

Hildersham Parish Council
Clerk: Mrs. PM Harper
17 Lewis Crescent, Great Abington, Cambridge CB21 6AG

A Meeting of Hildersham Parish Council was held on Tuesday 14th January 2025, at Hildersham Village Hall.

Present: Mark Logan, David Mercer, Tom Barton-Owen, Rob Clay, County and District Councillor Henry Batchelor, District Councillor John Batchelor, one member of the public and the Clerk.

Meeting started at 7.30pm

73. Open Forum - Parishioners can raise any matters of concern. No items were raised.

74. Apologies were received and unanimously accepted by councillors from Darren Long.

75. Councillors to declare any interests in the items to be discussed during the meeting? Has the Clerk granted any dispensations under section 33 (1) of the Localism Act and the basis is set out under section 33(2)? No interests were declared.

76. Approval of the minutes from the last meetings on 12th November 2024. Councillors unanimously approved the minutes which were signed by the Chairman.

77. Report from District Councillor John Batchelor – their reports had been circulated to councillors

Reorganisation of local government – some details of the initial plans would be available in March, with the final plan available in September. A unitary authority must be 500,000 households to be financially viable, but the city was currently only 300,000 households. This unit size would be difficult for other areas in the county. The County Council would cease to exist and SCDC would become a unitary authority with fewer councillors, most likely 50-60 councillors against the current 90. East Cambridgeshire wants to join South Cambs but has different systems.

78. Report from County Councillor and District Councillor Henry Batchelor – their reports had been circulated to councillors

The potential solar farm north of Balsham - Two planning officers who have experience of a recent successful application for a solar farm have offered to meet action groups and council so explain the process and to explain how the community might be able to influence elements of the impact and some benefits for the community. A meeting will be set up for community groups in the next 2 weeks. Planning for such big facilities is decided nationally with the secretary of state making the final decision. There will be a formal consultation about the solar farm over the summer.

There is no current highway officer for our area, as they are recruiting and hope to have someone in place soon. Bradley and his colleague are trying to help in the meanwhile. Once the role is filled there will be opportunities for face-to-face meetings with highway officers quarter or bi-monthly.

MR
4/3/25

The engineers have been commissioned to work on the new park and ride towards Balsham, and the only current (uncosted) greenway route between Hildersham and Abington would be along Pampisford Road.

Henry and John Batchelor left the meeting.

79. Feedback on actions from the last meetings

- a) The resuscitation training session took place on 19th November in the village hall and was attended by 9-10 residents.
- b) Outcome of conversation with local farmer about allowing residents to use his land to walk safely along the road to Balsham. The 'unofficial' footpath was land being managed under a stewardship scheme to protect it, so should not have been walked on, despite requests from the farmer the public continued to walk on this land. The field has now been ploughed to the edge of the field as the stewardship scheme is at an end, and There will be no footpath on the land.
- c) How to go about getting the speed limit on Back Road reduced. Councillor do not intend to take any action on this now.

80. Update on External Audit

- a) The September notice has been posted up as requested by the External Auditor, but the audit was not concluded until 13th December. The external auditor had requested that several figures on the Section 2 AGAR be amended to ensure that the final figure agreed with the bank balance; however, the figures suggested do not balance therefore has contacted the external auditor. Also identified was weakness in relation to Internal Control Objective C, action should be taken to address

81. Biodiversity

- a) Councillors discuss the options for biodiversity suggested by the Hildersham Nature Recovery Group. Jean was thanked by Mark for all the work she and her team had done to produce suggestions for biodiversity actions the council and community could take.
Action: Rob Clay to speak to Gerald Franklin about whether he could cut the South Holding once a year to encourage growth; although councillors suspected that this would break the set-a-side rules and the payments received for it.
It was suggested that the North Holding could have an unploughed boundary around it to encourage biodiversity, although it was also suggested that the sprays used may compromise this. **Action: Mark** to talk to Gerald Franklin about this.
Council to set a budget figure for biodiversity for 2025.

82. Budget and precept for the council for 2025

- a) Can councillors reconsider the draft budget and any amendment they would like to make in light of CCC possibly taking on the verge management, the cost of cutting the plantation, the cost of power to pedestrian lights (£400), contribute to the community scheme, Neighbourhood plan (£300-£500) and the ditch work being funded by the Trust?
Councillors unanimously agreed to leave the figure for grass cutting to cover the cost of the new plantation cutting and the play area, to reduce the pedestrian light figure to £150, add £500 for the Neighbourhood Plan, add £1000 for biodiversity and to deduct the £4,000 for the ditch clearance as the Trust was to fund this.
- b) **Councillors review the agreed precept for 2025 and unanimously agreed to reduce the precept to the current level of £13,500.**

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83. Neighbourhood Plan.

a) Update - there was no further news.

84. Correspondences

a) Update on transferring the verge grass cutting to the County Council. The Clerk had emailed Emma Stannard numerous times, had left a phone message and Henry Batchelor had emailed her too, but there had been no response. Henry agreed to email again.

85. Finance

a) Councillors unanimously agreed to authorise the payments and approve the financial statement dated 14/01/2025.

86. Open Forum for Parishioners to make comments or raise items - Jane Kelly explained that she had attended the unofficial consultation meeting held by Kingsway and had learned nothing further than the information that was on their website.

87. Items for the next meeting's agenda on 11th March 2025
Councillors agreed to hold the March meeting earlier to enable to councillors to be present; it would be held on 4th March 2025.

Items to be discussed should include biodiversity and the climate emergency statement

Meeting ended at 8.22pm

M/R
4/3/25

Agenda for the Hildersham Land Management

This meeting follows the Parish Council meeting

The meeting started at 8.22pm

Present: Mark Logan, Rob Clay, David Mercer, Tom Barton-Owen and the Clerk

1. Maintenance of the new plantation-

a) Maintenance of the plantation grass cutting. Clerk needs to obtain quotes but has been awaiting confirmation from CCC about verge cutting before contacting contractors to avoid duplication of visits to Hildersham. **Action: Clerk** to obtain quotations to cut the plantation and the play area.

2. Allotment

a) When is the next Inspection of the allotment plots to take place in the Spring as we could advertise this on the noticeboard on the allotments. No date in spring was agreed.

b) Creation of an allotment WhatsApp group. There are now 4 members on the group.

c) The large tree on Mr Cross old allotment has been cut down.

3. South Holding

a) Stolen bollards – a wide trench to be dug to deter unwanted visitors, but has not been dug yet.

4. Recreation Ground

a) Clearance of ditch to ensure it helps the land to drain when flooded, now the pipe to the river is clear. The Council had contacted three contractors but only received quotations from two contractors, one of which was extremely expensive (£20,000 to clear the ditch). Councillors unanimously agreed that Jonathan Sutherland of JSB Agricultural's quotation should be accepted, once he sent us a copy of his public liability statement.

b) New gate post has been installed by the bridge and the plantation gate has been installed.

5. Finance

a) Update on payments made from the account and the balance which were unchanged for the last meeting.

b) Update on opening/renaming a Lloyds Trust interest account to transfer the £20,000 into. It was agreed unanimously that the existing Lloyds bank 'Land'

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interest account should be used as the Trust interest account, and the £20,000 should be transferred into this account to earn interest.

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4/3/25