

**HAWSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
AT THE VILLAGE HALL
ON 14th March 2024 at 7.30pm.**

Present: Cllrs R Alexander (Chair), P Barham, P Baker, H Brewis, C Carr, & J West. C Hibbert (Clerk).
Five members of the public.
Apologies: P Cllr J Bulbrook; SC Cllr K Soons.

The meeting started at 7.30pm.

The filming statement was taken as read.

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

JB was attending PC training; his apologies were accepted.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

2.1 Public participation.

The applicant for planning permission at item 9.2 below provided some background to his application, explaining that the proposed detached bungalow within the grounds of his home was potentially for use by his parents; he commented that he had worked with the architect to minimise the visual impact of the proposals for neighbours/public.

A member of the public expressed concern about works which had been done to the River Lark to remove gravel; damage had apparently been done to (SCC?) pipework and the work was in his opinion poorly executed, damaging to the river and undertaken at a bad time of year from an ecology point of view; the meeting heard that the Council as a whole had approved an offer from a landowner to remove the build-up of debris/silt blocking the pipe under Bells Lane which has been recently flooded causing problems for road users. The works flagged up by the member of the public were potentially more extensive than the work which had been suggested to and approved by the Council; the agreed work had been undertaken without supervision. A member noted that the offer to unblock the culvert had been well intentioned as an attempt to ease the flooded road; all members of the Council had been consulted before the offer was accepted. It was **AGREED** that all members of the Council would go and look at the work complained of and the Chair would liaise with the landowner who had undertaken this work - as appropriate.

2.2 County Council. In the absence of SC Cllr Soons, a copy of her most recent report will be uploaded onto the website.

2.3 West Suffolk Council. See item 2.2.

2.4 Police; It was **NOTED** that a police representative had visited the village hall recently (only two residents attended). Discussion followed about the recent vehicle photographed driving over the green; it was **AGREED** that the Council would pass the vehicle details to the police.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3.1 RA declared an interest in respect of her recent appointment as chair to the Board of Trustees for the River Lark Catchment Partnership (item 8.1 below); all members declared an interest in item 9.2 below to the extent they are personally acquainted with the applicant for planning permission, who was formerly a member of the Council.

3.2 No dispensation applications were received.

4. MINUTES FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATED 8th JANUARY 2024.

The minutes from the Parish Council meeting dated 8th January 2024 were (subject to rewording of one section) **APPROVED** and signed as a true and accurate record of this meeting. It was **AGREED** to include a matters arising section in subsequent agendas.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT The meeting received the report attached. Discussion followed about the blocked ditches along Whepstead Road; it was **AGREED** that members would

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endeavour to develop a better understanding of the cause of the flooding in the first instance by observation after heavy rain - before the Council considers taking any action to address the issue.

6. CONSERVATION

6.1 Greens: The meeting heard that; (i) three quotes for 2 new fingerposts ranging in price from £470-£837 exc VAT had been sourced (The SignMaker - £695.09; Fitzpatrick Woolmer Design - £837; The Acorn Workshop - £470). It was **NOTED** that using blank posts supplied from Clarke's of Walsham, these could be adapted by the volunteer group to a similar finish and installed to provide entry and exit markers to the newly opened section of footpath on Brook Green for a cost of circa £150. It was **AGREED** to proceed with the volunteer group proposal; and (ii) a free advice session regarding the new Countryside Stewardship agreement has been set up for 22 March 2024.

6.2 Footpaths: The meeting heard that the footpaths are in good condition.

6.3 Bird boxes: Installation of the two (renovated/new) owl boxes is included in the tree quote below.

6.4 Trees on the Green: the tree warden had sourced one quote for the proposed tree work, some of which is required to be undertaken for health and safety purposes (Stuart Bradnam £2,150 plus VAT); attempts had been made to secure further quotes but no contractors were available to undertake this work within the required time frame; it was **AGREED** to accept the quote.

9 PLANNING APPEALS AND NOTIFICATIONS (taken out of turn)

9.1 Planning notifications: The following notifications were received;-

Householder planning application - a. replace existing flat roof to pitched on side elevation; b. additional parking spaces - 4 Bull Lane Pinford End Hawstead Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 5NU Ref. No: DC/23/1807/HH | Status: Application Granted | Case Type: Planning Application

9.2 DC/24/0177/FUL Application for one dwelling on land Adjacent to Cullum House Church Road Hawstead Suffolk. The meeting considered this application and discussed; (i) the proposed location set back within the plot; (ii) the height and scale of the proposed development and its visibility from the public highway; (iii) its relationship to the grade II listed building within the same plot and the conclusion of the heritage report prepared by John Selby in support of the application; (iv) emerging legislation on biodiversity net gain; (v) Local plan policies (particularly policy DM27); (vi) the need for consistency in approach - mindful of its recent support to another infill plot development at the Pound. It was **AGREED** that the proposal appeared to be a project of a reasonable scale on a small infill plot meeting the requirements of policy DM27 and as such it should be **SUPPORTED** on conditions that; (a) due regard is had to any advice from the WSC heritage officer about the impact of the proposal on Cullum House; (b) suitable screening (hedges) is provided/maintained to protect the amenity of neighbouring property; and (c) the WSC gives due regard to the emerging legislation on biodiversity net gain (if appropriate).

It was noted that a new planning consultation re application DC/24/0339/LB had been received after the agenda for this meeting had been issued. It was **AGREED** to delegate power to the clerk to respond on behalf of the Council in relation to this proposal, subject to all members first confirming that they do not require an extraordinary meeting to review any issues arising.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Communications; HB reported that the various communication lists/WhatsApp groups were working well. It was **NOTED** that it remains intended to prepare a flier inviting residents to join the WhatsApp Group/ village email lists for circulation with the final emergency plan - when ready.

7.2 Highways; The meeting discussed the poor state of verges in the village; those present felt a lot of damage was being done by Anglian Water vehicles linked to the laying of new pipeline; it was **AGREED** to; (i) contact Anglian Water to report damage and request reinstatement; (ii) contact Karen Soons to follow up on her offer to get the community highway engineer out to review matters; (iii) consider liaising with Great Whelnetham PC as appropriate. There had been discussion at the previous meeting about acquiring a flood gauge for the section of Bells Lane which is regularly flooded; some quotes had been sought from Ashley/ Shelley; it was **NOTED** that approval would be required to site the gauge on highway land and Karen Soons had already been approached for support. Subject to her response as to whether SCC would be prepare to

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provide the flood gauge, it was generally agreed that the Council itself should not proceed to purchase such signage itself – there are already flood warning signs in situ and drivers ought to know to approach with caution in wet weather. The clerk was asked to review previous correspondence re the status of an area of highway verge at Melpost Farm.

7.3 Volunteering: the meeting heard that the volunteer group has created a number of wildlife conservation areas in Brook Green and has plans to install the bark under the swings; weed the village hall car park, install the finger posts at Brook Green etc. RA commented how impressed the River Lark visitors had been with the work already completed by the group. Discussion followed about HCC’s aspiration to create a soakaway under the play area which they manage.

7.4 Clerk. The clerk report was received and **NOTED**.

8 TO CONSIDER

8.1 Chalk stream proposal - The Chair noted that the Council is a riparian owner of sections of the River Lark; details of a proposal to support a project lead by the the River Lark Catchment Partnership, of which RA is the chair of Trustees, were presented (see copy attached). The meeting **AGREED** to generally support the project and asked to be kept informed of activities undertaken by this group. The view was expressed that some care should be taken to avoid any blurring of the lines between the work of the RLCP and the Council; another view was expressed about the importance of maintaining good relations with all local stakeholders in the area.

8.2 Councillor awards – nomination. The meeting confirmed the nomination of CR for a councillor award (in recognition of his voluntary work litter picking around the village) to be presented at a mutually convenient date by SC Cllr K Soons.

8.3 Confirmation of mowing contract The spec has been amended to include the edges of traffic triangles – this will increase the WSC mowing quote by £232 to £2,412.72 exc VAT. This relatively late amendment to the spec meant that there was no time to seek more quotes for this work. It was noted that WSC have the right equipment for the work and have undertaken this work for the Council satisfactorily for a number of years. It was **AGREED** to accept the amended WSC quote (£ 2412.72 plus VAT).

8.4 Tithe map request. The meeting received a request for funding for securing a digitised copy of the tithe map; CCllr K Soons has indicated that locality funding may be available to support this request. Whilst it is understood that digitisation would be the primary purpose, it is unclear whether there would be any practical use for a physical copy of the tithe map, given its likely large size. It was **AGREED** to defer a decision pending further clarification.

8.5 review asset register. The asset register attached was reviewed and **APPROVED**. Thanks to PB for her work in monitoring the assets regularly.

8.6 To review risk assessments. The report on risk assessments attached was received; the risk assessments for 24/25 were reviewed and **APPROVED**.

10. FINANCE

10.1 To receive and approve the bi-monthly financial summary for January-February 2024; received and **APPROVED**.

10.2 To approve payments; the following online payments were **APPROVED:-**

	Detail	Cheque no/online payment	Net (of VAT)	Vat	TOTAL
1	Wage	online	973.60		973.60
2	Tax on wage	online	26.60		26.60
3	CH – 1&1 website refund	online	59.97	11.99	71.96
4	S Bradnam	online	2150.00	430.00	2580.00
5	CH expenses	online	104.00		104.00
6	Command Pest Control	online	412.00	82.40	494.40

10.3 To consider bond proposal; roll over to next meeting. It was **NOTED** that the funds in the 32 day notice account have been taken off deposit and will be available from 15 April; £10k min

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can be placed back on deposit once the precept for the year has been received - unless a better investment vehicle for this is secured in the meantime.

10.4 To appoint SALC as internal auditor; APPROVED.

10.5 To review adequacy of internal controls. The internal statement of controls attached was reviewed and **APPROVED**. The Council **AGREED** the controls in place were adequate.

11. CORRESPONDENCE AND CIRCULARS

The following correspondence was received and **NOTED**:-

- 11.1 Play area reports for Feb/March 24;
- 11.2 SCC report re condition of Bells Lane;
- 11.3 SCC comments on arts funding;
- 11.4 Neighbourhood Watch info.

Discussion followed about Neighbourhood Watch information; it was generally agreed that this scheme had less current relevance in this rural area; information about any suspicious activity can be speedily disseminated by WhatsApp/email groups.

AOB Cllr PB stated that he would be standing down before the next meeting. Thanks to PB for his work on behalf of the Council.

It was **NOTED** that neither the Council nor the HCC appear to have a signed copy of the VH lease; Chair to provide copy.

Discussion followed about the Chairs' statement for inclusion on the new website. It was suggested that more emphasis should be given to;(i) the Council's role in engagement with residents to understand local needs in order to enable effective engagement on behalf of residents with District and County Councils etc; (ii) the Councils various statutory powers/ duties; (iii) the elected /voluntary role of councillors.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Thursday 9th May 2024 to follow the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Distribution
All Cllrs
Website
Noticeboard

Docs before the meeting

CC report
Clerk report
Bi Monthly summary

Attachment Item 5 Chairs Report

River Lark

26 Feb

RA spent the morning with Sharon Reeves (Norfolk Rivers Trust), Chris and Rupert Brown, and two officers from River Lark Catchment Project (Steph Holland the volunteer Citizen Science co-ordinator, and Glenn Smithson, River Restoration manager) walking the river around the Village Green area, looking at silting by the bridge and the culvert under the road, river flow and fallen trees, and discussing the problem of flood management. We also visited Great War Huts where Taff is (rightly) extremely proud of his section of the river and keen to restore the banks in ways which will protect his site from flooding and enhance the visitor experience. Our visitors from NRT and RLCP were hugely impressed by the natural meandering state of the water course and are keen to return.

