

# The Local Government Act 1972

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## Parish of HELLESDON

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### Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held at Diamond Jubilee Lodge, Woodview Road, Hellesdon on TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> MAY 2022, at 7.00 p.m.

The meeting was chaired by Parish Council Chairman, Cllr David King.  
The voting strength of electorate in attendance was 9.

#### **1) Welcome by Chairman of Hellesdon Parish Council**

The Chairman welcomed all those in attendance including Councillors and residents of the Parish.

#### **2) Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Draft minutes of the previous meeting were circulated. As the minutes did not provide adequate detail of those in attendance at the previous meeting, it was agreed to note the minutes as the meeting being held.

#### **3) Matters Arising**

A query was raised about the 20mph speed limit on Meadow Way and whether a meeting had been held with the highways officer to discuss the matter. Cllr King will ask the County Councillor to include this in her report to council on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

#### **4) Annual Report of the Parish Council by the Chairman of Hellesdon Parish Council**

Cllr King provided his report to the meeting (appended)

#### **5) Invitation to the Public to Raise any Matters for Discussion**

A parishioner provided some statistics on council tax and precept locally and the services provided. The following subsequent questions were posed:

- 1. Why do Hellesdon residents have to pay more than residents in the rest of Broadland, in Norwich, or indeed than anywhere other than Stalham in the north and Cringleford and Diss in the south?*
- 2. Why the particularly large increase this year?*
- 3. Given that presently Hellesdon Parish services are significantly more expensive than elsewhere what steps, if any, are Hellesdon Parish Council undertaking to ensure greater efficiency and better value for money?*
- 4. Given that it is known that Broadland are a reluctant provider of street lighting what steps are being taken to ensure value for money in this element? In the past, but I understand no longer, Broadland Council used to manage the lighting through two separate contracts one for maintenance and replacements, and another with a separate company for safety inspections. What arrangements does Hellesdon Parish*

*Council have in place to ensure the public are not put in danger by unsafe streetlights?*

5. *Given that Hellesdon has been saddled with high levels of development, in particular on the golf course, that many of us didn't want, but our local representatives failed to prevent, what hope have we that the costs of improvements to facilities like the work on the Community Centre will be met fully from funding provided by the developers not by local residents who are already paying much more than residents elsewhere?*

Cllr King advised that a formal written response would be provided, but gave the following verbal information:

- The roof on the community centre was urgent works and could not wait until the CIL from large developments was received. A forecast of CIL receipts was provided at the start of the development, but there had been delays in the development because of Covid-19 and availability of supplies that had held up the building and therefore CIL contributions. A public works load had been secured to cover the costs of the urgent roof and subsequent mechanical and engineering works.
- It would be difficult to commit to a lesser precept when the CIL contributions are received, due to other pressures on the council. Inflation is currently at 7% and costs to the council such as increases in employers National Insurance, pensions and wage rises (and likely aspirations of the unions to support a higher pay rise due to inflation), and costs of energy and fuel, will all affect the future precept calculations.
- The Parish Council is constantly striving for best value for the tax payer. The Diamond Jubilee Lodge and now the community centre have solar panelling to help reduce energy costs. The boiler for the community centre is also now more energy efficient.
- The annual accounts for Hellesdon Parish Council will be agreed on 14<sup>th</sup> June and there will be a period of exercise of public rights to inspect the accounts.
- A strategic plan is due to be looked at in October 2022 to cover the next two years. This will be a rolling plan so is always 2 years ahead.
- The council continues to look at ways to be more efficient. Suppliers are regularly reviewed to ensure that the council is getting the most competitive rates. However the recent cost rises in fuel and energy costs were not expected.
- Broadland Council is the street lighting authority and therefore the parish council cannot comment on the timing and quality of inspections, maintenance and repair of the street lights. The parish council had previously refused to take on the street light maintenance due to the low level of commuted sum. But if a revised figure is offered from Broadland Council then this can be relooked at.
- The increased development will provide a higher tax base and as such income stream for the parish council.

The question was raised about the time of day that the budget setting meetings were held and that daytime meetings often prevented working members of the public from attending. The Clerk was asked to put this on the next council agenda for consideration.

The Chairman was asked whether he would be reducing his committee commitments in the future. Cllr King responded that he would be reducing his commitments to chairing committees, but not necessarily the number of committees.

