

**HAWSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
AT THE VILLAGE HALL
ON 12th September 2024 at 7.30pm.**

Present: P Cllrs R Alexander (Chair), J Bulbrook, J Lomas-Farley, C Carr, & J West. C Hibbert (Clerk).
SC Cllr Soons (in part); 5 members of the public.
Apologies: P Cllr H Brewis.

The meeting started at 7.35pm.

The filming statement was taken as read.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND CONSIDER ANY APPLICATIONS FOR APPROVAL OF ABSENCE: Noted.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

2.1 Public participation. A resident, who was concerned about the muddy/poor condition of the parking area along Whepstead Road, reported that he had asked Havebury directly to review the parking arrangements to see if any improvement could be delivered.

2.2 County Council. See below.

2.3 West Suffolk Council. See item 2.2.

2.4 Police; no report.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3.1 To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting. JW declared an interest in items 7.4 and 9.2 as auditor of HCC; CC declared an interest in items 7.4, 7.5, 8.4 and 9.2 as employee of the Environment Agency; RA declared an interest in respect of items 7.4, 7.5, 8.4 and 9.2 as Chair to the Board of Trustees for the River Lark Catchment Partnership and in item 7.4 and 9.2 as Trustee of the village hall.

3.2 To consider any applications for dispensations in relation to declared pecuniary interests: no dispensation applications were received.

4. MINUTES FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATED 22nd JULY 2024.

The minutes from the Parish Council meeting dated 22nd July 2024 were **APPROVED** and signed as a true and accurate record of this meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING

A signed copy of the VH lease has been provided to HCC; a copy is still required for the Council records.

6. CHAIR'S REPORT No separate report. It was **NOTED** that the Chair had requested that the clerk to register an expression of interest on the part of the Council in the SCC thermal imaging project. It was **AGREED** that the Council would formally write to PB to thank her for her 8 years' service as a parish councillor.

7. REPORTS To receive reports including the following:-

7.1 Communications; no report received.

7.2 Highways and safety; it was **AGREED** that the Council would purchase three x 30mph replacement signs for the village gates (cost approx. £100 plus VAT – TBC).

7.3 Volunteering; the meeting heard that the volunteer group have renovated the white gates – thanks to DD and have varnished the interpretation board; they have plans to do some work around the brook. Thanks to all involved.

7.4 HCC Drainage proposal working party report. The working party report (copy attached) was received.

9.2 HCC drainage proposal (taken out of turn). The meeting heard that the working party had met on 4 September to consider in detail the HCC drainage proposal from HCC. The meeting considered; (i) mapping showing how the green drains; and (ii) the matters referred to in the

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working party report (item 7.4) including the impact of the proposals on the green and its grant funding and the availability of further soakaway drainage. The Council unanimously **AGREED** to accept the recommendations of the working party and accordingly **REFUSED** permission for the HCC proposal.

2.2 SCC Report (taken out of turn). SC Cllr Soons presented her report, a copy of which will be uploaded onto the website. She has approved the locality grant application (tithe map). The meeting heard that she had followed up regarding the reports of damage to Church Road caused by local farm machinery, but that the damage did not meet SCC repair criteria. She encouraged residents (especially cyclists) to continue to report this damage if it was continuing to cause problems. *K Soons left meeting at 7.55pm.*

7.5 Fallen Tree working party. The meeting heard that a working party (RA/CC/JC) had met by the river to review whether the fallen tree should be removed from the river (as previously agreed by the Council) or left in place to slow river flow as recommended by the River Lark Catchment Partnership. A copy of the working party report is attached, together with a report from the tree warden

8.4 Tree work (taken out of turn). Following full discussion at item 7.5 it was by majority **AGREED** (4:1) that the fallen tree should be removed completely from the river in line with the Council's previous resolution to authorise that work. It was **NOTED** that the owl boxes still need to be erected..

