latter was in large part due to a lack of inherited accurate administrative records on holders and plots, coupled with the lack of on-the-ground maintenance which means boundaries have shifted and the map of plots is different from the actuality. The Clerk and Cllr Pearson had visited the allotments a number of times in attempts to clarify the situation but each time they believed that they had the right picture of which allotment is which and who all the holders were, it had become clear that there was still some doubt. It is now believed that we have an accurate picture of holders and, in order to confirm this, a letter is in course of distribution to all current allotment holders to confirm their details.

The letter also reminds them of their obligation to keep plots in cultivation, asks them to confirm that they still want to hold an allotment and to confirm that they have maintained their plots in cultivation over the past two years. To that end a form and stamped return envelope accompanied the letter and the letter stated that if the form is not received back by the 10th September 2021, the Council will assume that they wish to surrender their plots and that we will re-allocate them to people on the waiting list in the autumn.

Letters or emails had also been sent to everyone on the waiting list, which had grown, over the past few months especially, to check whether they still wished to be on the list. Not all replies had been received at the time of the meeting but of the 13 on the list two had already responded to remove their names.

- ◆ **Road Sign on Lime Tree Green** - One of the uprights is damaged. At present the County (which apparently caused the damage by backing into the sign) are not undertaking such repairs. It was agreed that the damage is minor and not causing a problem as so it would be left in abeyance for the time being.
- ◆ **Signage for the play area, allotments and Heath gate** - it had previously been decided to wait for the new fencing at the play area but, given the delay to that work, it was proposed that signage be commissioned and the Council resolved to do so, with the play area signs being stored until such time as new fencing was installed.
- ◆ **Shared Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)** - A new scheme is being introduced which will be better than the previous, discontinued, scheme.

The new equipment will have vehicle number plate recognition which, together with the fact that the speed sensors are calibrated by Highways or the Police, means that it is possible for the police to follow up on offenders. It is understood that this would initially be by letter but clearly there would be scope for greater enforcement for persistent offenders. Time scales for introduction are not yet clear but it is anticipated that it will be before the end of this year. Each participating village will have the sign rotated around them by Highways which is also helpful as the evidence suggests that occasional and mobile VASs have greater deterrence than permanent ones.

- ◆ **Play Area Fencing** - This will be discussed under Item 23.

- ◆ **New Grit Bin installation** - The shortage of contractors has affected this but it is hoped that these can be installed over the next two months so that they are in place for the winter.
- ◆ **Phone Kiosk (and Potential woodland planting)** - Council had previously decided to await the end of Covid related restrictions to distribute the consultation leaflet about potential planting on the Heath and about future use of the phone box so that questionnaires could be collected in person. This was in order to maximise the response, based on previous experience of getting the widest response from residents in this way.  
Following the lifting of restrictions, the planned consultation leaflet and questionnaire had been distributed. Hope was expressed that the bogus leaflet that had been distributed would not undermine the genuine one as several residents had already been confused. The Council agreed a vote of thanks to the Hessel Ladies Group who had distributed the genuine leaflet.
- ◆ **New Benches** - The Council was presented with some indicative designs and prices and it was resolved to purchase one new bench and one new picnic table/bench initially, to enhance the amenities, and that further items would be considered in future. A maximum cost of £1,400 plus VAT was approved, to include the means of fixing, as the benches will need to be fixed to the ground to prevent theft. This will have to be done with some form of deep stake as new concrete plinths are not allowed on the Green.

**Village Green** - Arising partly from the discussion about the fixing of benches and partly in relation to the comments made during the Public Forum, Cllr Pearson asked the Clerk to explain the position in relation to restrictions to the use of the Green.

The Clerk explained that the main issue was that the Village Green had been registered as a green under the Village Greens Act, in the early 1970s. This had been to prevent the green from being developed in any way but it also had a very restrictive effect on its use, meaning that permanent changes, even the addition of desirable facilities, are prohibited. This includes things such as new driveways or parking lay-bys and so it is not in the Parish Council's power (nor anybody else's) to over-rule the legislation.

In relation to events, the legislation is similarly restrictive and only certain types of event can be held on the green. However, as the limit is essentially about avoiding commercial exploitation of the green and ensuring that its use benefits residents these rules are less of a nuisance. For example, community events are permitted, within certain rules, and had been held from time to time. The rules are published in a document, available on the website or from the Clerk, which sets out what people need to do if they want to mount an event on the green. Permission from the Parish Council, which owns the green, and which must therefore enforce the statutory restrictions, is always required.

Cllr Mitcham added that the land had been given by farmers for the benefit of the community and that it had been felt important to ensure that it was used for its intended purpose when it had been gifted.

The Clerk went on to say that the possibility of de-registering the green had been investigated but that it had been found that de-registration is only possible by Act of Parliament and that the initial costs alone would approach £10,000, with considerable further costs involved in later stages.

