

## Hothfield Parish Council

### Minutes No: 195

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6 May 2020 by Video Call

Present: Mr I Lloyd (Chair) Mrs M Merrion (Vice Chair) Mrs P Sutcliffe, Mr M Cook, Mr R Vernon, Mr G Cox, Mr P Theedom & Mrs C Bell (Borough Councillor) Mrs M Norris (Clerk)

Attendance: Mr Clive Stanley,

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| <b>1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN</b>  |
| Mr Ian Lloyd appointed. Proposed by Mrs Sutcliffe and seconded by Mr Cook.  |
| <b>2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>   |
| None recorded.  |
| <b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS ON AGENDA ITEMS</b>   |
| None received.  |
| <b>4. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN</b>   |
| Mrs Margaret Merrion was proposed and agreed to continue in the role.   |
| <b>5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES FOR CONTINUING TERM</b>   |
| All current Councillors agreed to continue in the roles to which they were previously assigned. Where there are current vacancies on boards and panels, the Councillors agreed to fill the roles where possible and an updated list will be made available to view on the website once agreed. <b>Action</b> The Clerk will issue a revised table (Annex A) with the minutes for Councillors to consider further.   |
| <b>6. DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONTINUING TERM</b>  |
| All current Councillors agreed to continue which the responsibilities for which they were previously appointed. Where there are current vacancies on boards and panels the Councillors agreed to fill the roles where possible and an updated list will be made available to view. <b>Action</b> The Clerk will issue a revised table (Annex A) with the minutes for Councillors to consider further.   |
| <b>7. PUBLIC INTERVAL</b>   |
| Clive Stanley (Webmaster) explained that he and the Clerk had made great progress on the new website. The website that is now hosted by Hugo Fox and compliant with the legislation was now in a position for Councillors to review via the link that he sent to all councillor and requested that they provide their feedback. Mr Stanley also explained that the PC can adopt the new website as soon as they were happy with the content and at this point, he will arrange training for the Clerk on website maintenance. <b>Action – Councillors to confirm they have viewed the website and submit comments where applicable.</b> |
| There were no other public interval items.  |
| <b>8. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS</b>  |

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| Councillors agreed to review the above and advise the Clerk of any discrepancies which can then be discussed at the next meeting.  |
| <b>9. REVIEW OF LAND AND ASSETS BELONGING TO THE COUNCIL</b>   |
| A copy of the fixed assets register had been issued to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It is clear that HPC do not own the Village Hall but that it holds the lease from ABC which it subsequently leases to the Village Hall Committee. The following actions were taken.<br><b>Action. Cllr Theedom to request a copy of the lease from the village hall. Cllr Cox to send the email from ABC which states the position of the village hall. Clerk to add the lease for Hothfield Village Hall to the asset list once established. Clerk to contact the Clerk at Westwell regarding the 4% uplift to establish whether it is a rate agreed for all Parish Council assets as HPC were not aware of the basis used previously.</b> |
| <b>10. CONFIRMATION OF INSURANCE ARRANGMENTS IN RESPECT OF ALL INSURABLE RISKS</b>   |
| A copy of the premium had been issued to all Cllr's prior to the meeting. Currently the Insurance arrangements are tied in until May 21. The PC confirmed they were happy with the arrangement although requested that the clerk question with Came & Co the increase in premium before paying the invoice. <b>Action – Clerk to write to Came &amp; Co to question the increase. Post Meeting Note. Matter now resolved as the increase was in line with the 3 year agreement with the insurance company</b>  |
| <b>11. REVIEW OF SUBSCRIPTIONS –</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KALC</li> </ul>   |
| It was agreed to renew the KALC subscription for 20/21.  |
| <b>12. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S POLICIES AND PRACTICES CONCERNING FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION</b>  |
| The Policies are all held on the website however it was clear that some had not had the opportunity to access them and thus Item 12 to 16 would be deferred. Councillors agreed to review the above and advise the Clerk of any amendments before the next meeting.  |
| <b>13. REVIEW OF COUNCILS POLICY FOR DEALING WITH PRESS &amp; MEDIA</b>  |
| Councillors agreed to review the above and advise the clerk of any amendments.   |
| <b>14. REVIEW OF COUNCILS EMPLOYMENT POLICIES / PROCEDURES</b>   |
| Councillors agreed to review the above and advise the clerk of any amendments.   |
| <b>15. REVIEW OF THE COUNCILS EXPENDITURE INCURRED UNDER THE POWER OF GENERAL COMPETENCE</b>   |
| Councillors agreed to review the above and advise the clerk of any amendments. Cllr Cox wished it to be noted in the minutes that Hothfield Parish Council do not have the power of general competence therefore will not be reviewing any Council expenditure. Any expenditure is of course conducted under strict control and subject to counter signatory checks and regular independent audits   |
| <b>16. REVIEW OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE</b>  |
| Councillors agreed to review the above and advise the clerk of any amendments.   |
| <b>17. DETERMINING THE TIME AND PLACE OF ORDINARY MEETINGS UP TO AND INCLUDING THE NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b>   |

Annex B to the agenda set out the forthcoming dates for the Parish Council Meetings. These were agreed by all present and will continue to be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month.

Due to current social distancing guidelines, the Annual Parish Meeting was cancelled and it was proposed and agreed that this meeting will now encompass residents meeting (that would normally follow this meeting) and could take place in October. This would allow Cllrs the opportunity to update residents on the ideas for the Solar Funding money.

**Action** - Clerk to liaise with Village Hall for availability.

#### **18. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Cllr Cox had previously requested an amendment to the March minutes at Item 5.

*"I believe he asked that residents not, at this time, be offered the option of the newsletter by email and **no** physical delivery."*

The clerk will update accordingly.

The minutes were agreed but not signed off at this meeting. **Action - Clerk to amend minutes item 5 and present minutes for sign of at the next available opportunity.**

#### **19. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The Chairman confirmed that he had received an email from Hedley Greenfell Banks who had agreed that he was happy to put a question in the next edition of the newsletter asking if people would like an email copy.

#### **20. GENERAL COUNCIL BUSINESS**

##### Correspondence

Email from Little Chart PC to Hothfield Chairman dated:

Mr & Mrs Whisson letter dated: 14.04.2020 – Reply sent as per Chairman's email

##### PCSO April Report

Not Received

##### Muga

Cllr Cox had spoken with two building contractors concerning fencing on the Muga, one company had supplied a quote that had been forwarded to the parish council for consideration. The second company were yet to quote. **Action The Clerk agreed to contact them to find out if they would be submitting a quotation.**

##### Data Protection

Nothing to report.

##### Parish Council Website

Covered under Public Interval by Mr Stanley.

##### Risk Assessment

Cllr Merrion confirmed that an assessment was due to take place in April however due to current restrictions this is delayed. Cllr Merrion will report back once she had been able to

access the village Hall. It was also agreed the Cllr Theedom would assist Cllr Merrion as he is on the Village Hall Committee.

#### KALC

A meeting has not taken place due to restrictions.

#### Hothfield Newsletter

Discussed under matters arising.

#### Solar Funding

Discussions to continue further when the PC were able to meet together and discuss in more detail.

### **21. FINANCE**

#### Internal Auditors Report

The auditor's report has not been completed at this time (due to lockdown) Cllr Merrion and the Clerk will review documentation before contacting Lionel Robbins.

#### Completion of Certificate of Exemption

Not yet completed.

#### Review of System of Internal Control

#### Review of Direct Debits

EDF Energy £9.00 pcm to continue.

#### Accounts to be paid

The PC agreed the payment of the following accounts for May 2020:

| <u>CHQ No</u> | <u>ITEM</u>           | <u>AMOUNT</u>   |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
|               | Salary                | £118.80         |
|               | Salary                | £273.86         |
|               | Webmaster Services    | £256.88         |
|               | Subscription          | £346.49         |
|               | Insurance Renewal     | £800.55         |
|               | Newsletter Production | £2,000.00       |
| D/D           | EDF                   | <u>£9.00</u>    |
|               | <b>Total</b>          | <b>£3805.58</b> |

#### Bank Balance

As of the 31<sup>st</sup> March the balance at bank current account – £41,296.81

Including Solar Funding of £11,018.95

Less uncleared cheques: £1353.76

**Total**                      **£39943.05**

### Review of Salaries

The Clerk advised the increase of salary cost was due to the National Minimum wage increasing as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

The PC agreed to review the salary and hours of the Clerk in July 2020.

### **22. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT**

Cllr Bell provided the PC with the update attached at Annex C

### **23. PLANNING**

Applications Received – May 2020

200/00484/AS Unit 4, Paddocks Farm, Bethersden Road, Hothfield, Ashford, TN26 1EN  
Proposed external lighting and extractor ducting to building approved under 15/01468/AS

Parish Council – The parish council did not make a decision upon this application as they were concerned that residents had not been consulted and as such would not have had the opportunity to voice their opinions. Cllr Bell agreed that she would look into the matter further. The parish clerk would also seek an extension to the application at this time.

**\*Secretary's Note** the planning department have confirmed that letters will be sent to residents seeking their views.

### Planning Decisions

No Decision Notices for planning have been received from ABC.

### **24. VILLAGE ACTIVITIES**

Cllr Sutcliffe reported that Hothfield Garden Competition had been cancelled having consulted with Goddington however residents can now send photographs of their garden to be published in the newsletter.

### **25. FORUM FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION**

Hothfield Children's play area has notice from the Borough Council stating that it should not be used. The Muga which is owned by the PC is not displaying a notice at present. It was agreed that we would await the Prime Ministers brief on Sunday and if lockdown rules were not changed a notice should be displayed. Cllr Cook agreed to visit the Muga.

There being no further items for discussion the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:40pm

Signed ..... Dated .....

Chairman

Annex C

### **Report by Clair Bell, Ashford Borough Council ward member for Upper Weald, May 2020**

Council meetings were all suspended when lockdown started with staff and councillors are working from home wherever possible. Over the weeks, video conferencing technology has increasingly enabled internal meetings to take place and some meetings in public. Two Planning Committee meetings have been held via Microsoft Teams Live Events. The first of these saw an application to transform the derelict Newtown Railway Works into a global film and TV hub receive councillors' approval. The £250m project includes studios, hotel, serviced apartments, conferencing facility and quality homes. Thousands of jobs are expected to be created, providing a boost to the economy of the town and the wider borough.

A further Planning Committee will be held on 20th May, and a Cabinet meeting on 28th May. Joining details will be available on the Council's website.

Service delivery has inevitably changed in some areas but I am pleased that the household waste and recycling collections have continued uninterrupted. This service is regarded as a top priority for the Council but delivery has been very challenging as a result staff absence. Friday 15th May sees the re-opening of the Household Waste Recycling Centres, including Cobbs Wood in Ashford. To protect the staff and avoid large queues, there will be a booking system and certain

restrictions in place. Details are available at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/rubbish-and-recycling/visiting-a-hwrc-during-coronavirus>

Ashford Borough Council is administering the Government's Business Support Grant Scheme. More than £22 million has so far been paid out to over 1900 businesses. Contrary to reports in the media, grants have been paid to 88% of the pubs in Ashford borough who are eligible for the grants, and we are encouraging the remaining pubs and indeed all businesses to apply as soon as possible.

The Council continues to support the Kent and Medway Growth Hub Hotline which is providing support to business owners across the county.

Ashford Borough Council has awarded £17,300 worth of emergency grants to 13 not-for-profit groups based in the borough who need resilience help, or funding to enable them to support the people in the borough who need it the most at this critical time. Recipients of the emergency grants include Ashford Volunteer Centre, Tenterden Social Hub and Pilgrims Hospices, who have received £3,000 to enable them to provide extra beds in the Ashford hospice, as well as cover some of the losses from their planned fundraising activities in the borough.

The council has launched its own Voluntary Emergency Response Appeal (VERA) to provide support to those in need. Donations have reached £8,500, not far short of our target of £10,000. Ashford Response Depot has been operating throughout the lockdown, preparing and delivering food parcels with the help of volunteers, Kent Fire & Rescue and council staff including the Aspire team, to people on the shielded list and anyone else who needs food and supplies of household items. The ABC website has a map and list of local volunteer groups throughout the borough. <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-community/emergency-planning/health-and-pandemics/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-help-for-community-groups/list-of-voluntary-and-community-groups/>

There is a new section of the ABC website dedicated to Coronavirus which has detailed information for individuals, families, community groups and businesses on where to get help. <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-community/emergency-planning/health-and-pandemics/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Recovery plans are underway, and services will gradually resume in line with government guidance on social distancing etc. It is interesting to see how, in the midst of a crisis and of course, tragic circumstances for some, new ways of working are emerging, an element of which will hopefully be carried forward in future, to the benefit of residents, employees and the environment.

As elsewhere, the cost of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic is having an impact on the Council's finances. Income from parking charges, for example, has been particularly affected, estimated to be down from an expected £2.4 million to £1.2 million for the year. ABC has received just over £1.3 million so far from central government to help mitigate the loss of income incurred. Local authorities, through their representative bodies continue to lobby for additional support. But there are many calls on government during this challenging time and we shall have to look very carefully at how we manage our budget and shape our services in the future.

I send my very best wishes to all Hothfield residents and hope you are keeping safe and well.