**NOTICE OF MEETING OF**

**GREAT PAXTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**A meeting of the Parish Council will be held in the Community Room, Great Paxton Primary School, Great Paxton on Monday 18th September 2023 at 7.30pm**

## Members of the Public and Press are cordially invited to attend or to express any views/opinions by letter. If members of the public wish to speak on any Agenda Item, please let the Clerk or Chairman know at least 24 hours before the Meeting.

## All members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend to consider and resolve the business to be transacted at the meeting as set out below.

C. A. Brandon 11th September 2023

Clerk to the Parish Council ([clerk@greatpaxton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@greatpaxton-pc.gov.uk) or [www.greatpaxton-pc.gov.uk](http://www.greatpaxton-pc.gov.uk))

**AGENDA**

**1. Apologies for Absence and Any Declarations of Interests**

1. Apologies
2. To receive declarations of interests from Councillors on items on the Agenda.
3. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any) and to grant any requests for dispensations, as appropriate.

**2**. **Comments and Observations from Members of the Public & District and County**

**Councillors**

1. County\* & District Councillor Reports
2. Public Forum (to allow members of the public to address the Council (10 Mins).

\*Discussion & Update on East West Rail Link - should Councillor Ferguson be in attendance. Also report on the introduction of ‘Garden Waste Subscription Service’.

**3.** **Community Shop**

Andy Wylde to report.

**4. Minutes**

To approve, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2023**.**

**5.** **Planning Matters: Update (if any) on Proposed Developments**

**i. Erection of a bungalow split into two properties, with garden space, 2 car parking spaces, bin and bike storage, Land West of The Bungalow, River Lane: 22/01359/FUL.** Still ‘in progress’.

**ii. NEW - 55 High Street, Proposed Ground Floor Extension: 23/01198/HHFUL.** The Parish Council has raised no objections to this application.

**iii.** **NEW - 77 High Street, Creation of dropped kerb & replace grass area with block paving: 23/01198/HHFUL.** Deadline for comments: 16th September.

**6.**  **Council Insurance**

To endorse renewal of the Council’s Insurance with Hiscox Insurance Co Ltd for the period 1stOctober to 30th September 2024 at a cost of £1056.85. This premium includes tax and fees. The three-year Long-Term Agreement is due to expire in 2024.

**7. Draft Parish Plan: Progress**

Focus Group to report. Draft copy enclosed for Councillors only.

**8. Review of Grants Policy**

Draft Policy enclosed for Councillors only.

**9.** **Street Lighting Replacement: Update**

Awaiting delivery of new equipment. Any further update will be reported at the meeting. A request has been received from a collector who wishes to ‘rescue’ the discarded lamps. Paragraph 14.2 of the Parish Council’s Financial Regulations states ‘that no property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council’. Therefore, **the Parish Council is asked to consider both this request and whether a modest donation might be expected in exchange?**

**10. LHI Update**

To confirm that the LHI Application 2023/24 for improvements to the High Street has been successful and that the County Council’s Project Lead has advised that design documents (for a new MVAS post and reflective hazard markers on the grass verge from Church Lane to the Manor Farm entrance) were in preparation and would be discussed with the Parish Council in due course.

In terms of the 24/25 round of LHI applications, this will open from the end of October. In a change to current practice, the County Council is asking for an ‘Expression of Interest’ from potential applicants. This is to help gauge the number of applications around the County and within each District. This will be assessed via a short survey which has to be completed by the end of September. Applicants will be invited to question and answer style sessions on the process. These are likely to run in mid-October.

