

# Hales & Heckingham Parish Council

## MINUTES OF VIRTUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held at 7.30pm on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Present:**

HHPC Councillors: Sheila Beckett (SB) – Chair  
Georgina Buckle (GB)  
Luisa Ferrari (LF)  
Phil Grimes (PG)  
Andy Woodman (AW)

Clerk: Eleanor Bannister (EB)

Other attendees: District Cllr. Kay Billig (until to 7.55pm)

**21/159 Welcome** – The Chair welcomed all present and opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

**21/160 Apologies for Absence** – All Councillors were present.

**21/161 Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda** – None were received.

**21/162 Ratification of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021** – The Minutes were ratified.

**21/163 Action Log from Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021** – See pages 7 & 8.

**21/164 County & District Councillor Updates** – District Cllr. Kay Billig highlighted:

- The positive progress in relation to Covid-19 in Norfolk as of 24/3. [Norfolk rates were below the rest of the UK and at 20 per 100K in South Norfolk. There were 21 in hospital in Norfolk down from 800 in mid-January, and the percentage of those vaccinated with a first dose were: 29% of 16-59 age group, 90% of 60-69 age group, 100% of 70-79 & 80+ age group.]
- That the option to hold remote council meetings would end on 6/5 as it would require primary legislation to extend this date. In the meantime, South Norfolk Council (SNC) had brought forward its AGM to 26<sup>th</sup> April so that it could meet virtually and be quorate.
- There were still some available funds/government grants for businesses or those needing support and residents should contact the South Norfolk Help Hub (01508 533933). SNC was worried about the potential increase in evictions, homelessness and people losing jobs their jobs so it was preparing for this.
- Cllr. SB asked when there would be more detail on the South Norfolk Village Clusters plan and Cllr. KB noted that parish councils would be consulted in April or May.

Cllr. J. Rowe's March report was circulated with the 10/2 Minutes. County Councillor M. Stone had previously circulated Norfolk County Council's 2020-2021 Annual Report. Please contact the Clerk for a copy.

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**21/165 Meeting Adjourned for Public Forum** – No members of the Public were present.

**21/166 Meeting Reconvened**

**21/167 Old Village Hall Working Group** – Given Covid restrictions, the planned meeting with the Management Trustee had been postponed. Action: Clerk to confirm date. It was also confirmed that an application to register the hall as an 'Asset of Community Value' with SNC had been submitted. A decision on this was expected on 7/4.

**21/168 Planning Working Group** – No applications or approvals for planning had been received from SNC.

**21/169 Composting Working Group** – Cllr. AW summarised a report from Alan Mason: The site has been reviewed and was generally in good order. However some scaffold boards had been affected by damp and to counter this it was planned to use the spare boards. It was planned to sieve existing compost into the soil improver and then consolidate the remainder of last year's collection ready to start again in the spring. It was hoped that the first 'collection' would take place by the second week of April, though given Covid, 'collections' of compost material needed to be delivered to the site itself. All agreed that if help were needed with delivering material then volunteers or neighbours could be asked to assist with transport.

Supplies of safety equipment were low so it was planned to address this, with an anticipated spend of approximately £50, for gloves, wipes and sanitiser. All agreed that Alan Mason should inspect the trailer which was no longer used, and consider how best to sell it, ideally locally via H&H Things, and if not successful, then via Loddon & Chedgrave facebook. Proceeds of sale to be placed in the compost restricted funds. **Action:** Clerk to liaise with Alan Mason.

**21/170 Environment & Amenities Working Group**

**170.1 Playground** – The Clerk reported that Norfolk CC Highways division had used spare earth from the 'bund' that was removed from the Hales roundabout, to raise the ground level below the playing field rope bridge to a safe level and that wildflower seeds would be scattered there.

**170.2 Wild-flowering in Hales** – Cllr. SB had circulated a summary on the meeting with Chet Valley B-Line and Saffron Housing on 3/3. It was agreed that the steps to promote wild-flowering needed to be communicated to residents, including with signs in the areas which would not be mowed to encourage wildflowers to grow. Cllr. PG highlighted the increased connectivity / 'joined up landscape' between similar initiatives, including 'Bug Life' which HHPC could help raise awareness of. Cllr. AW noted the local 'Pig Pollinator' initiative with some piglets helping to encourage pollinators. **Action:** Clerk to write to Saffron Housing to confirm next steps. Clerk and Cllr. PG to arrange for signs around bus shelter and to manage communication (Chet Contact Magazine and Facebook).

