

HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

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

Present: Mr Shaxson (Chair), Mrs Bramley, Mr Bonner, Mrs Curran, Mrs Dawson, Mrs Gaterell, Mr Johnson Hill, Mr Mackay, Mrs Martin, Mr Miller and Mr Palmer.
In attendance: Mrs Walker (Parish Clerk).

There were no members of the public in attendance.

71. Apologies for absence: None.

72. Declarations of Interest: None

73. Minutes from Meeting held on 16th May 2019 and the Extra-ordinary meeting held on 12th June 2019.

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

74. Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public.

75. Matter of Urgent Public Importance:

The Chairman confirmed that in the previous 48 hours the Council had completed the purchase of the car park area at the entrance to South Gardens for the sum of £25,000. This item had previously been discussed in camera, but these minutes would now be placed in the public domain.

It was agreed that the area will need to be properly managed to ensure the area is of the maximum benefit to the users and to the Community. The members agreed that a Working Group should be set up to consider the ongoing future of the area and bring them back to the Council for consideration.

The following proposal was agreed:

That a Working Group is set up to consider the management of the South Gardens Car Park. The members will be the Clerk, Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Parish Council, and Chairmen of HABAC and Finance.

76. Reports from the County and District Councillors

Dr O'Kelly (County and District Councillor) was unable to attend the meeting and her written report had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.

Dr O'Kelly has been liaising with SDNPA and WSCC with regard to improving the quality of the walking route between Harting and Petersfield. This may start with an extension of the path from the War Memorial Playing Field to the Sussex Border path.

The County Council section of the report highlighted the Ofsted 'inadequate' rating for the children's services in West Sussex, this had been discussed at the Full Council on 7th

June 2019 and a Government Commissioner has been appointed to oversee an improvement plan.

WSCC has published a new 'pollinator action plan' setting out how vital species can be protected, further information can be found at www.westsussex.gov.uk/bees.

The West Sussex Climate Pledge is also asking everyone to pledge to make a series of simple changes to help the environment, further information can be found at www.westsussex.gov.uk/maketheclimatepledge.

The District Council section of the report referred to the excellent result achieved by the Grange Leisure Centre in Midhurst following a recent assessment by Quest, the UK quality scheme for Sport and Leisure.

77. Co-option of councillor to represent the Nyewood ward

The members considered an application for the vacancy within the Nyewood ward of the Parish from Mrs Jill Martin.

The following recommendation was agreed:

That Mrs Jill Martin would be co-opted and appointed as a member of Harting Parish Council.

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

78. Tree Update

Dr Bowman, a member of the Tree Working Group, provided a report to the Council outlining progress on the Woodland Management Plan (WMP) and the current challenges and actions required by the Council to cope with the issue of ash dieback.

The recent tree hazard survey of the Warren and South Gardens was undertaken on the 11 & 12 of June 2019. Given the area is open access and borders the B2146, the arboricultural consultant has verbally recommended that all ash trees should be felled because the levels of dieback have increased greatly in the 16 months since the last survey. The written report will be received in due course. Although stark, the recommendation enables the Council to deal with the trees in one episode of felling which will reduce overall costs and disruption.

On behalf of the Council, the Tree Working Group has selected Petra Billings to write the Woodland Management Plan (WMP) at the cost of £1000. She has already visited the site and will have a draft WMP ready by the end of June or early in July. Having been advised of the outcome of the hazard survey, as part of her brief, she will recommend that the Forestry Commission grants a selective felling licence; she will also liaise with Natural England about the necessary works in the SSSI area.

The SDNPA tree officer has also been very helpful: he and the local ranger have offered to work with the Council to create an action plan based on the WMP once the major tree works have been completed.

For safety reasons, ash trees in poor condition cannot be felled by traditional methods. For such trees, 'harvesting' machines are required which can also readily handle the quantity of timber involved. The work needs to be organised as soon as possible, not

only because of the risk to the public, but also because companies with the appropriate equipment are limited in number and are increasingly in demand as woodland owners become aware of the dieback problem. The Clerk will try to obtain three quotes and has already been in contact with two contractors: they will be asked to provide quotes for the felling and clearance of the timber and associated debris for consideration by the Council at the earliest opportunity. There is currently a market for timber so this will offset some of the felling costs.

Ideally the tree works need to be completed during September to avoid the nesting season and to ensure ground conditions are suitable to access the area. This timescale will be tight given the need to appoint contractors, apply for a road closure, get the felling licence and give sufficient notice of conservation area tree works.

Provided it does not cause any delay to the Council's programme, there are advantages in working with two adjacent landowners, minimising disruption caused by road closures in one case and limiting machinery access to the Warren in the other.

WSCC have recently sent out the quarterly magazine 'Connections' giving residents advice on ash dieback; an article will also be placed in the Parish Magazine.

Councillors discussed placing notices at the entrance to South Gardens and the Warren warning users of the potential danger of the ash trees.

An additional recommendation was proposed to read: "to agree that Barry Mackay should become a member of the Tree Working Group".

The following proposals were then agreed:

- i. To note the report
- ii. To note the urgency for action on ash dieback on public safety grounds
- iii. To agree that the Tree Working Group (TWG) approves the Woodland Management Plan on behalf of the Council, subject to necessary changes
- iv. To agree to the following ash dieback strategy:
 - a. felling of all ash trees in the Warren and to the felling of those in South Gardens as recommended in the forthcoming tree hazard report
 - b. felling wherever possible using a tree harvesting company with the cost being offset by the sale of the timber
 - c. the work being done by the end of September if at all possible
 - d. working with two neighbouring woodland owners provided that negotiations do not adversely affect the Council's timetable
- v. To agree to the TWG taking forward the strategy and bringing quotes to the Council for consideration at the earliest opportunity
- vi. To agree that Barry Mackay should become a member of the Tree Working Group

79. Traffic Update

Mrs Bramley reported on the progress of the Traffic Working Group since the last update. Ed Hartridge, a resident in the Street has joined the group.

The traffic consultant, Laurie Shaw, and the area highway manager at WSCC, Chris Dye met with the group to consider the proposals for the Community Highways Scheme. The favoured 20mph limit raises many issues in relation to the technical requirements of signage and will need to be reconsidered. The area of pedestrian safety is very highly marked within the scheme so improved crossing points to South Gardens and at the southern end of North Lane will be considered. The Council's recent ownership of the car park area will aid this greatly.

Chris Dye confirmed that despite the July deadline, traffic schemes can be put forward at other times of year for consideration.

Quotes for the improved 30mph signs at the southern entrance to the village had been received and were higher than anticipated; £755 + vat versus the estimate of £350-400. Further quotes are being requested.

Two places have been identified to site SID's (Speed Indicator Devices) if purchased. It is possible that another parish may consider a share scheme to reduce costs. The SID's cost in the region of £2500+vat, quotes will be pursued.

There is concern in the village about the noise created by traffic, in particular on Sunday mornings. Residents are encouraged to report the details of any offending vehicles to the police via Operation Crackdown.

Speedwatch is another method to consider with regard to reducing speed in the village, however this would need to be run by a community volunteer group.

*The following proposal was agreed:
to note the report*

80. Vision and Business Working Group (VBWG)

Mrs Gatterell proposed that a Working Group should be set up to consider the Aims and Objectives of the Council for the next four year period. There are many pressures and threats to discretionary services, the responsibilities for which may fall to Parish Councils in the next few years. It is important that the Council is best placed for any changes that come along and is in a position to be proactive rather than reactive. The financial business plan will feed from these objectives.

The proposed Working Group will report back to the Council at regular intervals. A proposed framework will be presented to the Council meeting on 11 July 2019, and an initial report will be presented at the Council meeting on 19th September 2019.

It was felt that the group should be called the Aims and Objectives Working Group.

*The following proposal was agreed:
that the Council agree that an Aims and Objectives Working Group (AOWG) should be formed with a brief to develop a possible vision and business plan for the Council, and to bring proposals to the Parish Council.*

81. Office 365 licence

The members agreed that a further Office 365 licence should be purchased. This will enable a former councillor, who is actively working with the Tree Working Group, to have access to the documents relating to that group.

The following proposal was agreed:

To agree to the purchase of one extra Office 365 licence, at the cost of £72 per annum, to enable a non-councillor to have access to specific Working Group files.

82. South Gardens Access Road

The clerk reported that confirmation had been received that the caution against first registration had been completed.

The following proposal was agreed:

to note that the caution against first registration of the South Gardens access road has been completed.

83. Annual governance statement 2018/19

The statement had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. The members reviewed the responses to the questions read out by the Chairman and agreed that “Yes” should be the response to all the statements.

The clerk and the Chairman signed and dated the Governance Statement.

The following proposal was agreed:

that the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19

84. Accounting statements 2018/19

The accounting statements had been circulated to the members in advance of the meeting. The Chairman proposed that the Accounting Statement for 2017/18 should be approved and the Annual Return submitted to the external auditor.

The members agreed and the RFO and Chairman signed and dated the Accounting Statement.

The following proposal was agreed:

that the Council approves the Accounting Statements for 2018/19

85. Footpath Lights

The Highways and Byways Advisory Committee (HABAC) are considering a new lighting scheme for the footpath from the Old School to the Village school. The lights are currently switched off following a further incidence of vandalism.

There are many areas to consider within the lighting scheme and the Council agreed to take professional advice to ensure the most suitable and resilient system is recommended.

The following proposal was agreed:

That the Council agrees to pay up to the sum of £650 for professional advice in respect of new lighting solution for the footpath leading from the Street to the School.

86. Committee Membership

The members considered the need for further membership to the Planning and Finance Committees.

The following proposals were agreed:

- i. that Jill Martin and Sunny Dawson were appointed as members of the Planning Committee*
- ii. that Anthony Palmer and Stephanie Gatterell were appointed as members of the Finance Committee*

87. Finance

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

Trish Walker	Clerk & RFO Salary - June	834.22
HMRC	Tax and NI contributions	34.81
Trish Walker	Clerks expenses	176.71
Surrey Hills Solicitors	registration of caution for S Gardens access road	570.00
Wallis White & Co Ltd	Internal Audit	280.80
SSALC Limited	LCR Magazine subscription	17.00
M H Kennedy & Son Ltd	Grass Cutting	332.40
SSALC Limited	Councillor training 13/6/19	84.00
Surrey Hills Solicitors	Legal services re: land ownership (May fees)	330.00
Surrey Hills Solicitors	Land Purchase (transferred to vendor)	25,000.00
Surrey Hills Solicitors	Legal services re: land ownership (June fees)	1,073.78

88. Bank Reconciliation for June 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.

89. Bank balance as of 31 May 2019 - £77,372.09

Noted

90. Budget statement for May 2019

Noted

91. Finance Committee

The unconfirmed minutes of the Finance Committee held on 6 June 2019 were noted and the following proposals were agreed:

- i. That the Council approve the revised Financial Regulations*
- ii. To note that the Finance Committee have reviewed the Health & Safety and Risk Management Strategy and propose further review in March 2020*
- iii. To note that the Finance Committee have reviewed the risk assessments for Finance, Homeworking, Reputation and Expertise and Safeguarding Information and propose further review in October 2020*
- iv. That the Insurance Schedules for the Parish Council, WMPF and HCH are retained at the current level*
- v. That the staff and Council subscriptions are retained at the current level*

92. Planning

The unconfirmed minutes of the Planning Committee held on 28 May 2019 were noted.

93. Play and Open Spaces Advisory Committee (POSAC)

The unconfirmed minutes of POSAC held on 28 May 2019 were noted.

94. Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence.

95. Clerks report

Noted

96. Items for future meetings

National Trust re: 2018 Harting Down tree clearance update

97. Date of next meeting - Council Meeting 11 July 2019 at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.