7.6 Clerk. Clerk report received and **NOTED**.

8. CONSERVATION

8.1 Greens: The meeting heard that; (i) the hay making went well; clerk to write letter of thanks to RD; (ii) amendments to the ELMS mapping are yet to be actioned; (iii) the hedge along the Millennium Field needs cutting back – CC to liaise with the PCC

8.2 Footpaths (including appointment of new footpath rep): It was **AGREED** to place an advert in the Village Voice for a resident who might be prepared to monitor the footpaths on a voluntary basis.

It was **NOTED** that a group of residents continues to progress the Lost Footpath Project.

8.3 River proposals - update on grant funding. The meeting heard that the RLCP awaits a response to its recent application for grant funding; a further application is being considered.

9. TO CONSIDER

9.1 Casual vacancy. The vacancy created following the resignation of PB has been advertised; WSC has confirmed that the vacancy may now be filled through co-option.

9.3 Insurance renewal Quotes had been received from Clear Council and Ansvar (£409.65). The quotes were evaluated and it was **AGREED** to renew with Clear (£392.69).

9.4 Agree how to monitor HPC assets for remainder of year. The meeting heard that one of the grit bins was destroyed earlier in the year. JB agreed to take on the monitoring role in relation to the village asset, for which thanks.

AOB The meeting heard that the phone kiosk is so heavily stacked with books, it is impossible to get to the defibrillator. It was **AGREED** to request responsible use of the phone kiosk via the Village Voice. The clerk was asked to investigate dates/cost for possible defibrillator training.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS, APPEALS AND NOTIFICATIONS

10.1 Planning notifications. No notifications were received.

10.2 Appeal re: Application DC/24/0177/FUL Land Adjacent Cullum House, Church Road, Hawstead, Suffolk, IP29 5N. It was **AGREED** not to submit additional comments.

10.3 DC/24/1132/ELEC Application under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 - replace existing poles with 11 metres poles Location Bryers Farm Whepstead Road Hawstead Bury St Edmunds Suffolk. It was **AGREED** not to comment.

It was **AGREED** that the Council would ask WS Cllr Soons to follow up on its earlier enquiry about the landscaping delivered at Woodlands.

11. FINANCE

11.1 To receive and approve the bi-monthly financial summary for July-August 2024; received and **APPROVED**.

11.2 To approve payments to be made. The following online payments were **APPROVED:-**

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Approved

	Detail	Cheque no/online payment	Net (of VAT)	Vat	TOTAL
1	Community Heartbeat Trust – annual fee	online	135.00	27.00	162.00
2	SALC audit	online	177.00	35.40	212.40
3	John West exps PAID	online	43.19		43.19
4	AP expenses PAID	online	7.99		7.99
5	CH refund website fee	online	59.97	11.99	71.96
6	CH wage	online	973.60		973.60
7	HMRC tax on wage	online	26.60		26.60
8	DD - paint	online	11.00		11.00
9	WSC grass cut	online	2412.72	482.55	2895.27
10	SALC - training	online	140.00	28.00	168.00
11	Insurance*	online	392.62		392.69
12	CH exps	online	52.00		52.00
13	CH/JW TBC* - signage	online	100	20	120

It was **AGREED** to award a grant of £150 towards the village Macmillan coffee morning.

12. CORRESPONDENCE The following correspondence was received and **NOTED**;-

12.1 Playground reports; report to go to JW.

12.2 Correspondence regarding damage to Church Road.

The meeting heard that older children are sometimes using the swings on the green.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS Thursday 14th November 2024; 9th January 2025; 13th March 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Distribution

All Cllrs

Website

Noticeboard

Docs before the meeting

CC report

Clerk report

Bi Monthly summary

Working party report and correspondence – trees

Working party report - drainage proposal

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Attachment 7.4 Report of the PC Working Party on Playground Drainage

Wednesday 4 Sept 2024

Present: Ros Alexander, Henry Brewis, Christabel Carr, James Bulbrook, John West

Following discussion, the working party would like to make the following observations to the Parish Council.

