

**Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th
February 2021 – 7PM (Zoom Meeting)**

Councillors Present: Cllrs R Scott (Chair), P Dickens, P Scott, L Antonini, A Rose, D Coleman, R Capstick & M Versallion (CBC)

Clerk: C Underhay

193: To receive apologies for absence:

None – all Councillors present.

194: Declarations of Interest:

None received.

195: Approval of Minutes from 11th January 2021:

The Minutes were signed as a true reflection of the meeting.

196: Public Forum:

A resident asked whether another salt bin could be placed by the Church – the Chair asked the Clerk to contact CBC.

A resident asked if additional repeater 30mph speed markers could be placed on the A5 – the Chair asked Councillor Capstick to investigate.

A resident asked about actions that could be taken regarding drug dealing - he has reported via 101. Cllr Versallion said he would talk to the police.

197: Central Bedfordshire Councillor Mark Versallion report:

Cllr Versallion reported to the meeting as follows:

Fix my street.com is now live on the CBC website.

The field south of McDonalds noted in last month's minutes – this has been reported to CBC.

Chalgrave Parish Council are keen to have a roundabout on the junction of Hockliffe Road and the A5.

CBC are still undertaking a cost analysis for the feasibility of purchasing the A5 (though Hockliffe and surrounds) from Highways England – the purchase is not expected this year.

CBC Highways are struggling with workload. However, the speed limit reduction outside the school is being progressed.

The Local Plan Inspectorate have gone against CBC recommendation and left two of the proposed development sites in the plan – although with a reduced number of dwellings (they accepted that one site should be dropped from proposed development). CBC have sent a letter to the Inspectorate agreeing to the report – so the “clock is now ticking”.

198: Solar Farm:

Cllr Versallion noted that we had all now seen the leaflet that has been posted to all homes in Hockliffe. There has been lobbying from both sides (Green Belt preservation to Renewal Energy progress). Most of the proposed site is in Eggington Parish, however, the disruption will be in Hockliffe Parish (entry to the site). If agreed, there will be an annual financial contribution to the community.

The Clerk noted that the leaflet said that the Developer (Grounds Farm Solar Park) had been in contact with the Parish Council and no such contact had taken place. An email has been sent to them, inviting contact, but no response had yet been received. Cllr Antonini said that this could make residents wonder what the Parish Council knows – or doesn't know.

It was clarified that the entrance to the site will be near the Hawthorns. It was clarified that the contractors would be required to clear mud off the road.

It was noted that the planning permission documentation would probably be available at the end of March 2021.

Cllr P Scott asked whether the Developer could come to a meeting – they will be invited and Clerk to arrange.

199. Neighbourhood Plan:

Cllr Dickens advised that the Councillor training session had been held and was a success. Cllr Dickens recommended that as a result of advice from Tom Price, CBC's Neighbourhood Involvement Officer, at this training session, a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group should be set up to complete a Neighbourhood Plan that excludes Development. Cllr Antonini questioned whether this would be a separate committee. Cllr P Scott asked how it would work – a Neighbourhood Plan without development (considering the Inspectorate Report) – Cllr Versallion noted that as CBC had now sent the letter back to the Inspectorate it is un-retrievable. Cllr Capstick asked whether this letter could be followed up with another letter saying that Hockliffe Parish Council are looking at a Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Versallion noted that as it has not been adopted yet, we do have the right to appeal, and that there will be a public consultation (6 weeks from mid-March). The Inspectorate would then write the final report (expected September 2021).

Cllr Versallion noted that CBC are "annoyed" at the result – although there is an opportunity with the public consultation in mid-March. The Chair then opened the meeting to the public for comment and discussion. Various points were raised by residents as follows:

Why development in Hockliffe and not other local villages.

We have already had a fair share of development over the past 10 years or so (for example, Manor Avenue and Gilpin Court).

Strain on the A5 and local roads– already very busy and causing many problems.

We are not linked to the gas mains.

We have drainage issues.

The proposed sites are fields that are regularly waterlogged.

The new A6/M1 link will make the A5 even busier.

What would happen to the school?

One of the plots is the only green land you can see from the A5.

The Brook (Clipstone) sometime has very high water – it could easily flood.

We have had other developments – but no benefits (e.g., doctors/shop etc)

A Facebook poll, run by a resident, shows 136 against development and 9 for (and some of these do not even live in Hockliffe).

There seems to be no “gusto” about challenging the outcome.

It would change a way of life if the fields were built on – they are in Green Belt land.

Cllr Versallion noted that the Inspectorate even had disagreed with themselves (from a previous report), He said that an important area is that we need a Neighbourhood Plan.

A resident said that we were originally told we had to have development in a local plan.

Cllr P Scott asked that if a Neighbourhood Plan was put forward, would CBC have to follow it?

Cllr Dickens said that the neighbourhood Plan had always tried to follow CBC, who had the Local Plan, as it was not allowed to be inconsistent with the Local Plan – the Parish Council has already written a letter to CBC requesting no new housing (i.e., supporting CBC position of no new houses).

Cllr P Scott said that had we known about the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan and the fact that it did not require development, we would have done one.

Cllr Capstick asked, what can be done now – and not wait for a month until the next meeting.

Cllr Versallion said that he will chase CBC regarding flooding. Cllr Coleman said that the flooding issues had gone back more than 41 years. The Clerk reminded the Council that the River Ouzel Authority have said

that the Brook is set for a major drainage exercise throughout our Parish in the Spring and that he will follow this up at the appropriate time.

The Council unanimously resolved the following:

A new Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will be set up to include residents and to push forward with the Neighbourhood Plan. An advert will go out on our Facebook Page for applicants – the aim being that this Group will be formally appointed at the next Parish Council Meeting in March. A cross section of applicants will be considered.

A letter will be written to the Head Of Strategic Planning at CBC from the Chair this week. This will outline our position and objection but will also propose a way forward via the new Neighbourhood Plan. This letter will be available on our website for viewing.

A template letter will be made available on the website for residents to use (and amend if they wish to). This letter will outline objections and reasons. It can be forwarded to CBC and/or the Inspectorate and/or our MP – address details will be provided.

200: Matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the

Agenda:

The Chair noted the following:

CBC is investigating rat issue – a case officer has been assigned.

CBC have also responded regarding rubbish on Leighton bypass and will ensure it is cleared.

Christmas Tree update – this will remain in place until it is safe to remove (COVID).

Telegraph pole top of Leighton road – Openreach have been out, just waiting for a report.

Footpath between A5 and Church Lane (muddy) – reported, pending reply.

201: Finance:

1. To authorise accounts for payment:

The Chair invited the Clerk to speak.

It was resolved that the following payments could be made (dated 8th February 2021):

Cheque	Amount	Payee	For
1798	£40.39	C Underhay	Clerk expenses
1799	£249.60	C Underhay	Clerk salary
1800	£62.40	HMRC	Clerk tax

A £35 direct debit was also paid on 14th January 2021 to the ICO for GDPR data protection.

A credit of 27p was received for interest (29th January 2021). A £9541.03 credit was also received on 1st February 2021 from HMRC for a VAT claim – this covers the period 1/8/17 to 31/3/19 and brings outstanding VAT claim up to date (1/4/19 to 31/3/20 was claimed earlier this financial year). The next return will be completed in April 2021.

2. Account Balances & Budget:

With 83% of the year gone – we have spent 83% of the spend budget. We are £9785 over on expected income (due to outstanding VAT reclaim). December and January reconciliations were presented. This shows the total bank balance to be £79,975.63 as of 1st February 2021.

3. Online Banking:

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

4. Allocation of funds:

This item was postponed to the next meeting – although it was noted that a decision must be made at the next meeting to meet our audit requirements. The Clerk will prepare a paper for consideration.

The Clerk noted virtual training sessions for the Clerk and new Councillors. It was resolved that the Clerk could book 3 training sessions (finance) at a total cost of £90, and Cllr Antonini could book 2 courses (total cost £60) for new Councillors. Clerk to arrange.

