

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 12th November 2024 at Hildersham Village Hall.

Meeting started at 7.32pm

Present: Mark Logan, Darren Long, David Mercer, District Councillor John Batchelor, County and District Councillor Henry Batchelor, 6 members of the public and the Clerk.

57. Ian Walters, a councillor at Duford Parish Council gave a presentation with slides explaining how their Duford Parish Council had created a biodiversity policy and the actions it had taken. He talked about the declining number of plants, animals and insects over the last few decades in the UK. The council had worked to create connected nature corridors in their community working with farmers, and local businesses by linking their green spaces. They had protected their verges and encouraged residents to create ponds in their gardens as well to leave areas of their garden as wildlife spaces, and planting hedges and installing bird and bat boxes. Residents had been encouraged to plant pollinator plants for insects, particularly bees. In their village allotments, they used community chest funds to create boundary hedges. Mark Logan thanked Ian Walters for his helpful talk and presentation.

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

59. Apologies- Apologies were received and unanimously accepted by councillors from Rob Clay.

60. 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.

61. Approval of the minutes from the last meetings on 24th September, and the planning meeting on 24th October 2024. The minutes were unanimously approved.

62. Report from District Councillor John Batchelor

He updated the council on the District Council's four-day week working, explaining that the new Government would permit it to do as it wanted rather than challenging the new work pattern. There would be a consultation in January about the 4-day week. During the year trial of working a 4-day week weekly performance data had been sent to the Government. The council believed that this new working pattern had improved productivity and staff retention, as well as saving money on reduced recruitment costs and temporary staff.

63. Report from County Councillor and District Councillor Henry Batchelor

Kingsway Solar would be undertaking an informal consultation about plan for the largest solar farm in the UK which was available on their website. The public consultations would also take place at Balsham on Friday and at West Wrating on Saturday of this week, to explain the likely impact locally.

MJFm
14/11/2024

The next phase of the road upgrade would start soon as the Haverhill to Abington work was done and it was almost complete. The next project would be the travel hub on the Brabraham side of the A11 which would be funded by central government. The guided bus route was likely to travel through the local villages to Addenbrookes and Cambridge.

64. Feedback on actions from the last meetings

- a) The resuscitation training session will take place on 19th November in the village hall. Residents had been told about the training with notes posted through their doors and a poster on the noticeboard.
- b) Clerk has informed Great Abington Parish Council that this council will not be purchasing a new dog poo bin.

65. Biodiversity

- a) **Adoption of the draft policy** with a suggestion that two items be removed about not use environmentally friendly pesticides near water and that the council work with the county council on verge management to protect diversity. Jean was concerned that any pesticide used may go into the water course. **Councillors unanimously agreed to adopt the policy as it was circulated.**

- b) **Management of the verge cutting-** will this include cutting the plantation land?
 - i) Emma Stannard of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)- asked all councils to update them on the verge areas they managed, the frequency of cuts, how long councils have managed the verges, and the contractors used. Mark had emailed these details to the council. There was an option to pass the management of all or some verge cutting areas to the CCC who would cut the grass three time a year. **Councillors unanimously agreed to request that the CCC cut the verges in 2025, if it was possible to take back responsibility if the new regime was unsatisfactory.** This council has had problems finding satisfactory grass cutting contractors.

- ii) Proposed updated grass cutting regime created by Jean Kelly/the Nature Recovery Team. Jean to contact Emma Stannard at CCC to make her aware of the local flora and fauna for grass cutting purposes. **The Council supported Jeans' request to reinstate the two A4 nature information notices on the green.**

Mark Logan asked the Hildersham Nature Recovery Team's recommendations for what biodiversity action the council should take in the South Holding (with Gerlad Franklins agreement), the recreation ground and around the allotments, ideally for the next meeting.