**170.3 Parish Map** using 'ParishOnline' software – All agreed that given Councillor and Clerk time constraints this project needed to be allocated out. The Clerk had previously volunteered a family member with technical skills for the job on a free of charge basis, but the Council

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decided they should be paid for their support with a nominal payment of £50.00. **Action:** Clerk to confirm with LCB whether they could progress this and to ensure that the Playground and Hales Green Common were added to Google Maps.

**170.4 Signposting of Playing Field** – The Clerk confirmed that the maintenance contractor could create a sign and with a stake provided by Cllr. SB, ensure the playing field was physically signposted. **Action:** Clerk to liaise with DF.

**170.5 Litter Pick** – It was agreed to hold the next Litter Pick on **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May at 10.00am** for one hour. Parking was available at Masala Garden if required. **Action:** Clerk / Cllr. SB to source four more litter picking sticks (cost under £20.00) and to ensure event communicated to residents. Participants would be requested to observe social distancing guidelines and bring their own gloves. Cllr. SB confirmed she would co-ordinate on the day. Cllr. AW recommended that HHPC should be supportive of these events and help encourage the community to get more actively involved so that a community-led litter picking scheme could potentially be set-up. A later litter-picking date that could tie-in with the 'Keep Britain Tidy' campaign would also be considered.

**21/171 Hales Green Common Working Group** – Cllr. LF had previously circulated some practical suggestions for how to improve on-going issues:

- a. **A voluntary steward scheme** – With the support of SNC, training volunteers as stewards who could then advise visitors to the Common on protocol at busier times. All approved the recommendation.
- b. **Regular Inspections of the Common** – With councillors and residents walking the perimeter, documenting changes. (First to take place shortly followed by a second two months later, thereafter quarterly or bi-annually.) Norfolk Wildlife Trust 2019 survey to be used as benchmark. All approved recommendation. **Action:** Cllr. LF to discuss with residents.

Photographs of a bonfire site and tree scarring caused by recent fires on the Common had been previously circulated for reference. Cllr. PG noted that the recently highlighted burnt animal carcasses which had caused some dogs to be sick was also a critical issue and that clearing common land by burning the scrub was not appropriate management activity (as highlighted in the Norfolk Wildlife Trust Report). All agreed HHPC should ask SNC why fires had been permitted, highlighting the damage caused. **Action:** Cllrs. SB & LF to draft letter to SNC requesting support for suggestions a. and b. Letter to also include images of fire damaged trees and request, at the very least, a moratorium on fires.

**21/172 Police & Safety Working Group** – There were no key updates but the initial concern regarding the continuity of the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme had been clarified and it was anticipated that the Hales & Heckingham Neighbourhood Watch Scheme would shortly be formally approved by the national scheme. [For contact details of the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator see HHPC website.] Cllr. SB reported that Norfolk's Chief Constable Simon Bailey would be retiring in June.

**21/173 Traffic & Transport Working Group**

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- 173.1 Hales Roundabout & Highways improvements** – Cllr. AW noted he had received positive feedback on the removal of the ‘bund’ on the roundabout which the Council had lobbied for over the last two years, and all agreed its removal should be posted on facebook. It was also noted that the larger stones had been cleared so the verges could be mowed. **Action:** Cllr. AW to post on Facebook and Hales & Heckingham Things with a photo of the area minus bund. Cllr. SB to highlight in Chet Contact Magazine.
- 173.2 Speed-watch** – Cllr. GB reported that volunteers were keen to start again from 29/3.
- 173.3 A146 Bus Stop Visibility** – The Clerk reported that Highways had hoped to move the sign but then found this was not possible, so the Clerk was seeing if HHPC’s initial request to heighten the sign could be met.

## **21/174 Correspondence Received** - previously circulated/referred to but not covered elsewhere:

- 174.1 The Broads Authority** – were running engagement events as part of the Broadland Futures Initiative. [Broadland Futures Initiative \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk) This included a [virtual exhibition](#) and online survey (until 11 April 2021), to hear from stakeholders and local communities about their priorities.
- 174.2 Hales Green Common – SNC Senior Community Protection Officer:** Reported an anonymous complaint concerning dog-related issues including but not limited to anti-social dog walking activities by multiple parties, dog fouling, and people and their dogs being attacked. The complainant said they had raised these issues with the local parish council who had tried to resolve the 20-year-old problem with posters and a dog walkers code, to limited effect and they felt stricter enforcement was needed. (See item 21/171) It was noted that if there was poaching or a dog attack on a person, it must be reported to the Police immediately, without engaging with the individual/s.
- 174.3 Burning on Hales Common - Facebook message from resident** regarding burning with animal carcasses that made their dogs ill. This was referred to SNC Community Assets Manager and the Community Protection Team were investigating. (See item 21/171)
- 174.4 CPRE Norfolk Awards 2021 – Entries by 28<sup>th</sup> May.** Nominations were open for the 2021 CPRE Norfolk Awards, recognising exceptional projects that celebrated and enhanced the quality of country life. For info: [www.cprenorfolk.org.uk/awards-2021/](http://www.cprenorfolk.org.uk/awards-2021/) It was suggested that Chet Valley B-Line should be nominated but Cllr. PG noted nominations had to be submitted by the project itself. The Clerk had advised Chet Valley B-Line.
- 174.5 Litter Pick – Email from resident** enquiring about next litter pick date. (See item 21/170.5)