**Governance and Conduct of Council Business** - The Chair underlined the importance of the Parish Council working within all the relevant legislation and reminded the Council that under the previous Clerk the Council had had a very adverse governance audit which had taken two months and revealed a myriad of failings. Since then the governance of the Council had been put on a proper footing.

Cllr Turvill asked whether the failings arose from just administrative mistakes or whether there were financial or other substantive matters involved. The Chair replied that, while there had

been no financial impropriety, the issues under the previous Clerk had been substantive and serious and were about the whole way in which the Council had been conducting its business. For example, decision-making had not been clear, members of the public had been allowed to interject outside the Public Forum, transparency rules had not been applied, business had been conducted outside meetings and decisions had been made without regard to the statutes governing them.

Cllr Turvill asked what sanction had been imposed and the Chair replied that, because Councillors and the then Clerk had pleaded that they had been unaware of the correct rules, only a small fine had arisen, however, he felt that an indication of the seriousness of such matters was suggested by a case of transgression of the rules having been dealt with by disbarring councillors from holding public office and had given rise to sizable fines.

**Workshop** - the Clerk had attended an on-line workshop on CIL funds (money arising from development, designated for improving infrastructure). The ways in which these funds can be used are circumscribed and the workshop outlined some of the ways in which the funds can and cannot be applied.

**Website** - the website had been greatly improved over the past two years or so, including a new domain host, but the Clerk had become aware that there are some differences between the information that appears on different types of device, with either out-of-date information appearing or gaps in information. The problem seems to particularly affect mobile devices. The issues that had been identified will be corrected but the Clerk asked councillors to let him know if they find any further defects so that they can be put right. Some information, including some statutory information that had previously been displaying properly, had also simply disappeared and that had also been addressed.

## 17. Planning & Environment

a. **New Planning Application Consultations** - There were none to hand.

b. **Updates on Planning Applications Considered Previously**

- i. **DC/21/01416** - Plot 2 Land South of Hubbards Lane Hessett: *Erection of 1No. dwelling with detached cart lodge*. Permission had been granted.
- ii. **DC/21/02060** - 8 Muriel King Close, Hessett: *Erection of dormer to rear and installation of 2 rooflights to front*. Permission had been granted.
- iii. **DC/21/02094** - The Firs, Heath Road, Hessett: *Erection of two single storey rear extensions (following demolition of conservatory); Replace flat roof to garage with pitched roof and enclose to form linked extension*. Permission had been granted.
- iv. **DC/21/02250** - 1 Beyton Road, Hessett: *Erection of a single storey side extension*. Permission had been granted.
- v. **DC/21/02610 and DC/21/02606 - Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent** - Fraisor, Heath Road, Hessett: *Erection of 2 single storey extensions (following demolition of modern conservatory) and replacement of door on north elevation*. Permission had been granted.
- vi. **Bridges, The Street** - This application had been considered by the Council previously and subsequently approved by the planning authority. Residents had reported that the works have not been proceeding in line with the permission, especially in relation roofing materials, cladding and a bathroom window that should be obscured and non-opening (but is neither). After brief discussion, the Council resolved that these matters should be taken up with the Enforcement Team at the planning authority.

## 18. Five Bells Inn

Cllr Willis asked whether there had been a condition that the new house should not be lived in until the pub re-opened. The Clerk replied that the planning condition had been that all the *works*

to the pub building that had been granted permission must be complete before the house was occupied. The Clerk would check on the status of the works and report back to the next meeting.

### **19. Flooding on Hubbards Lane**

The Clerk reported that, on the third attempt, the correct culvert had been flushed out and that the County Council was stating that they felt that all was now well when this clearly was not the case and flooding would ensue again. Cllr Mitcham reported that sewage flooding had been occurring again for the previous month or so and that ongoing discussions were very frustrating. It is difficult to argue without the information contained in the report of which this council has not had sight and so it was important to obtain a copy of it (see Item 14, above).

The Clerk also reported that the County Officer had decided that no action was required in relation to the pumping station that had been installed in the wrong place (Drinkstone village instead of Drinkstone Road) some years ago and which has been eagerly awaited ever since. This has also been taken up with our County Councillor.

### **20. Role, Etiquette and Responsibilities of Councillors**

Cllr Mitcham sought advice on the correct way to respond to queries that are raised by members of the public, mindful of the rules about only discussing matters in Council itself. In responding, the Clerk differentiated between matters that fall within the Council's responsibilities and matters that are outside the Council's areas of responsibility and which may therefore need to be referred elsewhere. In the latter case members of the public can be referred to the relevant body or to the Clerk, who very often helps residents with such matters and routine enquiries about public services.

For matters that this Council can do something about but that need a decision by the Council, it is best for councillors to explain that they will ask for the matter to be put on an agenda but that an individual councillor cannot make decisions or comment by themselves. Members of the public are often unaware that new decisions of policy or expenditure can only be made by the Council (and that 'Council' means the members of Council when they are gathered together for a properly constituted meeting) and that matters that are not publicised on the agenda may not be discussed by a council. The latter is so that any member of the public who may have an interest in a particular item has the opportunity to be present to hear the discussion and to offer any comment during the Public Forum section of the meeting - if an item is not on the advertised agenda they have no way of knowing that it will be discussed and this is also the reason why council agendas do not have an 'any other business section'.

When being approached about issues it is perfectly permissible to express an opinion but it is important to avoid being absolute - 'this seems to be a problem' or 'this seems to be a good idea' are fine but categorical statements can be unhelpful because members of the public sometimes take that to be a view expressed by the Council, rather than an individual. Parish councillors are specifically forbidden from speaking or acting for the Council without a specific mandate to do so. In essence we all want to be as helpful as possible and at the same time we need to be mindful of the statutory framework within which we work. If unsure it is always helpful to refer to the Clerk.

### **21. Landscape Maintenance**

- a. Hedge Cutting on The Street / Beyton Road** - Following a call from a resident, the Clerk attended to discuss a number of issues relating to this corner of the village, one of which was the poor visibility for drivers emerging from Beyton Road. This is due to the outward growth of the hedge south of the small area of grass, which is itself immediately south of the turning. Having investigated, the hedge appears to belong to no one and be the responsibility of no one - the land was probably omitted from transfer by the District Council when parts of it were sold off for development several decades ago. In view of this the Clerk recommended that the Council should arrange for the hedge to be cut back next month (after the nesting season is officially over) at a cost of £250. The hedge would be taken back quite sharply, so that further

work would be unnecessary for another two or three years.

After brief discussion the Council resolved to commission the cutting back as recommended.

#### **b. Churchyard to Drinkstone Road Footpath**

The Clerk had previously reported on correspondence and Councillors had been copied into an exchange of letters with a resident. The matter had been the subject of a great deal of confusion in June and early July.

For clarity, the Clerk set out the position

- ◆ The path itself is a public right of way, not public property;
- ◆ Responsibility for maintaining the path itself rests with the County Council (for paths running through crops it rests with the landowner);
- ◆ Responsibility for clearing the growth of trees or shrubs alongside the path and which may encroach on the path or impede access to the path, rests with the landowners;
- ◆ Residents already pay for maintenance of the path through the council tax paid to the County Council but up to now the Parish Council has augmented the responsibilities of others by having the surface strimmed twice per season.

This year had been an unusual year because unseasonably dull and cold spring weather, followed by wet and warm weather, had encouraged vegetation to bolt, so creating problems of very fast overgrowth. This is demonstrated by the fact that when the Council was first sent pictures of the path it had been cut only two weeks previously. From the pictures it was clear that although the ground growth was significant, a major part of the problem was the fact that long grass on the bank by the path had been flattened by wind and heavy rain, creating a horizontal barrier over the path. The difficulty this caused was exacerbated by the overgrowth of hedging and trees by the northern side of the path as this had narrowed the path to an unacceptable width.

It was noted that it had been unfortunate that residents who were mistakenly under the impression that responsibility for the path rests with the PC, were encouraged in that misapprehension by an active campaign of disinformation. This included leaflets that seemed to be published by the Council being distributed illicitly with the parish magazine and subsequently (as referred to elsewhere during the meeting).

The current position was that the Council's contractors have offered to undertake a monthly strim of the path for no extra charge for the current season and have been taken up on that offer. The landowners have agreed to undertake work on the side growth once the legal bird nesting period is over. The County Council now operates a scheme whereby it will provide a grant to parish councils to arrange cutting of paths on the County's behalf and discussions are ongoing about that. The Council's contractor has provided a price for undertaking this work next year although it may be better to join in with the Rougham Estates contract. By the time a decision is needed about this, in January, the position should be clearer.

The Clerk was asked whether the current agreement is for the whole length of the path from the edge of the churchyard to Drinkstone Road and he reported it is only as far as the left hand bend. It was agreed that whatever is put in place should cover the entire length of that part of the path. Almost all the part of the path that continues to Drinkstone itself sits in Drinkstone parish and would not be included.

CLlr Mitcham offered to research whether the land over which the path crosses falls within the new natural England scheme because there may be limitations on what can be done in any event; the Council agreed this.

The Council resolved to extend the contract for the current season to include the full length from the churchyard to Drinkstone Road and review matters in January.

CLlr Turvill asked for clarification about the legal position of the footpath including the legal

liability of the Council in relation to it. In response it was explained that the land is privately owned (in common with the vast majority of rural paths) but that a public right of way exists over it. As the Parish Council has neither ownership of nor responsibility for the path, the default position is that it has no public liability arising from it. However, a liability could arise from anything that the Council actively does to it.

## **22. Orchids on the Heath**

The Clerk reported that the Council had recently been made aware of the presence of Bee Orchids on the Heath. It was noted that this is a protected species and that the Council must avoid damaging it when the Heath is mowed and will need to take this into account when making future plans for the Heath and its maintenance.

## **23. Fencing of the Play Area**

It was reported that getting any kind of works undertaken continued to be extremely difficult, and had been made considerably worse by the pandemic. There is a huge shortage of people available to do works and quotes are very hard to come by because lead times are lengthy and prices of all kinds of construction materials are inflated and continuing to increase, making tradesmen and companies unwilling to commit to a price.

The original indicative quote for fencing had been c £2,200. It had not been possible to obtain a firm quotation but two indicative quotes have been received - of £5,700 and significantly above £6,000 respectively. The Clerk felt that prices could fall back over time, once the impacts of Brexit and the pandemic are reduced but that this was difficult to predict. The problem had been exacerbated by the fact that the substantial changes in pricing mean that the Clerk has to repeatedly return the matter to meetings to discuss further action.

In discussion it was agreed that prices may well to fall back once the current situation settles and so, in view of this, a partial repair would be the best option.

Cllr Turvill offered to undertake the work on a voluntary basis, with a materials budget of up to £250 and Cllr Pearson joined in the offer. The Council immediately resolved to accept the offer. It was pointed out that safety matters needed to be observed and especially that, because this is a play area, posts must be on the outside of the fence.

## **24. Planting of a Replacement Tree on Lime Tree Green**

The horse chestnut tree that originally stood under the power cables was removed some years ago because it grew too big and too close to the cables. It had not been expected to re-grow from its stump but, unfortunately this is what had happened, which is why the Council agreed to have it removed as part of the recent tree works, subject to planting a suitable replacement. The stump has now been ground out to prevent re-growth.

The Council's arborculturalist had recommended that a *Sorbus Torminalis*, (wild service tree) be planted in its place - a little away from the cable, although this species is not large. The Council heard that *Sorbus Torminalis* has attractive flowers in the spring and good autumn colour, with small berries that provide winter food for birds. The species does not get excessively tall and is a native tree, increasingly rare but which has apparently always been associated with pubs, its fruit having been used to make beer, before hops were used. In discussion it was felt that this would be an attractive addition and that, assuming that the pub re-opens, it would be especially suitable on this spot. The arborculturalist had quoted a cost of £70 plus VAT for the supply and planting of a good sapling with staking and guarding and the work would be undertaken in the coming autumn. The Council resolved to accept the recommendation as to species and the quotation for supply and planting.

## **25. Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

2022 is to be a jubilee year to celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee and the Lord Lieutenant had

written to say that the year will also include Suffolk specific events. Tony Ciorra had also been in touch to suggest a Big Picnic event on the extended bank holiday weekend to mark the occasion. This would be along the lines that had been done in the past but with a Queen's Jubilee theme. Mr Ciorra had planned to come to the meeting but unfortunately he had had to send his apologies due to possible contact with Covid and the need for precautionary isolation. In discussion it was pointed out the Big Picnic involves contributions from the wider community and this was agreed to be highly desirable.

It was resolved to support the idea of a Big Picnic and for Cllrs Mitcham and Turvill to form a working party with Tony Ciorra and report back to the Council at the next meeting. The Council indicated that it would be open to offering financial support once an appropriate plan had been developed. The Clerk would be available to take notes of the meeting(s) if that were helpful.

## **26. Finance**

- a. The Council received the schedule of receipts and payments. The Clerk pointed out, in relation to comments that had been made about the pay budget, that this included provision for a handy person and the associated employment costs.

The Council resolved to approve the schedule of payments.

## **27. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas**

Matters for future agendas were suggested as follows:

- ◆ encouraging the formation of a village association
- ◆ to add the possibility of using the Heath for events / and or for a community hub to the discussions about the future of the Heath.

Cllr Willis asked for help with collecting questionnaires during the weekend of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of August and she would send out an email allocating streets.

Cllr Willis reported that a meeting of the Village Hall Committee had taken place and had decided to limit capacity to 25 for the time being, following the lifting of Covid-related restrictions. Maintenance had also been discussed and various minor improvements had been agreed. Broadband had been installed and the committee will be asking for the agreed grant from the Council in due course.

The resignations of Cllrs Baully and Elsworth were reported and the Chair proposed a vote of thanks to them. This was unanimously resolved.

Councillor Pearson informed the meeting that a Wednesday bus service may be introduced by an independent operator.

Cllr Turvill resigned as footpath officer.

**The meeting closed at 9.50pm.**

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chair

Date