66. Budget and precept for the council for 2025

- a) Can councillors consider the draft budget and any amendment they would like to make and adopt a version of this. **Councillors unanimously agreed to accept the draft budget with no changes required.**
- b) Can councillors agree the precept for 2025. **Councillors unanimously agreed to increase the precept to £14,000.**

67. Neighbourhood Plan.

- a) Update – More meetings have been held for the documents to be reviewed and edited. There was the possibility that a tree consultant and planning contractor would be engaged in relation to possible plans for the South Holding. Mark Logan thanked Jean Kelly for all the work she has done with the Neighbourhood Plan.

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11/01/2024

68. Year end and further recommendations from the Internal Auditor

- a) Adoption of a publication scheme. **Councillors unanimously agreed to adopt the draft draft Publication scheme, and to the charge of 10p/A4 sheet for information.**
- b) An interim notice was posted up as the External Auditor had not concluded their work by 30th September.

69. Correspondences

- a) Complaint about the quality of the verge grass cutting. The council hopes that the new cutting regime arranged by CCC should resolve these complaints.

70. Finance

- a) Can the Council authorise the payments and approve the financial statement dated 12.11.2024? **Councillors unanimously agreed to the payments listed.**
- b) The external auditor, Littlejohn, requested that the end of audit notice be displayed, which was posted up as requested.
- c) Expenses on Trust land and how the cost will be paid, by the council or the Trust?
- Reducing the height of the allotment hedge – Council to pay
 - Clearing the recreation ground ditch – Trust to pay
 - Pollarding the two willows on the recreation ground – Council to pay
 - Work on the ivy-covered tree and the tree on Mr Cross' old allotment - Trust to pay
 - New plantation gates and replacement gateposts on the recreation ground Council to pay - Trust to pay
- d) Can the council select a contractor to reduce the height of the allotment hedge. Quotes have been requested from three contractors but only one price supplied at £400.00 by JM Watkins. **Councillors unanimously agreed to this contractor being used.**
- e) Can councillors authorise the Clerk's pay increase backdated to April 2024 to £13.91/hr, as per National Pay Agreement. **Councillors unanimously agreed to this pay increase and the payment of back pay from April 2024.**

71. Open Forum for Parishioners to make comments or raise items

Mark Logan agreed to write to Mr Townsend asking him to cut back his hedge. Further to the discussions during the meeting about grass cutting. Jean Kelly explained that cow parsley was a good habitat for breeding insects. A resident highlighted how dangerous the speeding traffic was on Back Road. Mark Logan explained that the council had made several bids for the Local Highway Initiative funding to improve safety on this road, with no success, but was submitting another bid this year. Frustratingly, every Highway office who has visited the location has agreed that improvements are required. A petition was suggested. The speed limit along Back Road is 60 mph; it was suggested that this speed limit should be reduced, possibly gradually. Local people have been using an 'unofficial' footpath when walking to Little Abington along the Back Road, but this is no longer accessible. **Action: Clerk** to contact the farmer to ask if about making this accessible.

72. Items for the next meeting's agenda on 13th January 2025

Change the speed limit gradually on Baack Road from 60mph.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

M. Kelly
18/10/2024

Hildersham Land Management Trust meeting

Present: Mark Logan, Darren Long, David Mercer, one parishioner and the Clerk

Meeting started at 8.55pm

This meeting followed the Parish Council meeting

1. Maintenance of the new plantation-

- a) A gate for the new plantation has not yet been installed- Clerk to chase up.
Costs to be paid by the Trust.
- c) Maintenance of the plantation going forward. Does the Trust want the grass cut as part of the grass cutting contract? As the Council has asked the County Council to take back responsibility for the grass verge cutting, the Clerk to seek prices for the plantation cutting only and it should be cut 3-4 time a year.

2. Allotment

- a) Large tree on unleased allotment plot- does the Trust need to have this cut back or down? Tree to be cut back on Mr Cross old allotment- **Mark** to establish whether we will need contactors to do the work. **Mark** to check how big a job it would be to cut down the ivy-covered tree on Mr Dellow's plot.
- b) Inspection of the allotment plots has been done and the outcome would be sent to the Clerk to include in the invoices. There are 3 vacant plots.
- c) Creation of an allotment WhatsApp group. Three allotment holders have joined the group so far.
- d) Update on reducing height of the boundary hedge at the far end of the allotment and reducing or cutting down an ivy-covered tree in that location. Although quotes were sought for 3 local contractors (JB & B) only one contactor quoted as one thought the job should be done with a tractor -mower which he did not have and one contractor failed to quote. Trustees authorised the Clerk to ask to get the work done at the price quoted by JM Watkins - £400.

