

Hessett Parish Council

MINUTES

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

Tuesday 23rd May 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Michael Poulter (Chair for part), Debbie Willis (Chair for part), Lynn Heymoz, Margaret Shaw and Stuart Turvill.

In attendance: Maximilian Clay (Clerk to the Council)
Two members of the public.

1. Election of Chair for 2022/23

No councillors offered themselves for election and so the office was left vacant. Cllr Willis was nominated to Chair this meeting and agreed to do so. Cllr Poulter relinquished the chair.

2. Election of Vice Chair for 2022/23

Cllr Turvill was nominated and elected.

3. Signature of Acceptance of Office Forms

Cllr Turvill signed the acceptance of office declaration.

4. Apologies

All councillors were present and so there were no apologies.

5. Declarations of Interest

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

6. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 14th March 2021 were agreed to be a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them as such.

7. County & Borough Councillor Reports

County and District Cllr Otton had submitted a written report which was received by the Council. It was noted that a number of staff had left the District Council and this had caused some problems in relation to continuity of ongoing projects. In response to a question, D Cllr Otton felt that this was coincidence, rather than symptomatic of a problem, although retention is an ongoing problem in Suffolk generally.

8. Public Forum

A member of the public asked about goal nets and it was reported that replacements were in the new year's budget and so would be replaced in this year.

The Vice Chair of the Hessett Millennium Committee thanked the Clerk for his assistance with the Committee's funding application.

9. Insurance for 2022/23

The Council resolved to accept insurance arranged by BHIB, under the three year undertaking entered into in May 2021, at a premium of £484.76.

10. Grant Request - Hessett Millennium Committee

The Council noted that it had made a decision in principle (Minute No 2021/22 86) to make a grant of £850 towards the cost of an event planned for 13th August 2022 (previously July), subject to an updated and acceptable application.

The Clerk reported that the clause that the Council had identified as needing removal from the constitution had not yet been changed and representatives of the Hessett Millennium Committee (HMC) undertook to attend to this. The Council was informed that the bank account was not yet under the new Committee's control but would be once the mandates were fully processed by the bank.

It was noted that further risk assessment for the event would be necessary and HMC undertook to complete this.

The Clerk pointed out that, according to the updated budget that had been provided, costs had decreased and there was still over £2,000 in the HMC account. He advised that, although the Council may choose to go ahead with the grant anyway, especially as this was the first event planned by the new Committee, the Council should at least consider these factors in its decision making. The Chair of the HMC committee felt that neither the constitution nor the finances of HMC were the business of the Council but the Clerk explained that in considering grants it was both proper and necessary for the Council to consider the finances and governance of organisations to which they were considering giving public money.

Cllr Turvill stated that he had recently seen organisations given hundreds of thousands of pounds, even millions in some cases by the Arts Council, and that none of the scrutiny that the Council was undertaking had been necessary in those cases. He felt that the Council was not being realistic and that everything would be fine but that if not the Council should take a chance and risk breaking the law - in which case he would be willing to take responsibility himself, which he requested be recorded in the minutes.

The Clerk pointed out that the Council must not break the law but that that was not at issue - it was simply necessary to weigh all the factors involved before arriving at a decision.

After further discussion, the Council resolved to confirm the grant to the constitution of HMC being amended as previously agreed and submitted to the Council and on the condition that a full set of accounts for the event be submitted after the event.

11. Permission to use the Village Green

The Council considered the application from HMC to use the Village Green for an event planned for 13th August 2022 (previously July) and resolved to grant permission subject to the provision of the information requested in March and subject also to the same basis as the resolution relating to item 10 above.

12. Clerk's Report & Administrative Business

- a. The Clerk advised that no decisions had been taken under delegated powers since the last meeting.
- b. The Clerk reported that the play area re-fencing was currently underway, but that the posts had been placed on the inside of the area, rather than on the exterior. This was in the process of being corrected but would need to be re-checked to ensure that it was safe. There was a discussion about the positioning of the fencing but it was noted that the Village Green Act placed a constraint on being able to extend the area.

It was agreed that Graham Bauly would be asked whether he would be willing to use his machinery to remove the old benches on the Green and to put the new ones in their place.

13. Queens Platinum Jubilee Picnic

Cllr Turvill reported that all was going well with preparations and that everything was on track for a successful event.

