

Hockering Parish Council

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MINUTES of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Tuesday 12th December 2023 at the Village Hall, Hockering.

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

Also Present: The Parish Clerk.

- 1. Welcome and apologies for absence** – Apologies were received from Cllr Higgins and District Councillor Bambridge.
- 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 14th November 2023** – having previously been circulated to all councillors, Cllr Neave proposed, and Cllr Parker seconded that they be approved and signed. All agreed.

- 4. To receive County/District Councillor reports** – District Cllr Bembridge was not able to be present at the meeting but had sent a report commenting on the following matters affecting Hockering:

***Dualling A47 and of course the Western Link** - both of which will, in my opinion, assist this village, and I continue to press for retention and improvement of bus services.*

***Planning** - the site specifics/ local plan consultation starts on 14th Dec for eight weeks, I will get a briefing on this tomorrow.*

***Flooding** - attended ADA in London and WMA in Kings Lynn plus had meetings with two MPs, national and European officials, and others regarding flooding in this ward. Hockering is relatively safe compared with some parts, but we should not be complacent. currently my home is probably the most vulnerable in this village and I am trying to deal with that.*

***Breckland** - will be offering funding for an orchard in the village which you should be aware of, plus I anticipate other funding before end of financial year. Between now and Christmas I will be attending Council, Cabinet and OSC meetings in Dereham and dealing with residents' complaints.*

- 5. To receive updates from:**

- Hockering Life** – Cllr Cocker said that the latest issue of Hockering Life has been delivered although unfortunately some households did not receive their copy – this will be corrected for the next issue. However, there are always spare copies available in the shop and the pub if needed. She was pleased to report that she had received positive feedback from several residents together with ideas for future editions.
- Village Hall** – Following the sale of a neighbouring property the land officially belonging to the Village Hall had been returned. It is proposed that this area could be used for picnics in the future. Breckland Council had sent the PC details of a grant for fruit trees for the village and it was proposed that the Village Hall Committee consider whether this picnic area would be an appropriate place for a village orchard. New fire-doors will shortly be fitted, together with new power points, and the oil tank will be repainted in the Spring.
- Playing Field** – Updates on this are covered in item 7b below.
- Village Church** – Cllr Neave said that the Church had not been able to find a new, qualified Treasurer but the existing Treasurer will carry on at the moment. If a new Treasurer cannot be found, the Church will have to close. As costs increase, and more repairs are needed, fund-raising is imperative but difficult to put into place. Following discussion, councillors agreed to give a donation of £500 to the Church to assist with the maintenance of the churchyard.
- Primary School** – Cllr Parker reported that the hedge around the school had now been cut. The children recently performed their Christmas productions in the Village Hall for friends and

family and everyone thoroughly enjoyed them. The children will also be visiting a Pantomime in Norwich funded by the Friends of Hockering School.

6. Open Forum for Public Participation – maximum of 3 minutes per person – an email had been received asking that the agenda and draft minutes be displayed on the noticeboards and on the PC website in good time. The Clerk and Chairman agreed that this matter will be addressed in future. The resident also asked about the Parish Council's position concerning the upgrading of the A47 and the proposed Western Link road. He was assured that all councillors receive updates from the various parties involved, including NCC Highways Dept, Breckland Council and Jim Freeman, Stakeholder Manager, Galliford Try, on behalf of the A47 Project Team, and fully support both road improvement projects. It was not felt that the road improvement projects would have a detrimental impact on traffic through Hockering. It was suggested that Mr Freeman be contacted to ask if it was possible to re-open Mattishall Lane while waiting for the decision of the Appeal Court early next year. He will also be invited to attend a Parish Council meeting to answer questions concerning these road improvement projects.

7. To consider updates on the following Working Parties:

- a) **Neighbourhood Plan** – The Chairman said that he hoped to make progress on setting up a group of interested residents to move this initiative forward in the New Year.
- b) **Play Area/Youth Club** – Cllr Cocker reported that more volunteers have offered to help with planning the upgrading of the Play Area and a meeting will be held in the New Year to formalise plans and look at possible grants available. It had been agreed that the area needed to be more community-focused to provide facilities and attract support from all age groups in the village.

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 consider updates on the following:

- a) **Local Map on the Bus Shelter** – the District Council had been approached to provide a map of the village but are unable to help. The Ordnance Survey organization will need to be contacted to purchase a map.
- b) **Fly-tipping on Church Road** – The rubbish has now been removed. Cllr Blackwell said that he had also reported to NCC Highways that the damaged bollards and the fencing on Church Road need repairing and that the arrows on the A47 directing traffic to Hockering need repainting.
- c) **Defibrillator and First Aid Training** – the East Anglian Air Ambulance service carried out a training session on Saturday 2nd December. Unfortunately, only 9 residents were able to attend but all agreed that the training was excellent, and they now felt more able to help in the case of a medical emergency. It was agreed that training be offered again next year. Councillors agreed to give a donation of £200 to this worthwhile cause.
- d) **Speeding in the Village and Parking Outside the School** – Cllr Cocker reported that a Traffic Management Officer had attended the site of inconsiderate parking outside the school and spoken to parents. Teachers are also doing their best to ensure the safety of the children during times when cars are parking outside the school, but unfortunately some local residents are parking their cars on the road instead of in their own driveways, meaning that even less space is available for parents dropping off and picking up children. Discussion took place concerning the possibility of applying for a 20mph speed limit through the village when the A47 dualling is completed. An article could be put in Hockering Life asking for residents to give their views.
- e) **Grasscutting in Village Public Areas** – Cllr Higgins is looking into the feasibility of purchasing a ride-on mower so that he can undertake the cutting of the smaller public areas in Hockering. A decision will be made concerning this purchase at the next meeting.
- f) **Bus Service through Hockering** – The PC agreed to support the continuation of a bus service through Hockering, and when the A47 is dualled it was suggested that buses could travel through North Tuddenham and Hockering.

9. To consider future Village Events – It was suggested that a Village Fete should take place next year, possibly in late June/early July. 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) Applications for consideration – Application No. 3PL/2023/1153/HOU had been received for a 2-storey side extension, a single storey rear extension and new open entrance porch, at 6 The Glebe, Hockering. The Parish Council have no objections or comments on this application.
- 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 14.11.23			£22,818.63		
PAY TYPE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL AMOUNT	VAT	
BACS	M Ridgwell	Nov Salary	439.20		
BACS	M Ridgwell	Nov Exps	16.60		
BACS	HMRC	PAYE to Period 5	109.80		
BACS	Hockering Village Hall	Annual charge for PC meetings	200.00		
BACS	Harlequin Colour Print	Hockering Life Winter Quarter issue	386.02		
BACS	East Anglian Air Ambulance	Donation	200.00		
BACS	Hockering Church PCC	Donation for Churchyard maintenance	500.00		
Total			1,851.62		
BALANCE C/FWD			£20,967.01		

- 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. They will revisit the item at the next meeting before agreeing the budget and sending the Precept request to Breckland Council.

13. To receive any new items for the next agenda – To progress and receive updates on matters raised above, including purchase of mower, and discuss and approve Budget and Precept for 2024/25

To note the next meeting of the Parish Council – This is scheduled for 7:30pm on Tuesday 9th January 2024 at 7.30pm 2023 in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed