



# GREAT HORKESLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES

**Minutes of the virtual meeting held on Zoom of Great Horkesley Parish Council**

**Held at 7:30pm on Wednesday 20 January 2021**

**Members Present: Councillors Mead (Chairman)**

**Arnold, Baker, Duckworth, Taverner, Wescomb-Cross & Williams.**

**No Members of the Public Present**

### **1. Chairman's Welcome and Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed members to the first meeting of 2021.

The Chairman reported the very sad news of the passing of Brian Middleditch who was a former Parish councillor and had been a landlord of the Half Butt Inn with his late wife Carole we send our sincere condolences to his family.

### **2. Apologies and Reasons for Absence**

An apology was received from Cllr Ewing and on advice from the Chairman, it was agreed to approve the absence. Cllr Duckworth had informed the Chairman she would be joining the meeting later than the 7:30pm start.

Cllr Chapman sent his apology.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Baker declared an interest in Item 8b the Parochial Church Council (PCC) Grant.

### **4. Public Open Forum Public Open Forum**

No members of the public present.

### **5. Minutes of the last Meeting**

To approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held on the 16 December 2020 as a true and accurate record.

### **6. Village Sign**

The Chairman reported the resident is going to obtain information regarding the dimensions of the sign. Once this information is completed the Clerk will contact Colchester Borough Council regarding the siting and the required consent.

### **7. Village Hall Car Park**

It was agreed that Future Landscapes should be told that they had been selected to re-surface the car park and that there would be a short delay while the Council finished amassing the funds. The other tenderers would be thanked and stood down.

(Councillor Duckworth joined the meeting at 7:55pm)

### **8. Budget 2021 - 2022**

No members of the public were present so the motion to exclude was not put.

The Chairman reported that the finance working group consisting of Cllrs Arnold, Baker and himself had met four times since the last full Council meeting; the clerk had been absent from one meeting in order that personnel matters could be fully discussed. He invited Cllr Arnold to describe the basis for the recommendations that had been circulated to all members; he stressed that no decisions had been made and every item in the draft budget could be debated and agreed at the meeting if members wished.

Cllr Arnold reported that four meetings had been necessary so that members could be confident that the new accounting package was presenting accurate reports. He thanked Cllr Baker who with the clerk had put in extra time to ensure that staff costs were being calculated and reported accurately. He described the assumptions on which the 2021-22 budget was based:

- The Government's furlough scheme would continue until the end of April.
- The village hall would remain closed until 1<sup>st</sup> July.
- There was no sensible basis for reviewing the charges for hiring the village hall, so the budget would have to be based on data from previous years.
- The recommendation on the Clerk's salary from the Personnel Committee would be implemented in full along with the home working allowance.
- The village warden would continue to work at the currently-agreed rate.
- That the cost of the PRS licence would be nil, on the basis of usage in 2020-21.
- That income would comprise the CBC grant ((£864), bank interest (£26) and VAT refund (£900).

It had been noticed after the meeting papers had been published that the cost of the village hall broadband connection which supported its fire alarm and security systems had been omitted from the budget; he asked that £400 be added to cover this, though the clerk was confident that a better deal could be obtained.

On this basis the working group anticipated that the village hall would make a loss of around £5.5k in 2021-22; their recommendation was that this be covered by a transfer from balances.

Other recommendations were:

- That GHPC should re-join RCCE to take advantage of its advice on Neighbourhood Planning.
- Grants should be made to the PCC for the upkeep of the village graveyard and to the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley (DVSV) AONB project,
- That the noticeboard at the end of Keelers Way should be replaced in 2021-22.

Overall, this would leave a deficit of some £43k to be funded from balances and the precept. Cllr Arnold circulated a table setting out the impact on the precept, based on the 2020-21 Band D charge of £33.43, of transferring various sums from balances to close the budget gap.

Members discussed whether a grant should be paid to the village neighbourhood watch to enable various security devices to be bought and distributed to residents. It was agreed that the need for the devices had not been demonstrated and amount required was not clear, so no payment should be made at this stage. The amount was in any case small, so if in future a more detailed bid were made, the cost could be met from balances if appropriate.

a. It was **agreed** that the assumptions on which the working group had constructed the 2021-22 budget, as set out in the spreadsheet circulated with the agenda with the addition of £400 for the broadband connection, were reasonable, given the uncertainty as to when lockdown would end.

b. It was **agreed** that grants be paid as requested to the PCC and the DVSV project but not to the Neighbourhood Watch.

c. It was **agreed** to adopt the figures contained in the spreadsheet, with the addition of the broadband cost, as the Council's budget for 2021-22.

d. Following discussion, it was **agreed** that £6,500 would be transferred from balances to support spending in 2021-22, which would result in a Band D precept of £36.11 being levied in the village, an 8% increase. Members generally commented that whilst this seemed a large proportionate increase, it actually amounted to less than 27 pence per month, which they felt was reasonable.

Finally, Cllr Arnold reported that building on the knowledge gained from putting together next year's budget, the working group would be meeting again to consider whether the accounting system was accurately recording income and expenditure in the current year.