It was raised that it would be preferable for the parish council to pay off the public works loan, prior to taking on any more large scale projects.

Concerns were raised that as the community centre had not been used for such a long time, some regular hirers would have sought alternative venues. Cllr King advised that a feasibility study would occur prior to commencing with the extension project, to see at what capacity the community centre was working to. He was also mindful that the Neighbourhood Plan will need reviewing in due course and this will help with establishing the needs of the community.

Concerns were raised about the potential demolition of aspects of the old Hellesdon Hospital as some of the buildings are still very solid, dating back to 1880. Cllr King agreed that he would like to see the oldest part of the building retained, in a similar manner to the redevelopment of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

**6) Consideration and Decisions on Subjects as Discussed.**

The Clerk is to ensure a written response is provided to the parishioner who asked five questions at the beginning of the meeting.

The Clerk is to add the timing of budget meetings to the next full council agenda.

**7) Close**

The Chairman thanked all those who had attended the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Approved.....

Date.....

## **Chairman's Reports 2021-2022 Hellesdon Parish Council.**

Hello, good evening and welcome to the Annual General Meeting of Hellesdon Parish Council. I am David King, and during the past year I have had the honour of being the Chairman of Hellesdon Parish Council.

Strictly, this is the Annual Meeting of the Parish. It is also known as the Annual Parish Meeting and as the Annual Parish Assembly, they are all the same thing. The Annual Parish Meeting is the meeting where the parish council report to its electorate on what it has accomplished in the preceding year.

### **COVID-19**

This year we continued with the ever-looming threat of COVID-19 to potentially have a mutation that could again cause significant issues to our parish, its resident and the greater community at large. Thankfully this year's omicron variation has not caused as many issues as we had feared or had planned for. We as a council did, however, plan for additional services that we may have had to provide in case of another lockdown, as well as ensuring that the other council services could still be delivered in a way that was in line with the current Covid-19 guidelines.

Clerk to the Council

In November of 2021 we sadly lost our clerk, Mrs Natasha Carver, who decided that a career change into private industry was best for her career development. This left us in a position where the role of Clerk to the Council became vacant, and as such a large Parish, it was felt that we would need a safe pair of hands as soon as possible to keep up the pace we are working to.

Mr Russel Reeve, a very experienced clerk, stepped in at very short notice to fill this role as Locum Clerk whilst we recruited and interviewed for a full-time replacement. During this process, Russel was instrumental in guiding us through the process of recruiting and ensuring that we found the right person for the position of Clerk to the Council.

During the interviews we found that one candidate in particular stood out from the others, and we are very grateful that Mrs Faye LeBon accepted the offer of employment as the Parish Clerk. She started with us at the end of February. Faye, who has a wealth of experience as a Parish Clerk to large councils, has really hit the ground running.

I would like to extend my personal thanks to all the members of the officer team during a year of changes of personnel and Covid rules and for adapting so quickly and efficiently during this time.

### **Community Centre**

As many of you are aware, a few years ago it was identified that the roof of the community centre was going to need to be replaced. In 2020 Hellesdon Parish Council instructed a project manager to start drawing up designs for the future community centre. This included an extension to give more space, as well as designs for the new roof. These drawings were submitted to Broadland District Council as part of the planning application to do the work, and the planning application was approved in November 2020.

Whilst working with our designers it was subsequently identified that there were severe dilapidations of the mechanical and electrical system inside the building, so therefore it was decided to replace these systems as part of the refit and roof replacement.

Following the required tender process, a builder for one part of the project and a mechanical & electrical engineer were appointed to carry out the work.

Unfortunately, we have experienced a number of delays on the project, the majority of which were Covid-related, with possibly some impact from Brexit.

We had a shut down of the site following a Covid outbreak in the construction team, delays of materials due to supply shortages, as well as problems with water ingress to the building. These delays have resulted in substantial overall delay in reopening the centre. We had hoped to open in February of 2022, but the delays will result in a planned reopening over the summer. A more concrete update will be provided at the next full council meeting following the next site meeting with our project manager and contractor teams.

## **Playgrounds & Playing Fields**

### **Meadow Way**

Following the large slide replacement in the spring of 2021 which was during the most recent lockdown, we have completed work on replacing the climbing frame. The new climbing frame was installed following the previous one coming to the end of its expected life. We as a council will continue to review this site and look at ways of improving and advancing the facilities it has as part of our forward plan for the years to come.