**21/175 Annual Parish Meeting & Annual Parish Assembly** – Given Covid restrictions, all agreed to bring forward the meeting from 12<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May so the meeting could be held virtually. [Legislation had not been passed permitting such meetings to be held virtually after 6<sup>th</sup> May.] There was discussion about how to make the Annual Parish Assembly relevant to residents and it was considered better to invite ‘NARS Community First Responders’ to give the talk they were due to give in 2020 when it could be given in person and NARS were less busy. Cllr. SB suggested a virtual talk by Vic Roberts on ‘Pigs & Pollinators’ and all approved. **Action:** Cllr. SB to invite Vic Roberts to make a 5-minute video which HHPC could also post on facebook. Each working group to prepare a

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brief presentation and ideally, include photographs of Councillors in action. **Action:** Clerk to draft and circulate agenda.

**The Chairmanship** was discussed as Cllr. SB had previously circulated an email noting she had been Chairman for three years and recommending that another Councillor took the reins, though she would remain fully supportive. Cllr. AW noted that he would be moving out of Hales shortly so it was not appropriate for him to become Chairman. It was noted that all the other Councillors had commitments that, at this moment in time, made it difficult for them to take on the responsibility so Cllr. SB was asked to remain as Chairman for another year. Cllr. SB agreed on the basis that should another Councillor wish to become Chairman, she would support this.

**Councillor vacancies:** There were currently two vacancies and all agreed to highlight the vacancies to other residents. It was also suggested that younger residents should be encouraged to join. Representation from Saffron Housing and Heckingham Park would also be helpful. **Action:** All to discuss with other residents. [Residents could also consider joining a working group that was of interest to them.]

**21/176 Neighbourhood Plan** – All agreed to trial Parish Council ‘drop-in’ sessions at Masala Garden so residents could meet the Clerk and a Councillor and highlight concerns and/or recommendations. It was agreed the first would be on 20<sup>th</sup> May between 5.30 to 7.00pm, with the Clerk and Cllr. GB present at Masala Garden. Cllr. AW suggested preparing some FAQs. **Action:** Clerk to confirm details with Masala Garden. Clerk to draft template so could capture questions asked and recommendations made. Cllr. SB to circulate list of topics that might be raised. FAQ to be developed from this, including how the Council were starting the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan and **welcomed the input of all residents.**

## **21/177 Finance & Admin**

**177.1 Restricted Funds** – Cllr. SB outlined the recommendations for simplifying the accounts by having less ‘restricted funds’, currently at four i.e. that the Composting Group and Charity Marsh restricted funds remained ‘restricted funds’, but that the playing field restricted funds (£65.05), and the village sign restricted funds were incorporated into unrestricted funds. (The village sign was an asset that the Council was already committed to maintaining, so restricted funds were not required.) All approved this. **Action:** Cllr. SB and the Clerk to amend budget format.

**177.2 Standing Orders** – These were ratified. Next review: March 2022.

**177.3 Asset & Risk Register** – The Clerk had circulated an updated register which was approved. **Action:** Cllr. AW to deliver the projector to the Clerk. Cllr. GB to check the grit bins each October. Clerk to check with Highways when the grit bins are topped up and whether, if rock salt gets wet, it becomes ineffective. (Grit bin at junction of Yarmouth Road/Briar Lane was often full of water.) Cllr. GB to check the defibrillator quarterly; on the wall of Masala Garden, as plugged into Masala Garden electricity. Cllr. SB noted there was a good website for training on the defibrillator and it was agreed a link should be added to the website.

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**177.4 Accounts for Authorisation and Payment:** All below were approved. Cllr. SB agreed to authorise by 30/3.

