

HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Harting Parish Council held in the **Community Hall, South Harting** on **Thursday 19 December 2019 at 7.30 p.m.**

Present: Mr Shaxson (Chair), Mr Bonner, Mrs Bramley, Mrs Curran, Mrs Dawson, Mrs Gaterell, Mrs Martin, and Mr Miller.

In attendance: Mrs Walker (Parish Clerk).

There were two members of the public in attendance.

191. Apologies for absence: Mr Johnson Hill and Mr Palmer

192. Declarations of Interest: Mrs Bramley declared an interest in agenda item 9(i)a as a Trustee of Harting Community Hall

193. Minutes from Meeting held on 21 November 2019.

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21 November 2019 were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

194. Questions from the Public

A member of public raised the following questions:

- why had the trees around the middle pond in South Gardens been removed
- why were non tagged trees in that area removed
- Is the Council shocked at the extent of the tree works in the area
- will the entrance at the southern end of the Warren be closed off
- when the new woodland is replanted will there be glades
- why has all the timber been cleared away and not left for ecological reasons
- the natural chalk footpaths have been heavily disturbed what can be done about this
- it is disappointing that more members of the public do not attend Council meetings

Mr Shaxson, the Chair responded to the questions and confirmed the trees removed around the middle pond had either been tagged for removal as a result of the latest Tree Hazard survey or were diseased ash trees. The trees to the south of that pond were not owned by the Council. He confirmed that the woodland area was in the worst state at the moment, the work had been completed during the wettest autumn for years which had not helped the situation. The option to delay the works had not been a feasible option as felling cannot be carried out during the nesting season and the following winter could have been as wet. The rapid decline of the ash trees in the previous year was a major concern and leaving the works for a further 12 months would have posed a serious danger to the public using the area.

Mr Shaxson confirmed that the southern entrance to the Warren would be closed off with a barrier when the works had been completed, and that the Woodland Management Plan had specified areas of the woodland to be left as glades when the replanting takes place. He also confirmed that the timber and associated brash had been removed from the site and sold to help cover the cost of the work and also to leave the area as tidy as possible given the heavy criticism directed at the National

Trust following tree works in the previous year. It was also noted that timber stacks left after previous episodes of felling were stolen.

Mr Shaxson agreed that the footpaths were muddy at that time and stressed that as the weather improves, they would hopefully dry out.

195. Matters of Urgent Public Importance

This matter was considered after item 7 of the agenda “co-option of new councillor”.

The members considered two items which had been received subsequent to the publication of the agenda and which required consideration before the next Council meeting in January 2020.

The Council had received an unsolicited offer of help, with no cost implications for the Council, from Matthew Woodcock, the Forestry Commission’s Partnership and Expertise Manager for the South East. The offer is for a day of ‘enrichment’ planting in the Warren involving a relatively small area and a mix of tree species. Mr Woodcock is able to call on the support of a few volunteers from DEFRA’s tree health team to do the planting. He had also made contact with the Tree Council who kindly agreed to pay for the trees and for the shelter guards. The early planting would be a positive sign to the community. The proposed planting day would be 6 February 2020. The members were asked to consider this offer.

Further to this the Tree Working Group had met with the members of the Forestry Commission and SDNPA who are encouraging a programme of replanting from November 2020. It is likely the Warren will be eligible for a Woodland Tree Health Restoration Grant which will cover the cost of saplings trees and associated stakes and covers, as well as planting costs. The grant application will require a planting scheme to be produced and agreed by the Forestry Commission prior to any agreement by the Rural Payments Agency.

The lead time to source and purchase suitable saplings and the associated equipment is about 5 months so an application needs to be made as soon as possible.

The members were asked to consider commissioning Petra Billings, the author of the Council’s Woodland Management Plan, to produce a planting scheme and liaise with the Forestry Commission and Rural Payments Agency to make an application for a Woodland Tree Health Restoration Grant on behalf of the Council.

The following proposals were agreed:

- i. To agree to the proposed ‘enrichment’ planting on 6 February 2020 at no cost to the Council and to seek further volunteers to help with the planting if required.*
- ii. To agree that Petra Billings should be asked to formulate a planting scheme for the Warren and to make an application to the Forestry Commission, on behalf of the Parish Council, for a Woodland Tree Health Restoration Grant and that a contingency sum of £2,000 should be agreed for any fees this may incur*

196. Reports from the County and District Councillor

Dr O’Kelly, the County and District Councillor, was not able to attend the meeting but had sent a report which had been circulated to the councillors ahead of the meeting. The report confirmed that the Commissioner had been very critical of the failings in WSCC Children’s Services as well as the leadership and senior management. A new leader was now in post and the Council have appointed East Sussex as an improvement partner authority.

The consultation for the future of small schools, affecting Stedham and Compton in the local area, is now closed and a decision is expected in 2020.

The bus service 54, 07:34, from Harting to Chichester is being retained as WSCC have confirmed they are able to finance the service at this time.

WSCC now has a Microfund providing grants up to £750 to organisations, the application process has been improved. The next funds are due to be allocated in March 2020.

The decision to reduce the winter salting coverage had been reversed following many complaints from local communities.