14. Planning

a. *Planning Application Consultations:*

DC/22/02237 - Rattlesden Gliding Club, High Town Green, Rattlesden

Application under Section 73 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for 3373/13 for the

Removal or Variation of Condition 3 (Restriction: limit on hours, number and type of aerotow operations).

In discussion it was noted that although the application proposed removing the current condition that only one specific aircraft be used for towing gliders, an undertaking to use aircraft of a similar type was included, with specific reference to similar noise and traffic levels. On this basis the Council resolved to raise no objection.

b. Updates on previously considered planning applications - There were no update reports on planning applications considered previously.

c. Proposal to cease responding to planning consultations - The Council discussed a proposal to cease responding to planning consultations (following preliminary discussion at previous meetings). It was noted that the Council's position as a consultee would be weakened if only certain applications were responded to.

In discussion it was argued that as the Council's responses were often disregarded there was little value in considering applications in the first place - even though the Government's stated policy was to give greater influence to local people. There was a feeling that decisions often seemed to be random even when specific policies or inaccuracies were brought to bear with the planning authority.

It was resolved that the Clerk would test the experience of other parish councils and that if this confirmed that this Council's experience was common, or particular to the district council in this area, a campaign would be launched with other parish councils to address the problem.

15. Five Bells Inn

The meeting heard that a commercial kitchen was being installed and that the plan was to open the pub in September of this year. It was noted that the Asset of Community Value status of the pub lasts for five years and so will need to be renewed next year - the District Council notifies parish councils when this becomes due.

16. Finance & Governance

- a. The Council reviewed the Financial Regulations and resolved to make no changes.
- b. The Council resolved to approve revised Standing Orders 18c and f, in line with the national recommendations.
- c. The Council reviewed and approved the Financial Risk/ Risk Management assessment subject to two small corrections, to clarify that the monthly inspections of the play area are conducted by volunteers, with an annual professional inspection and report, and to correct the statement that the internal auditor attends meetings.
- d. The Council reviewed and approved the 2022/23 Accounts, including the end of year Bank Reconciliation and the Asset Register.
- e. The Council received and approved the Internal Auditor's Report.
- f. To Council considered and approved the Governance Statement at Part 2 Section 1 of the Annual Return and authorised the Chair to sign it on behalf of the Council.
- g. The Council considered the information provided at Part 2 Section 2 of the Annual Return and authorised the Chair to countersign it on behalf of the Council.
- h. The Council considered the grounds for exemption from Limited Assurance Review and determined that the Council is exempt. Accordingly, the Responsible Financial Officer and the Chair were authorised to sign the Certificate of Exemption.
- i. The Council resolved to re-appoint Mrs Christine Fitzgerald as internal auditor for 2022/23.
- j. The Council agreed the following dates for meetings for the 2021/22 session 25th July 2022, 26th September 2022, 28th November 2022, 30th January 2023, 27th March 2023 and 15th May 2023
- k. The schedule of receipts and payments was received by the Council and it was resolved to approve the schedule of payments, with the addition of the grant of £850 for the Hessett Millennium Committee which will only be issued once the conditions have been met.

17. Appointment of Council Representatives to Village Bodies

- a. Cllr Shaw was appointed as the Council's nominee on the Hesselton Charities Trustees.
- b. Cllr Willis was re-appointed as the Council's representative on the Village Hall Committee.

18. Clothing Recycling Bank

The Council discussed the possibility of housing a clothing recycling bank, arising from an approach by a national charity. After discussion, it was resolved to mandate Cllr Willis to find out more information and to report back to the next meeting when a final decision would be made.

19. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

The outgoing Chair noted that Graham Baulby is storing three grit bins on behalf of the Council (these were going to have been installed just before Covid) and that Andrew Pearson holds the Council mower (which he uses as a volunteer on the Heath pathways) together with a supply of small parts and an assortment of litter-picking equipment.

A vote of thanks to Cllr Poulter, as outgoing Chair, was proposed in recognition of his long service to the village, and this was carried by acclamation.

Cllr Willis reported that work on the telephone kiosk had been progressing well and it is nearly ready for re-painting. The Council resolved to apply for a locality grant from our district councillor to complete the work.

Reserved Business

20. Staff Matters

There had been no suitable applications for the Clerk and RFO's job and so the closing date had been removed and the advertisement left on the SALC website. The advertisement on Indeed had not been successful in attracting suitable candidates and had not been extended. It was noted that SALC operated a locum service and further information about this would be sought for discussion at the next meeting.

Council Poulter tendered his resignation from the Council.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm.

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chair

Date