Payee	Gross Amount	Net Amount	VAT to reclaim	Purpose
KBS Depot Ltd.	£615.60	£513.00	£102.60	Seating by village sign (Paid on 17/2, ratified on 24/3)
Mr D. Foreman	£212.50	£212.50	£0.00	Churchyard maintenance service October to March 2021 for St. Margaret's, Hales and St. Gregory's, Heckingham
Mr D. Foreman	£127.50	£127.50	£0.00	Playground maintenance Jan. to March 2021 at £10.20 p/w, 12.5 weeks.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£955.60</b>	<b>£853.00</b>	<b>£102.60</b>	

## 21/178 Items for consideration of inclusion on next agenda

**178.1** Year End Review & Internal Audit (AGAR)

**178.2** Came & Co – Annual Insurance 2021/22

**178.3** HHPC Communications Policy & Code of Conduct – Review and approval

**178.4** New Member Pack

## 21/179 To receive updates from individual council members – for information only

Cllr. SB outlined the items that would be covered in the next Chet Contact Magazine.

Cllr. GB noted that Footpath 7 (from the Shell Garage to the Common) had been cultivated so it was hoped dog walkers would be walking it to ensure it was clear. [Cultivated footpaths should be reinstated after 24 hours but this was difficult to enforce.]

## 21/180 The meeting was closed at 9.35pm

**Date of next virtual meetings: Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**6.00pm – Annual Meeting of the Parish Council**

**7.00pm – Annual Parish Meeting**

**For further information, please contact the Clerk:**

Eleanor Bannister, Clerk to HHPC

E: [clerk@halesandheckingham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@halesandheckingham-pc.gov.uk) / M: 07703 124 544

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## Updated ACTION LOG

Items 'closed' or 'completed' at HHPC Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February or on the Agenda for 24<sup>th</sup> March meeting have not been included.

ID	ACTION	OWNER	STATUS
21/155.3 <b>21/177.2</b>	<b>Standing Orders:</b> Clerk circulated final version which was ratified at meeting.	Clerk	Completed
19/124.1	<b>Hales Footpath 7</b> – Cllr. SB to get reassurances as noted in 19/124.1. <b>10/02:</b> Discussion around bin lorry turning area which often had 3 cars parked there; the middle car illegally blocking the footpath. Clerk to contact NCC and ask for yellow cross hatching, in at least the middle section. [See also 21/179.]	SB / Clerk	On-going
21/151.1 <b>21/173.1</b>	<b>Verges close to Roundabout &amp; A146 tree planting –24/3:</b> Clerk to continue to chase Highways re: trees. Cllr. SB to check original scheme. Cllr. AW to highlight the removal of the bund on Facebook.	Clerk / SB / AW	On-going
21/148.3 <b>21/170.3</b>	<b>Parish Map – 24/3:</b> Clerk to progress with external support and initial trail via <a href="http://www.parish-online.co.uk">www.parish-online.co.uk</a> . [To also ensure playing field & Hales Common were added to Google Maps.]	Clerk	On-going
21/145 <b>21/167</b>	<b>Village Hall - proceeds from sale: 24/03:</b> Clerk to arrange meeting with the trustee and Cllrs. SB & AW, once face-to-face meetings were permitted.	Clerk	April/May
19/125.2 <b>21/046</b>	<b>Increasing footpath on east side of Green Lane to bus stop - 24/3:</b> Cllr. PG recommended putting on hold until NCC Highways could offer funding support. All agreed and item considered 'closed' for the time being.	PG	Closed
19/71.2 <b>21/015</b>	<b>Community Police Officer – 12/2:</b> Cllr. AW to invite constable to HHPC meeting – Deferred to post Covid-19.	AW	Deferred post-Covid
19/129	<b>Code of Conduct - Behaviour to Councillors &amp; Parish Council staff:</b> Clerk to run final proof send all four documents to Cllr. SB for formal approval and posting on website. [Finalising as part of CiLCA training; now needs to reflect LGA model.]	Clerk / SB / PG	May
19/90	<b>Parish Council external communications - 24/03:</b> Statements covered in relevant sections of Standing Orders, the Social Media & Electronic Communications Policy and, 'New Councillor/Member induction pack'.	Clerk	June
20/071.6 <b>21/170.5</b>	<b>Litter Pick – 24/03:</b> Clerk / Cllr. SB to order four litter-pickers and to ensure communicated in Chet Contact Magazine and via Facebook (PG). Cllr. SB to co-ordinate on the day.	SB / Clerk / PG	On-going
20/073.4	<b>Reduction in Speed Limits on Country Lanes</b> – To be considered in 2021. [The Council for the Protection of Rural England could provide guidance.]	HHPC	2021
21/148.2 <b>21/170.2</b>	<b>Wild-flowering verges &amp; seating close to village sign – 24/3:</b> Clerk to email Saffron Housing to confirm steps agreed at meeting. Clerk to draft ½ A4 text for lamination re: initiative and 'planting'. Cllr. PG to prepare the graphics. All to communicate via Facebook and Chet Contact.	Clerk / PG	On-going
20/110.4	<b>Lower Speed Limits</b> (On to and off Hales roundabout including around central reservation between bus stops) – Cllr. AW to request records from the Police	AW	On-going
21/151.3 <b>21/173.3</b>	<b>Roundabout - 50 mph sign; Option to heighten – 24/03:</b> Clerk to again ask Highways if could be heightened.	Clerk	On-going
20/113.3	<b>Accessibility of Key Parish Council Documents</b> – Cllr. PG & Clerk to ensure key documents are easily accessible on website.	PG / Clerk	Spring
21/148.4 <b>21/170.4</b>	<b>Signposting of Playing Field – 24/03:</b> Clerk to buy required lettering and to liaise with DF to produce and erect sign.	Clerk	On-going
20/133.3	<b>Heckingham Charity Marsh</b> – Clerk to add to 2021 agenda for discussion on scope. Ex-Cllr. A. Mason to be invited to participate.	Clerk /All	2021