1. The map below, supplied by Christabel using EA software, shows that water in the soil drains away from the Village Hall and playground area directly down towards the NE corner of the green.
2. The soil in the playground is composted wood chip, and very compacted. It is highly water retaining.
3. Were an underground pipe to be installed from the playground to the tributary running along the E side of the Green, as proposed by HCC, it would not only affect the grassland for which the PC currently receives Environmental Stewardship payments, but also the woodland strip bordering the tributary. It would inevitably cut through tree roots, endangering the trees. The pipe would discharge high up on a steep bank causing bank erosion and diffuse pollution, i.e. adding to the silt in that stream.
4. While we could apply for the trench line across the grassland area to be taken out of stewardship, the trench would:
 - a. Cause a scar across the green, which we would not want or be able to 'reseed'
 - b. Take at least 9 months to revegetate, and might still remain visible as a band of different plants
 - c. Set a precedent for other applications to interfere with the surface of the green, which the PC has a legal duty to refuse
5. The Village Hall roof covers an area at least equal to the area of the playground. Rainwater from its six downpipes discharges into three soakaways which, we are informed by those involved in managing its construction, are located under the mown area to the East of the Hall. These appear to be working well.
6. There is plenty of space in the playground to install a similar set of soakaways.
7. Were the current composted wood chip to be excavated and replaced with playground quality bark (as also proposed by the HCC, and recommended by a recent playground safety inspection), this would also immediately improve drainage.
8. While the question of expenditure on the playground is entirely the responsibility of the HCC, it is our understanding that installation of a pipe would be much more expensive than modern soakaway(s). The playground has lost two pieces of equipment due to age in recent years and some additional play equipment would be valued by residents.

Conclusion

The working party unanimously agreed to recommend that the PC refuses to grant permission for the installation of a drainage pipe.

Attachment 7.5 fallen tree working party report and correspondence from the tree warden

Report of the PC Working Party on the fallen tree at Hawstead Brook

Friday 30 August 2024

Present: Ros Alexander, James Carr (Tree Warden), Christabel Carr,

Following inspection of the riverbed and bank in the vicinity of the fallen tree, and subsequent discussion, the working party would like to make the following observations to the Parish Council.

1. It is generally sound ecological management to leave fallen trees in situ unless there is good reason for removing them. In rivers they promote the processes of natural scouring, and sediment deposition.

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2. The current tree has an extremely large trunk most of which is clear of the stream except in periods of very high flow. Although some branches were removed last spring to clear the path, others remain lodged in other trees.
3. There is some build-up of silt under the trunk nearest to the roots, and some scouring of the bank on the other side.
4. The kingfisher has excavated a new burrow in the bank further upstream.
5. Movement of a stream in its floodplain is to be encouraged, and there is currently space for this to occur here without it interfering with the footpath

The working party recommends the following conservative approach

1. Remove those branches currently lodged in other trees, in order to protect them.
2. Leave the main trunk in situ.
3. Continuing to monitor the path of the river photographically (as at present) or with a stake inserted on the bank.

Comments from tree officer on Site visit re fallen tree in river

I have quite a few comments which are itemised below. For clarity CC will respond separately.

I believe we agreed to present 3 options to the PC:

1. Remove the tree from the water as previously agreed by the Parish Council in the agreed quotation by Bradnams Tree services.
2. Do nothing with the base of the tree and leave the trunk in the water.
3. Remove the top of the tree but leave the trunk in the water and monitor the situation.

My recommendation as Tree warden is support is strongly towards ~Option 1. The complete removal : as previously agreed by the Parish Council last winter. My explanation for supporting this view is below:

Having looked at this tree in situ and observed the movements of the brook for 45+ years I'm afraid as you know I had other observations on site which aren't recorded. It is naturally up to the Parish Council to be making the decision in the meeting but I would like my thoughts to be represented even if they are subsequently dismissed by the PC.

There has been rapid erosion here before when a tree fell and lodged just a few metres upstream here- this was back in around 1980 so I accept that it was a long time ago! At that time the river moved 3-4 metres and swept away a high bank within 2 years and I fear that similar could easily happen again. The village completely lost a 3-4 metre wide path along the top of the bank which was used by horse riders, children on bikes and walkers.