### **Community Centre Site**

The Centre had the under-nines play area amalgamated onto a single site. Due to the age and dilapidation of the existing equipment, the old equipment was removed in April 2021, and future use for this area was investigated.

The conclusion of this review was that there was a lack of useful facilities for young people aged 15 and over, so a project was started resulting in this area becoming "the Yard". A consultation had taken place with students of Hellesdon High School and the facilities that were suggested have been added to this area. These include an all-weather shelter and a table tennis table being fitted alongside other equipment. These have already become well-used.

We have also installed a Mini Forest at the far end of the site, and we have hopes of this enhancing biodiversity and its establishment becoming a real tangible benefit, in addition to showing other councils in the area that this is a truly worthwhile project to undertake and does not take up much space.

As a Council we are looking at the site as a whole and some forward plan suggestions will be advancing such as looking at the Skate Park area and how improvements and retro fitting can enhance this facility.

### **Mountfield Park**

During the whole of the lockdown Mountfield Park was open 24 hours a day. This enabled our residents to enjoy these facilities for their one-hour exercise at whatever time was most appropriate for them to use it.

Following the relaxation of Covid rules the park returned to its regular opening times. Major effort has been made in planting trees on Mountfield Park. Over 100 have now been planted in a joint project with the Broadland Tree Warden Network. This site is under review and part of the forward plan is to install better lighting on the site, with several options being considered.

Allotment Site and Cottinghams Park

Alongside the tree planting on Mountfield Park, several allotments have been allocated for use as a Community Orchard. Dozens of fruiting trees have now been planted and we expect the first harvest to be in 2023.

In April of 2021, a site for a community apiary had been identified and work was started soon after setting this up. The first hives were installed in May 2021 and we hope that the first production of honey will be harvested in the next few weeks. Details of this project were printed in the latest issue of Just Hellesdon.

### **Past and Future Events**

During the summer of 2021 a café was trialled in the Parish Council office. This proved to have a different outcome than what was expected. This outcome was that we had a proven need for community café facilities in the Parish, and as such a community café will begin running in the Community Centre shortly after it reopening, initially for two mornings a week but with the scope to increase these time and days subject to demand.

The Events Committee has run a series of Coffee Mornings in the Council Chamber in aid of various charities. These have been very successful, and money has been sent over to the respective charities.

The council elected again in 2021 not to have an older residents' Christmas party. This was again down to the risks of Covid. Instead, similar to Christmas 2020, gift packages were delivered to residents.

The planning for Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee is in full swing and we have all plans in place to deliver a celebration on the Community Centre Sports Field. This information has been provided outside of the meeting. The Council hopes to see as many of you there as possible.

I would also like to pay tribute to those who have supported the residents of Ukraine. The parish offices were designated as a donation site for people to leave items that would be of use to Ukrainian refugees. Thank you to those who donated and those who volunteered their time to sort the considerable amount of donations received.

The Parish Council flies the Ukrainian Flag outside the council offices as a sign of support and solidarity for the Ukrainian people suffering from Russian aggression.

### **Future Housing Developments**

Late in the civic year, submission was made by Persimmon homes on Phase 3 of the Project on the site of the Former Royal Norwich Golf Course. Public open days were held in the Parish Council Chamber between 28th and 30th of April. Another public meeting will take place at Hellesdon High school on Thursday 5th of May. We strongly encourage any residents of Hellesdon who wish to make comments on the application to attend this meeting so that all views and concerns can be aired in a positive and productive manner.

The feedback on these community projects has been amazing, and receiving phone calls and messages thanking the Parish Council from these projects has made me enormously proud of serving the community of Hellesdon as Chairman of the Parish Council for the last three years.

I thank you for attending the Annual Meeting for the Parish of Hellesdon, and I will now open the floor for residents' questions. Again, I will remind you that this meeting is only for residents, and any members of the public, press or other media - who are not residents of

the Parish - are not permitted to ask questions at this meeting. However, myself and other Councillors in attendance will be happy to answer any questions outside of this meeting.

**03/05/2022**

***Cllr. David King***

***Chairman Hellesdon Parish Council***

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