3. South Holding

- a) Stolen bollards – an alternative to bollards at the entrance? The local farmer Gerald Franklin will dig a ditch that only a tractor can cross to secure the entrance of the field.

4. Recreation Ground

- a) New Gate post should have been installed for the gate by the bridge from the Recreation ground. No one was sure whether this work had been done. **Action: Clerk** to chase up.
- b) Pollarding 2 willow trees near the bridge, Jon Watkins said they need doing.
No decision made about this

WJF
19/7/2024

c) Clearance of ditch, now the pipe to the river is clear. **Action: Clerk** to get contactors to visit site to quote.

5.Finance

- a) Update on payments made from the account and the balance
- b) Does the Trust want an agreed amount of Trust funds put into a Lloyds interest account? Trustees authorised the Clerk to transfer £20,000 into a new interest Trust account or to rename the existing unused interest account– **action: Clerk**

mjc
18/01/2014

HILDERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Budget for 2025-26

	<u>Budget</u> 2024-2025	<u>Projected</u> 2024-2025	2025-2026
Income			
Precept	13,500.00	13,500.00	14,000.00
VAT	500.00	620.64	350
Interest	300.00	184.00	150
Jubilee grant			
Grass cut rebate	334.83	334.83	334.83
Total	14,634.83	14,639.47	14,834.83
s. 106	0	0	-
S. 106 Interest	0.00	0.00	-
Total £	13,854.83	14,639.47	14,834.83

	<u>Budget</u> 2024-2025	<u>Projected</u> 2024-25	
Expenditure			
Staff costs/HMRC	3,192.80	3,192.80	361.66 recent pay increase announced
General admin (incl website m/ment, fees, m'ship)	1,500.00	329.00	345.00 5%
Maintenance of pedestrian lights	1,600.00	200.00	400.00 guess
Insurance	2,399.00	2,204.00	2,314.00 5%
Village maintenance & tree work (Gates, plants, tree)	1,320.00	3,004.00	3,150.00 5% willows
Play equipment maintenance and grass	120.00	430.00	452.00 5%
NP Consultation	0	0	
Grass cutting (verges and play area)	2,343.00	1,335.00	1,403.00 5%
Auditor and mileage	440.00	450.00	472.00 5%
Fees and subscriptions	in admin	in admin	
Allotment/Recreation Gd/South Holding (fence, clearance,	2,200.00	1,880.00	1,000.00 less expense 25
Legal costs for new housing investigation		900.00	
LHI Contribution speed reduction N'market Rd	1,000.00	-	1,000.00
Donations/Parish Nurse (£2k, £1k 22/23 & £1k 23/24)	0	-	
Community warden scheme			?
Clearing ditch			4,000.00
Total	16,114.80	13,924.80	14,897.66

EARMARKED RESERVES FOR VILLAGE HALL

In 2022 the Village Hall Community Trust agreed that the £13,281.40 remaining earmarked for village hall rebuilding/refurbishment, which included the £1000 contribution for year 2020/21 should be transferred to the Council. to be used for Parish Council expenditure

This is approx the amount to hold in reserves as PCs are advised to hold 1.5 x the precept.

Section 106 funds are 0.12p & Land income held separately for Trust to manage.

Income & Expenditure	
Anticipated expenditure £15,205.66	14,897.66
Less anticipated income £4,334.83	14,834.83
Decrease in reserves £870.83	- 62.83
Precept Request £14,000	?

Notes and points for discussion

1. Costs increases are best guesses or 5% increase
2. PC needs to decide which land projects it will fund & Trust will fund this yr & next:
Improving copse, new swing & play area improvements
3. Community warden schemes should start in 2025- a contribution may be needed?
4. Should the precept increase by £500 to £14,000, cld go down in 2026?

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14/01/2021