**The Parish Council is requested to consider potential applications for funding in 2024/25.**

**11. Support for Weed Spraying Resolution: Correspondence from Steve Count, Councillor for March North**

It has recently been established (after complaints made by residents & followed up by the Clerk) that the County Council had decided not to undertake weed spraying this season. A letter received from the County Council (11/9/23) offered the following reasons for this decision –

*‘In April 2023, the Council changed its operational policy in relation to the removal of weeds. The purpose of the change was to achieve two goals; 1. To improve the natural environment and biodiversity by reducing the use of chemicals that can have a detrimental environmental impact. 2. To reduce the running costs of the operations as part of the overall need to reduce costs across the Council as part of its budget planning process.*

The Conservative Group on the County Council will submit a Motion to the Council Meeting on 18th October to seek to reverse this policy. Councillor Count has called on Parish Councils in Cambridgeshire to indicate their support for the following –

1. Support for the petition <https://shorturl.at/dkFTZ>
2. Writing as a Parish Council to object to the change in policy and to ask for a reversal.

The Parish Council is asked either to use its own words or to use the following example template (which can be amended as required) –

*To: Cambridgeshire County Council*

*‘Please accept this formal objection on behalf of* ***insert name of Council*** *to the change in weedkilling policy that the County Council implemented this year. Our roads, cycleways and footpaths are in a dreadful state due to the explosion of weeds since your policy change. This has an unacceptable detrimental effect on the look, usability, and cost of repair to our highways. Our residents are angry at how you have made our community look. Those who attempt active travel are angry at the state of the weed ridden paths they must dodge. We are deeply concerned at the effect this will have on flash flooding, as gullies and drains become blocked by weeds. We also are aware of the poisonous danger posed to horses by the rapid increase in Ragwort in our area. As a Council we cannot understand the short-sighted financial nature of this decision, as short-term gain will be overshadowed by future repair bills. We are further dismayed that the County Council would implement such a devastating cut to a vital service with no consultation* ***(or no meaningful consultation)*** *with our Council. This blatant attempt at cost shunting onto our Council is unacceptable.*

*We therefore call on those whose decision this was, the “Joint administration” to reverse their disastrous policy. \**

*We ask that the chief executive Stephen Moir, takes urgent action to remove weeds across the County. (*[*stephen.moir@cambridgeshire.gov.uk*](mailto:stephen.moir@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)*)*

*We ask that the Chair of Highways, issues a public statement to reverse this dreadful decision and explain the immediate actions the County Council will be taking to address this. (*[*alex.beckett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk*](mailto:alex.beckett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) *)*

*We ask the monitoring officer to investigate how a major cut to services was allowed take place without engagement with Town and Parish Councils.* [*emma.duncan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk*](mailto:emma.duncan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)*’*

**The Parish Council is asked to decide how it wishes to respond.**

**12. Cambridgeshire ACRE: Membership Renewal**

To decide whether to renew the Parish Council’s membership of Cambs ACRE at a cost of £60 per annum (£57 in 2022/23). Membership will enable the Parish Council to continue to make use of their telephone/email advice service and the resources available via their [online members’ network](https://cambsacre-members-online.mn.co/). The Council will also continue to receive priority invitation to events/training sessions, have a say in the running of the charity at the Annual General Meeting and continue to support rural work across the County.

**13.** **Updates**

* 1. **Speed watch**
  2. **Saxon Green:** Routine Inspection plus Adult Gym check?
  3. **Recreation Ground Management Committee**
  4. **Creation of Litter & Weed Picking Teams?**
  5. **Purchase of Red Telephone Box for Community Use?** Adopt a Kiosk for £1 if one is already in situ otherwise the cost is from £1750. Could be used for a book exchange, dry goods food bank or to accommodate defibrillator. Location??
  6. **Highways, footpaths, trees etc**

**14. Finance Matters**

1. To note the Bank Reconciliation and approve any invoices/expenses for payment (to be circulated prior to the meeting);
2. To verify and sign the Bank Reconciliation(s) for June, July & August;
3. To consider whether to transfer the VAT Refund of £1035 to the Saxon Green Account; and
4. To consider the purchase of a replacement Laptop for the Parish Clerk (Cllr Goodyer).

**15. Date of Next Meeting: To note – Monday 16th October 2023 at 7.30pm.**