The river bed has deepened and moved since this tree came down in the last winter as a result of water pressure under and round it on the outside of the tight meander bend in high flow situations. I believe a metre of bank has been lost already this year- the old kingfisher nest has been eroded completely - their burrows are typically dug around 1 metre into a bank. this erosion is happening gently and naturally over time. My point is that I don't think it is in the PC's interest to accelerate erosion unnecessarily and I believe that unchecked this large willow trunk will cause a deep pool to be created here and also considerable bank collapse and loss of land towards the track. In itself this would be natural and fine for the river but the PC has a duty to protect the Green - not at any cost but with balance for the best interests of the Parish. The track is an attractive old green lane and needs to be at least 3 metres wide for machinery and at least another 3 metres of high bank adjacent to it to be stable and safe to use. That leaves 3-4 metres extra at the moment which may seem a lot however once that goes the PC will have a serious decision on its hands -

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Approved

to allow the track to go or to defend and protect it. Directly across the track is also a very large multi stemmed sycamore - the corner boundary marker of the former Drury Almshouses- which is a fine feature framing the green lane and has had a Tree Preservation Order on it since the 1970s. The base of this tree is currently 10 metres from the eroding bank top and obviously the roots will project under and beyond the track closer to the bank top. No protection of a 2 metre high bank is going to be cheap or pretty- it would involve very large wall of Gabon baskets (with further excavation to build them) or sheet piling, both very expensive and best avoided if at all possible. It is usually best to avoid getting into such a situation as the result is usually an eyesore and loss of habitat and natural bank.

At the moment we have an accepted quote for complete removal of the tree and stacking it along the path to keep people, occasional vehicles and dogs from the cliff edge and a protective distance from the kingfisher nest. I don't see why the PC would want to exacerbate erosion to a friable kingfisher bank which could delight children and adults in the village for generations to come. If rapid erosion occurs the bottom line is that eventually some significant engineering revetment - with sheet piling or gabion baskets would need to be erected destroying the natural beauty and habitat which we currently enjoy.

The willow log is substantial and will not rot for many years causing repeat erosion every winter and this is exacerbated here by a sycamore trunk immediately next to it on the outside of the bend which is causing swirling eddys to do more damage.

Please don't get me wrong I'm generally all for leaving rivers as natural as possible but the PC needs to be realistic and value what is special - removal of this one problem tree will allow the natural meander to continue without causing any further problems for many decades to come.

Should Option 3 be chosen might I suggest:

Monitoring the erosion.

Photographic monitoring of river processes can be useful but on its own is tricky to be precise with and prone to errors. Physical markers are invaluable. This would need to be with pins or stakes in the ground I would suggest a series of them at both a metre and two metres set back in lines parallel with the bank top. Short stakes could be put in so as not to cause an eyesore. If monitoring the situation is the option chosen can I suggest that the PC has a plan for what it is going to do and when to act early enough to prevent the loss of the track, natural bank and damage to the TPO tree.

Conclusion

We have a really lovely section of river here, possibly one of the best in the whole upper Lark catchment, the judicious removal of one fallen tree to prevent loss of natural beauty and an attractive and useful green lane access track will not affect the rest of the stretch. We already conserve lots of similar woody debris in-channel where it doesn't cause a problem and there is already lots of great flint & gravel in the channel therefore I don't think the PC needs to feel bad about not retaining this one potentially problematic one. I think the responsible thing to do would be to remove this tree as previous agreed by the PC last winter. In addition removing or cutting back the sycamore stump on the river bank will prevent rapid recirculation of floodwater at the foot of the eroding bank.

Timing of general tree work already quoted for and agreed by the PC: Regarding the timing of all the tree work SB wanted to get on with it before crops are sown if possible as he hoped to run a cherry picker platform down the edge of the Brown's field from Brook Green to avoid taking to on the road which is dangerous and time consuming.

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