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2 March

First water monitoring session with four of the Hawstead volunteers starting with training at Fullers Mill gardens. We then went to test the water quality of the Hawstead Tributary at the bottom of Harram Hill, Pinford End, and Larkfield Corner and one source of the main river either side of Stanningfield pumping station. These tests were all within acceptable limits for Phosphate and Ammonia, but other volunteers testing the Linnet in Chedburgh discovered a major pollution event which was reported to the Environment Agency.

A further session for Hawstead volunteers will be held in the village during March and regularly thereafter.

4 March

Declaration of interest: RA was elected as Chair of Trustees for RLCP for a term of one year in the first instance.

Roads

JW and RA each liaised with CH and Karen Soons concerning frustrations with Suffolk Highways. We have raised concerns over the quality of repairs done to potholes, and the poor state of the verges. In Whepstead Road this is due to vehicles of all sizes not recognising the road as effectively single track in many places, and the verges being washed away by blocked ditches. RA spoke to one landowner before Christmas about this issue but he affected to feign ignorance of the problem. RA proposes that the PC sends him a formal letter

Attachment 8.1 - Hawstead involvement in the River Lark Flagship Project - proposal

In 2021 the government through the Environment Agency identified eight chalk streams, one in each region of the UK, to be 'flagship' examples of river restoration over an entire catchment area. This is what has led to the designation 'Lark Corridor' in the West Suffolk local plan 2024. The Lark Flagship programme, to be overseen by Ofwat, largely financed by Anglian Water, and spearheaded by a local charity, the River Lark Catchment Partnership, is now in the planning stages. It is scheduled to start in 2025.

Hawstead Parish Council is pleased to be playing a small part in that project, and is liaising with other riparian landowners in the village. A group of village volunteers has already started to contribute to the RLCP's citizen science programme by monitoring water quality, flow, and invertebrates in the water at key points across the parish. This is providing baseline data against which to measure water quality further downstream. It will help plan how to restore the river, encourage wildlife, mitigate the ever-increasing threats of flooding, and enable residents to enjoy a beautiful natural resource.

Because the overall project is encouraged by national agencies (EA, Ofwat) and funded by Anglian Water, there is no financial charge to the PC for our involvement, and significant environmental and social benefit to the village and its residents.

Attachment 8.5 Hawstead Parish Council; Register of assets as at 14 March 2024

Description	Location/location held	Value	Date of acquisition (where known)
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The Green	Adjoining Bells Lane and Bury Road	£1 nominal value	
Pound Green	Bury Road, adjacent to Almshouse	£1 nominal value	
Bull Green	Bull Lane	£1 nominal value	
Brook Green	Adjoining Bells Lane	£1 nominal value	
Millennium Field	Church Road – adjoining Cemetery	£1 nominal value	
Village sign	The Pound	£3157	
Bus shelter	Junction of Bury/Lawshall Road and Whepstead Road	£2000	
Swings x 2	The Green – southern boundary	£1501	
Seats x 3	(1)The Green – adjacent to swings (2) The Green adjacent to play area (3) Millennium Field	(1) £557 (2) (3) £300 Total £857	(1)2015 (2)? (3)?
Memorial bench x1	The Green adjacent to play area	£500	
Dog bins x 2	(1)The Green – village hall car park (2) The Green –Bells Lane	£150	
Dog fouling signs	The Green – various locations	£148	2014
Litter bins x1	Adjacent to bus shelter	£100	
Grit bins x 13	Various locations around village	(1) £687.50 (x5) (2) £115 (x2)	(1)? (2)2014

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		(3) 297 (x3) (4) 366.92 x (3) Total £1466.42	(3)2019 (4)2022
Shovels x 13		108	2019
(5) 1x set outside xmas lights; (6) Internal decorations as follows: Xmas tree LED lights x1 2 x colour garlands, 1x white garland, plus timer in box with connector	Village hall	(1)£235 (2) £345 Total £580	(1)2014 (2)?
Emergency plan equipment; generator x 1, gas ring burnerx1, gas cylinders x2	1 Manor Cottages; The Green Village Hall; Kellycroft, the Green	£594	
Noticeboards x3	(1) Village hall car park; (2) Church Road adjacent to Pinford End Farmhouse, (3) The Pound.	(1) £1013.50 (2) £913.50 (3) £340 (est) Total=£2267	(1) 2014 (2) 2014 (3) ?
Interpretation Board	The Green	£990	2019
Finger posts x 2	Hawstead Brook	£400	2019
Gating to village entrances		£598	
Village bench and table	The Pound	£800	
Goal posts	The Green	£215	2014
Defibrillator	Village Hall	£2020	2015
Speedwatch signage	Village Hall	£170	2015
Bat boxes	The Green	£114	2016
Orchard sign	Millennium Field	£98	2021
Well	Bull Green	Notional value	?

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Footbridge	Hawstead Brook	£1375	2017
Speed gun	c/o Cllr West	£1110	2017
Phone box	Pinford End	£1	2017
Defibrillator	Pinford End	£2010	2019
Waymarker signs	Brook Green	£210	2019
Road signage	Larkfield Corner	£324.40	2022
Tree plaque	Village green	£50	2022
Owl Box	TBC	£178	2024
TOTAL		£24,096.82	

Attachment 8.6 RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR 23/24 – 14 March 2024.

Hawstead PC monitors risk in a variety of ways. The PC owns assets (benches, swings, noticeboards etc) which are inspected regularly as per the agreed annual monitoring schedule. An assessment of the risk the use of these assets poses to the community is set out in a separate document and the condition of the assets is monitored regularly in case this impacts onto the risk assessment. In particular Councillor PB undertakes quarterly visual checks on these assets; WSC undertakes monthly checks on the swings on the Green for safety. Issues raised in 23/24 and still ongoing are summarised below:- A couple of low risk findings about paint/ footings on the swings have been notified during 23/24 in the WSC reports.

Recommendation the volunteer group has been addressing the issues highlighted through the course of their work.

No issues raised during course of year re defibrillator, Xmas lights and emergency plan equipment. The generator was serviced in Autumn 2023; it will be necessary to find someone able to undertake the next annual service in Autumn 2024.

Recommendation – clerk to check with relevant residents.

The Council benefits from the expertise of a resident tree warden; following significant work in 17/18, further tree work is due to be undertaken in 2024.

Recommendation – Keep under review.

The Council owns two defibrillators at the village hall and Pinford End.

Recommendation –clerk to check these have been being monitored by residents.

Monitoring of internal controls and procedures. Relevant risks are identified and graded annually alongside annual monitoring schemes; Councillors monitor the system of controls in accordance with these procedures through the year. Councillors are asked to verify the bank balances at each meeting.

C Hibbert

Hawstead PC

**Attachment 10.5 HAWSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL
 INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024**

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Hawstead Parish Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

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Approved

The Council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

THE COUNCIL:

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at a full meeting of the Council. The Council will approve the level of precept for the following financial year at a full meeting of the Council. The Council monitors progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carries out regular reviews of financial matters throughout the year. The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

PAYMENTS:

All payments are reported to the Council for approval. Two members of the Council must sign every cheque or order for payment. The signatories should consider each cheque or order for payment against the relevant invoice, sign the invoice and initial the cheque counterfoil/payment schedule. All authorised signatories are members of the Council. No officer of the Council can sign cheques. Online payments may be made by the Council provide that two members of the Council have considered a list of proposed online payments against each relevant invoice and signed each invoice together with the list of payments.

INCOME:

All income is received and banked in the Council's name in a timely manner and reported to the Council.

RISK ASSESSMENTS / RISK MANAGEMENT:

The Council reviews its risk assessment annually, and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

INTERNAL AUDIT:

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The Council appoints an independent internal auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of it's:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal Control
- Regulations
- Risk Management

EXTERNAL AUDIT: INTERNAL AUDIT:

The Council's external auditors submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, which should include a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement on Internal Control.

Chairman

Clerk/RFO

Approved and adopted by Hawstead Parish Council

Meeting date and minute no:

Signature.....