<b>GHPC 2021-22 BUDGET SUMMARY</b>			
GHPC	clerk	21,029.20	
	village warden	10,800.00	
	admin	4,724.00	
	street furniture	2,362.00	
	grants	800.00	39,715.20
Village Hall	income	-20,980.00	
	staff costs	19,117.50	
	other outgoing	7,357.00	5,494.50
GHPC Income	CBC	864.00	
	interest	26.00	
	refunded VAT	900.00	-1,790.00
	excess expenditure over income		43,419.70
	less transfer from reserves		-6,500.00
	balance to be raised from precept		36,919.70
	divide balance by Band D equivalent of 1022.40		1,022.40
	resulting precept at Band D		36.11

## 9. Financial Matters

- a. It was agreed to note payments authorised at the last meeting, and those made under the Clerk's delegated powers since the last meeting and any receipts, as set out in **Appendix B**:
- b. No payment of invoices in respect of goods or services not covered under delegated powers were made.
- c. It was agreed to note the Village hall financial payments and receipts as set out in **Appendix C**: (Available for download on the website).
- d. It was agreed to have the telephone and broadband contract, Plus Net at £22.50 per month for 18 months to start on the 8 February 2021.
- e. It was agreed to release from balances £60.50 to pay the annual subscription to the RCCE for the Parish Council membership.

## 10. Planning

- a. It was agreed not to comment on the application as set out at **Appendix A**.
- b. Two applications as set out at Appendix A were lodged after the agenda had gone out but prior to the meeting. No comment to be made under the Clerk's delegated powers.

**11. A report was received from Cllr Arnold: (Borough Councillor)**

- Section 1 of the Borough Local Plan is to be discussed and hopefully adopted at a full Council meeting to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> February. This will secure the Borough's annual target of 920 dwelling consents for up to five years, a target which can be easily be reached using sites identified in Section 2 of the Plan. This should for the time being prevent speculative development on sites such as the one promoted by Bloor in Coach Road.
- An Officer has advised the siding out work required on The Causeway footway between Geantree and Old House Road will be too much for the Highway rangers to complete. Cllr Arnold has asked for a further inspection by ECC Highways.
- Cllr Anne Brown has been asked to discover who will repair the verges damaged by traffic diverted from the A134 to enable Anglian Water to work on the sewers. It is anticipated that Anglian Water will refuse responsibility because the lanes were not part of the official diversion route. An inspector will assess the damage.
- Despite all the work carried out last year, water is again running out of the A134 surface south of the A12 bridge and also across the footway. ECC Highways have been asked what further work they are planning.
- Flooding was reported by a Causeway resident because the ditch which runs behind properties from School Lane through to Old House Road is overflowing. This may mean that the culvert that runs from the ditch under the Yew Tree car park and discharges into a ditch on the east side of the A134 is blocked. The warden and the Yew Tree manager have been investigating this.

**12.** It was agreed to note the Clerk's report with the addition of the information that the bank had received Cllr Anne Brown's locality budget contribution of £2,056 towards the cost of purchasing the village sign. The Clerk's Report is available to download from the GHPC website.

**13.** It was agreed to note the Village Warden's report, this is available to download from the GHPC website.

**14. Future meetings and business.** It was agreed and confirmed the date and time of the .....next parish council as Wednesday 17 February 2021 at 7:30pm on Zoom.

## Appendix A: Planning Applications

Application No:	Details	Consultation Expiry Date
<a href="#">210054</a>	<b>Meadow Barns, London Road, Great Horkesley CO6 4BT</b> Conversion of existing garage/study area to annex and new cart lodge.	03/02/21
<b>Applications received after publication of the agenda</b>		
<a href="#">210018</a>	<b>Hillside, Brick Kiln Lane, Great Horkesley Colchester CO6 4EU</b>  Single storey wrap-around extension. Two storey rear extension.	05/02/21
<a href="#">210086</a>	<b>Westwood Home Farm, London Road, Great Horkesley Colchester CO6 4BS</b> Change of use of land from Agricultural land to garden land (C3 Domestic)	09/02/21

Accounting Dates: 14 December 2020 – 11 January 2021				
ID	TO/FROM	DETAILS	REF:	PAYMENTS RECEIPTS
83	A & J Lighting	Repair to PC Light Opposite Green Lane	Bacs	£180.54
84	Essex Pension Fund	Contributions	Bacs	£495.39
85	Cllr Mick Mead	Chairman's Allowance	Bacs	£250.00
86	HMRC	NI & Tax Contributions	Bacs	£343.45
87	Contractor	Village Warden	Bacs	£504.00
88	Clerk	Salary & Expenses	Bacs	Left Blank
89	Zoom	Monthly Subscription	DC	£14.39
90	EE Ltd	Mobile Phone	Bacs	£14.18
91	Information Commissioners Office	Annual Payment	DD	£35.00
92	HP Ink Ltd	Printing	DC	£9.99
93	Cllr Arnold	Locality Budget		<b>£1900.00</b>

Duly Signed at the parish council meeting held on the 17 February 2021

Chairman's signature.....