The District Council section of the report confirmed the Southern Gateway Project was to go ahead and a contractor has been chosen.

197. Co-option of a new councillor for the Harting Ward

The members considered an application for the vacancy within the Harting ward of the Parish from Mrs Sally Bull.

The following proposal was agreed:

That Mrs Sally Bull be co-opted as a member of Harting Parish Council.

After signing the declaration of acceptance of office, Mrs Bull joined the meeting.

198. Finance Committee

The minutes of the Finance Committee held on 31 October 2019 were noted and the the following proposal was agreed:

that the Council agree the movement of funds accrued in respect of the purchase of a new slide in South Gardens from Capital budget heading to Youth Club budget heading.

199. Grants 2020/21

Mr Bonner, the Chair of Finance outlined the proposed grants for the year 2020/21.

The following proposals were agreed:

i) that the Council allocates grants as shown in the draft budget (item 10) for 2020/21 to the following:

- a) Harting Community Hall and the War Memorial Playing Field (£2250 each) - £4500*
- b) Parish hospital car scheme - £180*
- c) Petersfield Citizens Advice Bureau - £300*
- d) Allotment rent - £50*
- e) The Parish Church and Congregational Church burial grounds (£200 each) - £400 in total*
- f) Other applications received from organisations with local connections.*

ii) To agree, as part of their overall grants, that the Council also covers the cost of the insurance premiums for Harting Community Hall and the War Memorial Playing Field and the cost of a bookkeeper for the former.

200. Budget and Precept 2020/21

Mr Bonner, the Chair of Finance outlined the proposed budget and precept requirements for 2020/21. He noted that the Council reserves had been halved during the year as a result of the purchase of the car parking area at the entrance to South Gardens.

The proposed budget has been retained at the same level as 2019/20 however the proposal is to increase the precept by £10,000 to £53,100.00 to build up the depleted reserves. The increased precept would mean a rise in the region of £13 per household per annum based on the band D Council Tax rating.

The following proposals were agreed:

- i) that the Council agree to request £53,100 as the precept from CDC for the year 2020/21*
- ii) that the Council agree the Budget for 2020/21*

201. The future of the disused telephone box in West Harting

The Phone Box in West Harting was adopted by the Parish Council some years ago and since then has fallen into disrepair. At a recent meeting the Council agreed that Mr Miller should carry out a straw poll of the local residents to consider the future of the Phone Box.

Mr Miller presented his findings to the Council and expressed the general feeling was to renovate and retain the Phone Box, hopefully with a local resident volunteering to maintain from there on. The members agreed that further information was required outlining the financial implications of the renovation before a decision could be taken.

The following proposal was agreed:

That the future use of the disused telephone box in West Harting and the surrounding area is considered at a future meeting once the financial implications for renovation are known.

202. 'Buy a brick' for Petersfield Museum

The members discussed the option to purchase a brick inscribed with the name of Harting Parish Council at a cost of £30. The Petersfield Museum is offering this option to local organisations to raise funds for the £2.56m expansion and improvement programme, 'Pathways into the past'.

The following proposal was agreed:

that the Council agreed to 'buy a brick' inscribed with the name of Harting Parish Council at a cost of £30.

203. All Parishes Meeting 10th February 2019

The All Parishes Meeting is due to take place at the District Council Offices, Chichester on 10th February 2019 at 7pm.

The following proposal was agreed:

that Mr Shaxson and one of the councillors would attend the CDC All parishes meeting on 10th February 2019

204. Finance

204.1 It was agreed that the following payments should be made:

Undisclosed	Clerk & RFO Salary - December	1,218.49
HMRC	Tax and NI contributions	155.29
Trish Walker	Clerk Expenses	159.59
M H Kennedy & Son Ltd	Grass Cutting	166.20
Harting War Memorial Playing Field	Lengthsman	170.00
Alpha Graphics	Nyewood Gateway Signs	939.60

204.2 There was no income for December 2019.

205. Bank Reconciliation for November 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.

206. Bank balance as of 30 November 2019 – £45,251.96

Noted

207. Budget statement for November 2019

Noted

208. Planning Committee

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

209. Play and Open Spaces Advisory Committee (POSAC)

The minutes of the POSAC Meeting held on 26 November 2019 were noted and the formation of a Tree and Woodland sub-committee to replace the former Tree Working Group.

210. Correspondence

Guidance had been received from SSALC regarding suggested arrangements for Operation London Bridge. The clerk will liaise with the local churches and report to the Council.

211. Clerks report

The report was noted and the following areas were updated:

- the Speed Indicator Device (SID) had been received and will be erected in the New Year once the WSCC paperwork has been completed.
- the Tree Working Group had met with representatives of the Forestry Commission and the SDNPA on 18 December (further information under Matters of Urgent Public Importance). The outcome of this meeting was to move to a programme of replanting in the Winter of 2020.

The final tranche of work had taken place around the ponds in South Gardens and on the neighbouring landowners land on 12 December, the weather conditions had been extremely bad and the paths are now very muddy.

- the January Drop In Session will take place on Saturday 4 January 10am- 12 noon.

212. Items for future meetings

West Harting Phone Box
Committee Membership
Emergency Plan

213. Date of next meeting - Council Meeting 16 January 2020 at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.