

HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Harting Parish Council held in **Harting Community Hall, Peasecroft, South Harting** on **Thursday 18 April 2019 at 7.30pm.**

Present: Mr Shaxson (Chair), Mrs Bramley, Mr Healey, Dr Bowman, Mr Bonner, Mr Powys Maurice, Mr Johnson-Hill, Mrs Dawson and Mr Palmer.

In attendance: Mrs Patricia Walker (Parish Clerk)

There were no members of public in attendance.

278. Apologies for absence: None.

279. Declarations of Interest: None.

280. Minutes from the Council Meeting held on 21 March 2019

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

281. Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public.

282. Matters of Urgent Public Importance: None.

283. Reports from the County and District Councillors

Dr O'Kelly (County Councillor) was unable to attend the meeting and her written report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The report highlighted that Dr O'Kelly was part of a steering group considering the Midhurst Cycle Bypass. The group is looking at ways to develop cycle paths in the area.

Dr O'Kelly is also part of a focus group looking at the County Strategy for electric vehicles.

There will be a drop-in session at the White Hart, South Harting on 3 June 2019 10.30-12.30.

Mr Shaxson gave his final report after serving as District Councillor for 20 years. He noted there had been a great deal of changes during that time, and one of these is the new ward which now covers Treyford and Rogate. This will be one of the largest wards.

Mr Shaxson reported that the Velo South event planned for last autumn, and the Ice Rink provided in Chichester last winter were both officer decisions, having not been previously debated by WSCC and the District Council. The lack of transparency, consultation and communication in both instances were a cause of much annoyance, and both authorities are looking to ensure that similar decisions concerning issues which affect the public are made after proper consultation.

He noted that the Westhampnett recycling site had now reopened for some items following the recent fire.

284. Tree Working Group Report

Dr Bowman reported the progress of the Tree Working Group (TWG) since the last report was made to the Council in January 2019 (minute 213).

The call for volunteers via the Parish Magazine produced no response. The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) do not have groups in this area, but do hold first aid training directly relevant to running volunteer groups and practical courses on topics such as coppicing.

The Council will have to continue to look for volunteers from within the community to work in the Warren. This work would be best advised by a Woodland Management Plan which would prioritise the tasks needed to improve the health of the trees and other flora.

Distribution of the flyer advertising the traffic scheme public meeting could be taken as an opportunity to also ask again for volunteers, as well as asking residents if they would like to join a mailing list to receive electronic communications from the Council.

As agreed at the January meeting, the TWG had investigated the cost of a Woodland Management Plan (WMP) and had looked into potential grants.

Dr Bowman confirmed that quotes had now been received from three consultants able to provide a Forestry Commission compliant WMP. The quotes had all been £1000 + VAT: the same as the grant available via the Countryside Stewardship Scheme for producing a WMP.

One of the conditions attached to applying for the grant, and for other Countryside Stewardship grants, is that the land should be registered with the Rural Land Registry (RLR). Currently, the Warren is not registered. Registration could take some months as the western boundary will need to be permanently marked and the RLR itself can take several months to process applications. Also, negotiations with the adjacent landowners may be necessary as it appears that they have inadvertently registered the Council's SSSI land, presumably because there is no boundary demarcation.

All three consultants are happy to try to register the Warren, one within their existing quote and the others for a 1-2 hour fee.

The ash dieback situation was also discussed as it is prevalent in the Warren. The 18 month 'leaf on' tree-hazard survey is due in the summer. However, at a recent meeting between the TWG and SDNPA's Woodland Officer, it was suggested that the Council should consider felling all the ash trees alongside the B2146. A WMP would be another source of advice on the ash dieback situation.

Councillors discussed the various aspects of the report and agreed it was essential to maintain momentum on the work in the Warren: the time taken to register the area with the RLR and to apply for a WMP could potentially halt work for many months. It was agreed that the Council should commission a WMP immediately and the grant option would not be pursued.

However, it was agreed that the successful consultant should be asked to try to register the land with RLR as it may be useful for future grant applications. It was also agreed that the TWG should continue until a new Woodland and Tree sub-committee of POSAC is able to take over.

The proposals were considered. An amendment was proposed to remove the words *“the grant option only being pursued if the consultant is willing to try to register the Warren with the Rural Land Registry and to apply for the WMP grant on the Council’s behalf and if the overall process is fairly quick”* from the original proposal (iv) which read:

“to agree that the TWG decides which consultant to employ with the proviso that the cost is less than £1500 + VAT, the grant option only being pursued if the consultant is willing to try to register the Warren with the Rural Land Registry and to apply for the WMP grant on the Council’s behalf and if the overall process is fairly quick.”

The amendment was agreed.

The following proposals, including substantive proposal (iv), were then agreed:

- i. *to note the Tree Working Group (TWG) report*
- ii. *to agree that the TWG continues until the new Woodland and Tree sub-committee of POSAC is able to take over*
- iii. *to commission a Woodland Management Plan (WMP) for which the TWG tries to obtain a third quote by the end of April 2019*
- iv. *to agree that the TWG decides which consultant to employ with the proviso that the cost is less than £1500 + VAT*
- v. *to note the deterioration in the condition of the ash trees in the Warren, and delegate responsibility to the TWG to consider all implications of this, including to draw up a scheme to deal with the problem.*

285. Internal Control Statement

The clerk confirmed that the Council Internal Controls need to be reviewed on an annual basis to satisfy the annual account requirements. The Statement had been revised to make it easier to understand and review.

The councillors reviewed the Internal Control Statement and subject to the removal of the last sentence in the table *“the external auditor is appointed by”*, was agreed.

The following proposal was agreed:

to review and agree the Internal Control Statement

286. Asset Register Review

The Asset register was reviewed and subject to replacing the word “road” with “path” in the last item of section E of the Asset Register, was agreed.

The following proposal was agreed:

to review and agree the Asset Register

287. Grant to Home-Start Chichester and District

The Finance committee had agreed at a meeting on 12 March 2019 to recommend that the Council make a grant to Homestart. However, due to an administrative error this item was not considered at the April Council meeting with the other recommendations. The councillors considered the proposal and agreed to make a grant of £100.

The following proposal was agreed:

that the Council agree a grant of £100 should be made to Homestart Chichester and District.

288. Community Governance Review – Harting and Rogate parishes

The Council noted the official paperwork received confirming that the parish boundary had been extended, from 1 April 2019, to include three houses and an industrial unit at the northern end of Nyewood. These properties had previously been in the Rogate parish.

the following proposal was agreed:

to note the report

289. CiLCA Award

The Chairman of the Personnel Committee confirmed that the clerk had been awarded the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). This is a qualification gained through the submission of a portfolio of work to demonstrate an understanding of all aspects of the work of a parish council clerk.

The clerk's contract contains a clause that her salary will be increased by one point on the national scale on achieving the CiLCA award.

The following proposals were agreed:

i. To congratulate our Clerk on her achievement

ii. To agree, with effect from 18 April 2019, to the uplift in salary as outlined in her contract of employment

290. Finance

290.1. It was agreed that the following payments should be made:

Undisclosed	Clerk & RFO Salary - April	747.74
WSALC Limited	WSALC & NALC Subscription	401.35
Chichester District Council	Litter and Dog Bins emptying	559.10
R J Playground services	New Twizzler - S Gardens	1,086.00
M H Kennedy & Sons	Grass cutting	324.00
Home-start Chichester and District	Grant	100.00
Surrey Hills Solicitors	Advance payment for legal work	500.00

290.2. The income for April was noted:

£21,550 1st instalment of precept

291. Bank Reconciliation for April 2019

It was noted that the bank reconciliation had been scrutinised and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee. The Chairman of the Council then signed the reconciliation in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

292. To note the bank balance as of 31 March 2019 - £69,042.06

Noted

293. Budget Statement for 31 March 2019

Noted

294. Planning

The minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 21 March 2019 were noted.

295. Correspondence

None.

296. Clerk's report

Noted.

297. Items for future meetings

There were no items noted at the time.

298. Date of next meeting

The Council Annual Meeting will be held on 16 May 2019 at 7.30pm.

The Chairman thanked the councillors for their support and work over the last four years and gave a special thank you to the five councillors who were not standing in the next election, in particular Mrs Gammon and Mr Healey who had been with the Council for many years.

As the publicity of the next item might have been deemed prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the members resolved that the press and public would be excluded during consideration of the next agenda item, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s2.

299. Land Ownership issue

The Council debated this item and agreed the resolutions in the confidential report dated 18 April 2019.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

