

Hockering Parish Council

Chairman: J Blackwell Tel: 07808 927910 e-mail: jonty.b@btinternet.com	Parish Clerk Margaret Ridgwell Tel: 01603 871636 e-mail: hockeringparishcouncil@gmail.com
--	---

MINUTES of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Tuesday 9th January 2024 at the Village Hall, Hockering.

Cllrs Present at the Meeting: J Blackwell (Chair), P Cocker, R Neave, L Parker and B Higgins

Also Present: District Cllr Gordon Bambridge, Mr Jim Freeman, Manager, A47 Project Team.

A47 Project - Mr Freeman gave the Council an update on the A47 project and advised that various environmental and flood abatement projects are included within the plans. Further archaeological work and other minor activities are continuing, but no irreversible actions are being taken until the current appeal has been heard. There is a possibility that further legal appeals will be logged at higher courts which would mean a further delay and increase in costs for this project. Matters discussed included flooding concerns, footpaths, access to Mattishall (there is no plan to open Mattishall Lane at this time as alternative routes only add about half a mile). The Village Hall have contacted the construction company regarding the £10K fund available for the village. They are awaiting further information from the committee to be able to process their request. It was suggested that the Football Club also contact them regarding funding for use on the proposed developments.

Mr Freeman was thanked for attending and then left the meeting at 7.50pm

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence** – Apologies were received from The Clerk, Margaret Ridgwell
2. **To receive any declarations of interest** – there were no declarations of interest.
3. **To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 12th December 2023** – having previously been circulated to all councillors, Cllr Neave proposed, and Cllr Higgins seconded that they be approved and signed. All agreed.
4. **To receive County/District Councillor reports** – District Cllr Bembridge reported that the budgets for Breckland District Council would be published soon. He suggested that the Parish Council send a representative to the 'Wetlands Conference'. He reported that the proposed New Town will be rejected due to increased traffic in the surrounding area and the lack of the proposed Western Link road.
5. **To receive updates from:**
 - a) **Hockering Life** – Cllr Cocker said that a callout for content had been sent out via Facebook and she confirmed that there will be four editions in 2024. Deadlines for content are: 25th April for the mid-May Spring edition; 25th July for the mid-August Summer edition; 25th November for the mid-November Autumn edition. Content submissions should be sent to: pippa.cocker@gmail.com. Committee meetings will be held a month before the publication date. She confirmed that all articles have a Hockering slant and any images need to be in high resolution to be suitable for submission. A website will be set up to allow contributors to transfer articles and images. More details to follow. Cllr Neave will provide the addresses of households that were inadvertently missed in the delivery schedule of the last edition.
 - b) **Village Hall** – The Village Hall Committee will be meeting on the 16th January and will discuss

the possibility of putting picnic benches on the recovered plot. Work is continuing on the kitchen and an outside light over the parking area will be considered.

- c) **Village Church** – Cllr Neave said that attendance at recent Church events had been low and that financial difficulties continue. However, the Church will remain open but even if the Church had to close, ongoing costs would still be incurred.
- d) **Primary School** – Cllr Parker reported that the trip to the Pantomime was a great success and it was noted by staff that the children had been very well behaved at the venue. The school play 'Bake-Off in Bethlehem' was performed in the Hall and was well received.
- e) **Bingo** – No volunteers had come forward to run the Bingo sessions in the village. The PC will put out another request on Facebook and it will be raised at the Wednesday coffee mornings. £383.80 which has been raised at the Bingo events will be banked shortly and will be used for village activities, e.g. Pumpkin prizes, Easter Egg hunt, resources for Youth Club. All expenditure from Bingo income will need to be approved by the Parish Council.
- f) **Football Club** – It was reported that the Football Club are looking for funding to provide an extension to the pavilion and to improve the carpark. The matter will be discussed at the AGM in February. Club attendance is increasing and they are looking at using additional venues for training.

6. Open Forum for Public Participation – maximum of 3 minutes per person – Cllr Bambridge suggested that the Football Club should approach Sport England and Breckland Council to ask for financial support.

7. To consider updates on the following Working Parties:

- a) **Neighbourhood Plan** – The Chairman said that there had been a limited response following an appeal on Facebook for volunteers. It was proposed that an open meeting be held in the pub in mid-February to promote the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.
- b) **Play Area/Youth Club** – Cllr Cocker reported that she has contacted some willing parents who have offered to help with planning the upgrading of the Play Area and the setting up of a Youth Club. She will liaise with Mr Johnson, Mr Bambridge and Mr Freeman to talk about funding options.

If any residents are interested in helping any of these Working Parties, they would be warmly welcomed and should contact the Parish Council for more information.

8. To discuss updates on the following:

- a) **Local Map on the Bus Shelter** – The Ordnance Survey organization will be contacted to purchase a map.
- b) **Parking in the Village** – There has been no real improvement in the dangerous and inconsiderate parking taking place, particularly near the school. Cllr Parker will raise the matter again with the school and Cllr Bambridge suggested that the matter is raised at the next SNAP meeting.
- c) **Grasscutting in Village Public Areas** – Cllr Higgins is investigating the possibility of purchasing a ride-on mower so that he can undertake the cutting of the smaller public areas in Hockering and he asked Cllr Bambridge for his advice on the disposal of the grass clippings. Volunteers will be needed to assist with the regular cutting of the verges.

9. To consider future Village Events – It was suggested that a Village Fete should take place next year, possibly in late June/early July. The Football Club are looking at their diary to try to find a convenient date for everyone. Once a date has been finalized, local organisations will be contacted and invited to take part.

10. Correspondence for circulation - All correspondence had been circulated and dealt with as required.

11. Planning Matters –

- a) No planning applications had been received.
- b) Any other applications received after the publication of the agenda are available on <http://planning.breckland.gov.uk/OcellaWeb/planningSearch>
- c) To note any planning decisions/appeals – none received.

12. Finance & Governance Matters

a) All councillors agreed to approve the following payments and noted the bank account balance:

PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL THIS MONTH: THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK COMMUNITY ACCOUNT					
BALANCE AS AT 12.12.23				£22,818.63	
PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	
BACS	M Ridgwell	Dec Salary	274.60		
BACS	M Ridgwell	Dec Exps	16.60		
BACS	HMRC	PAYE to Period 5	68.60		
BACS	Wix Annual Website Rental	Paid by S Marsh	108.00		
		Total	467.80		
BALANCE C/FWD			£20,464.21		

b) Councillors had been sent a copy of the draft budget and Precept requirement for the next financial year and carefully considered the proposed income and expenditure. Cllr Higgins proposed and Cllr Parker seconded that the Budget be approved and the Parish Precept amount of £10,000 be forwarded to Breckland District Council. All councillors were in agreement.

13. To receive any new items for the next agenda – To progress and receive updates on matters raised above, together with investigating the erection of a litter bin on the bus stop outside the pub.

To note the next meeting of the Parish Council – This is scheduled for 7:30pm on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 7.30pm 2024 in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed