

**Minutes of the meeting of
HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
held on
Monday, 3rd October 2011
in the Committee Room, Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford
at 7.30pm**

Councillors Present: Vice Chairman J Dickson, Mrs E Chippette, Mrs C Cunningham, Mrs L Haskew, Mrs A Heath, R Mitchell, R Patient, J Scrivener, D Weir, Mrs M Weir, A Williams and Mrs P Young.

Also Present: Nigel Towler, Clerk to Hockley Parish Council. Andrew Woodley, Wyvern Community Transport (for presentation only).

79. Presentation by Wyvern Community Transport:

Andrew Woodley gave a detailed presentation bringing Councillors up to date with the scheme. He distributed leaflets and invited questions which were as follows:-

- Q How many passengers can the vehicles take and are there any other charges in addition to the 90p per mile?
- A. The vehicles range between 14-16 seats, all are wheelchair accessible, seats can be removed to accommodate wheelchairs/mobility scooters. Once a booking and destination is requested a form is sent out requesting number of passengers, wheelchairs etc. Regarding cost, we try to provide a volunteer driver but if that's not possible a paid driver is used and we would have to pass on the costs for that booking.
- Q How much notice do you require?
- A On single journeys its up to 7 days notice, with group bookings the more notice the better.
- Q Is there a charge for carers accompanying passengers?
- A None, accompanying carers travel free of charge.
- Q Do you have regular routes and times?
- A Looking to get a regular trip into Southend under section 22 of the Transport Act alike Canewdon, Riverside, Southend, Rochford which is a hail and ride service one can use concessionary rate and claim the money back from ECC; proposing a similar route from Great Wakering to Rayleigh.
- Q Are passengers picked up from home?
- A Do operate a door to door service and people can travel as a regular booking, for example, a club.
- Q Would there be a chance of a regular shopping trip run?
- A Currently have a group from Wedgewood Avenue going to Morrisons and Canvey Island.
- Q Can one book transport for a hospital appointment with a return journey despite not knowing a collection time?
- A Have a small bank of social care drivers that are utilised for hospital journeys. You pay 45p per mile for a social care driver and they would leave a contact number for the Clinic to call when ready for collection or they may wait.
- Q On a shopping trip do you make arrangements to pick the passenger up again?
- A It would be stated when the booking is made and its up to the passenger to check with the driver if they are available if collection is required earlier.

The Vice Chairman thanked Mr Woodley for his presentation and Mr Woodley left the meeting.

80. Apologies for absence:

Cllr Mrs J Barney (another appointment), Cllr Mrs K Cooke (holiday) and Cllr V Leach (holiday). Members accepted the apologies tendered.

81. Declarations of Interest on any matter on agenda for 3rd October 2011:

Cllr Dickson declared a personal interest in the Wyvern Community Transport presentation as a user of the scheme.

82. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of Hawkwell Parish Council held on 5th September 2011:

Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting of Hawkwell Parish Council held on 5th September 2011 and agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting.

83. Financial Report (September 2011):

The Clerk referred to the year to date figure advising that in the main once doubled Members would see what the outturn was likely to be at the end of the year. He reported bank interest earned on £62,000 was a mere £8.00! The Clerk felt everything was in order and with no questions Members accepted the financial report. Cllr Dickson reminded Members of the precept figure last year being £138,541 which he advised would be relevant later.

84. Action List Update:

The Clerk went through the progress report.

- **Parish Plan – restart** – questionnaire analysis to be presented at public meeting on 15th October at the Freight House and publicised in September Newsletter.
- **Parish Footpath Signs** – awaiting answers from ECC and the Clerk to talk to neighbours regarding two of the signs.
- **HPC Notice board** – As above.
- **Clerk to arrange for a sign on the Ashingdon Road at the entrance to footpath 7** – As above.
- **Seek to rename Hockley Woods** – Cllr Mrs Heath queried whether there was a statutory requirement for RDC to answer a letter in good time; the Clerk responded there was good practice but not a statutory requirement.
- **John William Bobin** – Ongoing.
- **Approve use of reserves to fund legal advice re Core Strategy** – Developments in RDC Core Strategy overtook this initiative but a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group meeting would be arranged.
- **Contact Margaret Chambers re photos for 2012 summer fayre** – not many photos available; note placed in the emerging Newsletter calling for photographs to copy.
- **Invite Senior Police Officer to discuss Policing in Essex** – the Clerk speculated the presentation would likely be delegated to Glen Westley, District Commander.
- **Preparation of special edition of the newsletter to comment on Core Strategy** – Newsletter edited and approved by Vice Chairman of Council and going to print mid week.

85. Recommendation from Finance Committee that Hawkwell Parish Council adopt the Fiscal Policy:

Cllr Dickson notified he had reproduced part of the minutes from the Finance Committee for Councillors to read the recommendation themselves which was that **“Council, recognising the parlous state of the economy, where GDP only expected to increase by .1% this year and that wage increases are at a virtual standstill with inflation rising in to a predicted 5% or more and interest rates remaining at 0.5%, in an attempt to control inflation and the consequent reported loss of consumer confidence, resolves to adopt a stringent fiscal policy for 2011/12. Furthermore, Council recognises that the only source of income for the Parish is the precept and income from interest from the Parish bank resources, yet, also recognises the need for the parish to undertake projects, such as summer fairs and the celebration of the Christmas festive season for the enjoyment of families living in the parish during these difficult times.**

Council therefore agrees to adopt the following fiscal policy:-

(1) That the precept will only rise by an amount to cover the inflationary pressures in utility and other necessary operational and administration expenditure.

(2) In order to minimise the increase in the Parish Charge, to carefully cost all projects and programmes to ensure meeting Best Value criteria and, if possible, spread the expenditure on projects over more than one year.

(3) In respect of the reserves, maintain the present reserve policy, and restrain from drawing down from the general reserve in order to decrease the precept”.

Cllr Dickson added that it was relevant to the Chancellors speech that day to the Tory Party Conference in Manchester and the growth in the GDP depended amongst other things on the Government decisions. **Cllr Dickson moved that the recommendation from the Finance Committee be accepted by Full Council.** Cllr Patient, whilst wishing to second the motion, sought clarification that, in view of the Chancellors comments that Council Tax/Precept would be frozen for another year, what would be the effect, if any; furthermore if Council were not covered for inflationary pressures, by adopting the resolution, would Council have to use money out of its reserves or pass the cost onto the electorate. Cllr Dickson reminded Members the Parish did not get any Government support whatsoever, the principal authority received substantial support from the Government and they also made charges for planning and car parking but the Parish had only the precept. In answer to Cllr Patients question, the Clerk advised there was no legislation that allowed Government to cap the parish precept and in fact the Chancellor’s speech would have no legal affect on HPC precept, but there could of course be a political consequence. Cllr Mitchell queried whether the GDP was expected to increase by .1% as after hearing the Chancellor’s speech 1.1% had been reckoned, the Clerk advised that different pundits had given a range of different predictions. Cllr Dickson advised that the actual increase in Parish precept would be determined by the Committees when they do their budgets and depended on what their budgetary needs were. Cllr Mrs Heath suggested that the impending Newsletter should make mention of the precept to prepare parishioners for what may happen. **Cllr Patient seconded the motion; Members were asked to vote and the recommendation from the Finance Committee that Hawkwell Parish Council adopt the Fiscal Policy above was unanimously carried.**

86. RDC – Community Resilience (Town & Parish Council Emergency Plans):
Cllr Patient referred to the third paragraph of the letter and recounted the traffic chaos he had experienced first hand as a result of a serious incident the previous day; with no pre warning signs in place or Police presence to alert traffic of linked road closures, together with road works, roads came to a standstill around the area. Cllr Patient advised that the Manager of the Ann Boleyn Public House had displayed community spirit in the Pubs’ attempts to bring stranded motorists tea & coffee. Members discussed the incident and despite warnings broadcast on the radio they felt it could have been better managed. It was agreed for the Clerk to write to Paul Warren informing him of Members comments and complaints re the inadequacy of the Police in managing the traffic.

87. Precepting for 2012/13:
The Clerk went through his report setting out in detail the procedures in budget setting for 2012/13. He advised that Cllr Leach as Chairman of Council wished to hold Corporate ID and Village Fayre meetings, therefore General Purposes and Parks Committee would be held separately. Cllr Dickson asked that Chairs of Standing Committees pay particular attention to budgeting at the forthcoming meetings and guide their Members accordingly. Members noted and accepted the Clerk’s report.

At 8.20pm Cllr Dickson suspended Standing Orders for a coffee break due to noise disruption from another chamber. Cllr Dickson reinstated Standing Orders and reconvened the meeting at 8.35pm.

88. Correspondence:

The Chairman went through the correspondence one by one.

- 1. Email from RDC re. RDC Budget Survey** – The Clerk informed that he and the Chairman of Council had been summoned to attend a meeting on 13th October with the Leader of the District, Cllr Cutmore and the Chief Executive, Paul Warren. The Clerk reported that RDC had advised this was to explore ‘partnership working’, RDC had already asked some of the Parish Councils to think about taking over some of the RDC operating costs such as the public toilets; in this context he advised that the only thing District could ask Hawkwell to take over that would save RDC money would be Hawkwell Common. The Clerk added that he suspected that there would not be a consequential reduction in RDC Council Tax nor would they provide any funding for the parish and HPC would therefore have to pass on the full costs to the tax payer; it was understood that the incentive for RDC was that if the District reduced their costs they would get an additional grant from Government. From the parish’s perspective it meant double taxation. The Clerk asked Members if they wished to compile a corporate response to the RDC questionnaire and this was rejected.
- 2. Email from Sustainable Communities Act Co-ordinator re. New Proposal to empower Parish and Town Councils** – Cllr Patient proposed the matter be referred to the Planning Committee to enable time for thorough discussion; this was seconded by Cllr Mrs Heath and the motion was carried.
- 3. Letter from RDC re. initial proposals for new Parliamentary Constituencies in England** – Cllr Mrs Weir expressed concern that within Ashingdon, Hawkwell and Hullbridge there were 11 wards and they would have 4 as other parts of Southend would go to Castle Point; Rayleigh and Rawreth would go to Wickford and Pitsea and under this scheme Hawkwell would go to Southend -

instead of Hawkwell going east, it would go sideways and take in 3-4 wards but there were different options.

The Clerk advised that redrawing the boundaries was to balance the number of voters in each parliamentary constituency in principle. Members discussed the proposal and the changes made over the years; on the basis that Hawkwell consisted of rural communities it was agreed that the Clerk respond that Council did not like the proposal as it lined Hawkwell up with an urban area and not a rural area.

4. **Email from RDC re. Community action against crime: Innovation Fund** – Noted.
5. **RDC – Opportunities to Learn & Develop: A Programme for Members** – The Clerk asked Members to look through the programme and advise him as soon as possible of any training needs. He suggested the Planning Committee may wish to attend the National Planning Policy Framework and as this was of interest the Clerk agreed to find out if enough places were available.
6. **Letter from Essex Police re. New operating policing ‘Blueprint’** – Members noted the information with a view to asking questions at the forthcoming presentation (see Minute 84 bullet point 9).
7. **Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter – Summer 2011** – Noted.
8. **Wyvern Community Transport – Notice of AGM (5/10/11)** – Noted.

The Clerk read through the list of information available in the Office and this was noted.

89. Receive Committee/Working Party Reports since last meeting:

Planning Committee

Cllr Mrs Weir moved that the minutes of the meeting dated 8th September 2011 were all executive decisions and moved that they be approved; this was accepted.

Parks Committee

Cllr Mrs Weir moved that the minutes of the meeting dated 12th September 2011 be approved and this was accepted.

General Purposes Committee

Cllr Patient moved that the minutes of the meeting dated 12th September 2011 be approved and this was accepted. Cllr Mitchell reported that the main lights on Main Road pedestrian crossing had been out for a week and the Clerk made a note to look into it.

Finance Committee

Cllr Dickson drew attention to Minute 33 re Section 137 and asked that Members read and understand it; he advised that the fiscal policy and audit had been dealt with satisfactorily and he **moved that the minutes of the meeting dated 12th September 2011 be accepted and this was agreed.**

90. Representative Reports:

Hockley & Hawkwell Old Peoples Welfare committee – Cllr Mrs Weir – next meeting 18th October 2011.

Rochford Old Peoples Welfare committee – Cllr Dickson was unable to attend the previous meeting but he will be attending the meeting next week.

Rochford Hundred Assn of Local Councils – Cllrs Dickson/Leach – meeting in a weeks time.

Hawkwell Village Hall – Cllr Mrs Weir/Mrs Young – no meeting.

Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall MC – Cllr Mrs Chippette – attended a meeting last week and reported the Management Committee (MC) were slowly increasing the roof fund holding nearly £6.5K; they were very pleased that £358 had been donated by friends and family of the late Dave Perry. No responses had been received so far regarding grants for the roof and in the meantime the MC were having to spend money patching up the roof. There had been no major vandalism of late and the MC intended to hold a Christmas Bazaar on 10th December 2011.

Public Transport Liaison Group – Cllr Mrs Weir – meeting Wednesday (5/10/11). Cllr Dickson complained about the No 8 bus service and Cllr Mrs Weir noted.

Community Safety Partnership – Cllr Mrs Young – meeting next week.

Parish Plan Group – Cllrs Leach/Mrs Weir – Questionnaire response analysis to be presented on 15th October 2011 at the Freight House.

Community Forum (formerly Central Area Committee) – meeting next week.

91. Information Reports:

NAMs Reports – Cllr Mrs Young – Meetings suspended until November due to Dale Farm.

92. Payment of Accounts:

There were no questions and Members accepted the payment of accounts paid since the last meeting (September payments) and approved to pay any accounts due before the next meeting.

93. Summary of Decisions Taken:

- Approved recommendation from Finance Committee that Hawkwell Parish Council adopt the Fiscal Policy.
- The Clerk to write to Paul Warren re Community Resilience (Town & Parish Council Emergency Plans) passing on comments re inadequacy in traffic management over the weekend.
- Approved and noted the Clerk's Report for Budget Setting for 2012/13.
- Rejected completion of RDC Budget Survey.
- Email from Sustainable Communities Act Co-ordinator re. New Proposal to empower Parish and Town Councils to be referred to Planning Committee.
- The Clerk to respond to letter from RDC re. Initial proposals for new Parliamentary Constituencies in England that Council does not like the proposal in the sense that it lines Hawkwell up with urban rather than rural area.
- The Clerk to find out if enough places exist for Planning Committee to attend the National Planning Policy Framework and Members to inform the Clerk as soon as possible should any of the courses running be of interest.
- Clerk to investigate lights out on Main Road pedestrian crossing.

The Vice Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Chairman