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21/149 <b>21/171</b>	<b>Hales Green Common – 24/03:</b> Cllr. LF & Clerk had liaised with SNC who had agreed to improve signage and add more parking bays. Cllrs. SB & LF to draft letter to SNC requesting support for voluntary steward scheme, regular inspections of the Common and for the prohibition of fires on the Common unless pre-agreed and proposed site checked in advance.	Clerk / Working Group	On-going
<b>21/152.7</b>	<b>SNC Rough Sleeper initiative</b> – Council to post whenever it takes place.	Clerk / PG	Completed
21/154 <b>21/176</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Plan - facilitating consultation</b> via ‘drop-in’ sessions <b>24/03:</b> Clerk to confirm 20/5 date with Masala Garden, plus general preparation including template for capturing recommendations. Cllr. SB to circulate topics. Cllr PG to announce via Facebook (HHPC and Hales & Heckingham Things) Cllr. GB & Clerk to keep 5.30pm to 7.00pm free on Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> May.	Clerk / SB / GB / PG	On-going
21/155.1 <b>21/177.1</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b> – Cllr. SB & Clerk to amend budget format.	Clerk / SB	On-going
21/155.2	<b>VAT Return Q4</b> – Clerk to submit end March.	Clerk	Completed
21/155.4	<b>Financial Regulations</b> – Cllr. PG to re: format website to include tab titled ‘Council Docs’ with 4 sections ‘Procedural docs’, ‘Registers’, ‘Data Protection’ and ‘Financial Docs’ so the revised Financial Regulations can be added under Procedural docs.	PG/ Clerk	On-going
<b>21/171</b>	<b>Hales Green – Voluntary Steward Scheme Proposal and Fires</b> – Cllrs. LF & SB to draft letter to SNC. Letter to request support for voluntary steward scheme, regular inspections of the Common, and to request no further fires on the Common. (To include images of tree scarring, with cc: to District Councillors.)	SB / LF	New
<b>21/171</b>	<b>Hales Green – Regular Inspections of the Common</b> – Cllr. LF to discuss concept with residents.	LF	New
<b>21/169</b>	<b>Composting Scheme</b> – Clerk to ask A. Mason to progress sale of trailer.	Clerk	New
<b>21/175</b>	<b>Annual Parish Meeting</b> – Cllr. SB to invite Vic Roberts to make a 5-minute video / presentation. Clerk to draft agenda and circulate.	SB / Clerk	New
<b>21/175</b>	<b>Councillor Vacancies</b> - All to actively highlight the vacancies to other residents.	All	New
<b>21/177.3</b>	<b>Asset &amp; Risk Register</b> – Cllr. AW to deliver projector to Clerk. Cllr. GB to check grit bins each October and the defibrillator quarterly. Clerk to check with Highways when grit bins were re-filled and re: degradation of rock salt with water. Cllr. PG to post link to website with defibrillator training on website/facebook.	AW / GB / PG / Clerk	New

## Re-occurring Items:

	<b>Contact Magazine</b> – Content for May issue due by noon on 8 <sup>th</sup> April. Cllr. SB to circulate draft by 6/4.	SB	Monthly
	<b>Accounts for authorisation</b> – Second authorisation for outstanding payments. <b>Cllr. SB to authorise by 30/3.</b>	TBC	Post Meeting