202: Policy and procedure review/renewal:

It was resolved by all members of the Council that the following policies were renewed for 12 months:

Code of Conduct
Communications Policy
Complaints Policy & Procedures
Document Retention Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy
Media Response Policy

The Discrimination and Disability policy was also reviewed – Cllr Dickens noted that this was no longer needed as it has been superseded by the Equality and Diversity Policy, and so it was resolved that this policy is removed.

203: Social Media Policy:

The Chair presented the above policy to Councillors for adoption. It was resolved by all Councillors that this policy was adopted, with one amendment as follows:

Point 6 talks about twitter, as the Parish council does not operate a Twitter Account, this section will be removed.

It was resolved that the next review date of this policy will be February 2023.

204: Entrance To Alison's Brook:

The Chair noted that the pavement outside was not as it should be, and the site still has Harris Fencing around it. Cllr Versallion noted that it does take a reasonable time to clear this – but this had now passed. The Clerk will send some pictures, and then Cllr Versallion will take to CBC.

205: Village Drainage:

Cllr Capstick noted drainage issues in her part of the A5 and this extended to the Blackbirds. This is now becoming frequent. Highways England have agreed to survey drainage, and this will be week commencing 15th February 2021. The A5 will be closed at night times to allow for this work (for three nights). A letter has already been sent to residents.

Cllr Capstick passed information to the Clerk regarding a blocked drain outside the entrance to Old Dairy Court. The Clerk will report to CBC highways.

206: The Park:

The Clerk outlined issues he is having in obtaining quotations – either contactors do not want to quote – or they are too busy. He is pursuing this and will report further at the next meeting.

The handyman will provide quotes to clean the MUGA.

207: The Hedge In The Cemetery:

The Chair reported that this had not been cut, as agreed by the contractor, by the end of January 2021. The Clerk also noted that it appears no work has been done in January 2021 – no bill has been received. He has written to the Company, but not received a reply. The Clerk will chase.

208: Tree Survey:

The Clerk advised that whilst this is specialised work, he has still had to try to obtain 3 quotes. Therefore, he has been in contact with two other Companies to obtain a quote and is expecting these this week. He will forward these to the Chair for presentation at the next Parish Council meeting.

209: Planning Applications Received:

The Chair reported the following:

CB/20/03489 – Hockliffe House – update from November meeting – no decision made yet (by CBC).

CB/20/04627 – Goose Lodge -update from January meeting – no decision yet (by CBC).

No new planning applications were received.

210: A5/Speedwatch:

Cllr Capstick reported:

A post completion survey is expected (further to the work completed on the A5 – keep clear road markings, speed reduction to 30mph etc). It has been noted that the general impact of reduced traffic due to COVID lockdown may impact this survey. It will also look at the feasibility of a keep clear road marking by Hockley Court.

Cllr Capstick passed information to the Clerk regarding a blocked drain outside the entrance to Old Dairy Court. The Clerk will report to CBC highways.

A virtual training session for Speedwatch will be set up shortly – this can be used as either a refresher for people that have already been trained, or for new people. It will be possible (when trained) for couples to undertake Speedwatch in a COVID friendly environment.

211: Blooming Hockliffe:

The Chair invited a member of the Blooming Hockliffe team to speak. Soil and plants will be ordered before the end of March. The aim, in a COVID friendly environment, is to have the planters out before the end of March.

212: Handyman:

Richard noted that he is waiting for better weather, and the lifting of COVID restrictions, to be able to continue with work.

213: Cemetery Verge:

No further report since the last meeting.

214: Correspondence Received (for information only):

The Chair noted that no other correspondence had been received, other than that already referred to.

215: Items for inclusion in the next agenda:

Cllr Antonini asked for Hockliffe Herald printing to be included.

216: Date & place of the next Parish Council Meeting:

This will be held on Monday 8th March 2021 via Zoom, commencing at 7pm. The Meeting was closed at 9.45pm

Colin Underhay – Clerk – 14th February 2021

Signed as a true record..... Rob Scott (chair) 8th March 2021

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