

HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Harting Parish Council held in the **Community Hall, South Harting** on **Thursday 19 March 2020 at 7.30 p.m.**

Present: Mr Shaxson (Chair), Mr Bonner, Mrs Bull, Mrs Bramley, Mrs Curran, Mrs Dawson, Mrs Gaterell, Mr Johnson -Hill, Mr Miller and Mr Palmer.

In attendance: Mrs Walker (Parish Clerk).

The meeting was held at the start of the coronavirus outbreak and the councillors and members of the public observed the social distancing recommendations.

There were 4 members of the public in attendance.

259. Apologies for absence: Mrs Martin.

260. Declarations of Interest: None.

261. Jeff Ace, Chair of Governors at Harting Primary School

Mr Ace spoke to the members about the changes in school governance and the move toward a future federation with Stedham primary school.

The terms of governance have changed to allow a joint governing body to cover Harting and Stedham primary schools, both are Church of England voluntary controlled. There will be a reduction in the number of parent and teacher governors which reduces the 'emotional' attachment to the school and more of an emphasis on governors to support the business aspect of the schools.

There will be a series of meetings and consultations within both communities with parents, carers and staff. The results from this will be reviewed and considered.

It is hoped that the schools will move from the current status of collaboration toward the completion of a hard federation on 31 January 2021.

Mr Ace also spoke about arrangements in place at the school as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school was due to close to all pupils on Friday 20 March and will reopen on Monday 23 March for the children of parents and carers who are classed as key workers. The families that receive free school meals will have meals delivered to their home address.

Children working from home will be provided with distance learning packs.

Mr Ace confirmed that the KS1 and KS2 tests have been cancelled for this year.

It is presumed the school will reopen to all pupils in September.

The Chair thanked Mr Ace for the presentation and update.

Mr Johnson Hill left the meeting during the presentation.

262. Minutes from Meeting held on 20 February 2020.

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 20 February 2020 were signed by the Chair as a true record.

263. Questions from the Public: a request to speak, as a member of the Tree and Woodland sub-committee regarding agenda item 9 'Tree Update'.

264. Matters of Urgent Public Importance:

The Chair outlined the Government restrictions which had been set up as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, this included the curtailment of public gatherings and meetings. The

members were asked to consider and agree steps to enable the Council's work to be effectively carried out throughout the crisis or until Government guidance details alternative measures. The members agreed that during this period the Council would delegate the decisions of the Council to the Clerk who would act in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and the Chairs of the committees relevant to the matters under consideration.

The following recommendations were agreed:

- i. That with effect from the end of the meeting, the Council delegate its decision-making responsibilities to the Clerk. The Clerk will undertake this after proper consultation with the Chairman of the Council, the Vice Chair and the Chairs of committees relevant to decisions being taken.*
- ii. That this course of action will remain in place until the crisis eases or alternative arrangements are announced by the Government to supersede the need for this action.*

265. Reports from the County and District Councillor

Dr O'Kelly, the County and District Councillor reported that the coronavirus outbreak was a fast moving issue and she would be receiving daily updates from the County Council.

She confirmed that she hopes an arrangement will be put in place to allow residents over the border to use the Petersfield Household Waste recycling site in the near future.

The Rother Valley Steering Group is hoping that a scheme to complete the full cycle path from Nyewood to Petersfield will be agreed shortly.

Dr O'Kelly also confirmed that CDC had agreed the budget for 2020/21 and the Council Tax bills had been sent out to all households.

266. Emergency Plan

Mrs Gaterell presented the Emergency Plan, suitable for all emergencies and situations, which had been developed over a period of months by the Aims and Objective Advisory Committee (AOAC). The plan still had areas to be populated with some details for emergency contacts, but given the imminent threat of the coronavirus pandemic the members were asked to agree the Plan to enable the immediate activation of the Parish Council Emergency Group (PCEG). The members agreed this was very important. It was noted that two councillors had attended an Emergency Training seminar and as a result WSCC would be providing a kit of emergency equipment free of charge. It was anticipated this would be received in the following two weeks.

The members agreed that the PCEG should be activated with immediate effect and noted that the first meeting would be held in the Congregational Church Hall at 9am on Saturday 21 March 2020.

A mass canvas of the parish, in relation to the Emergency Plan, asking for volunteers had produced 150 potential volunteers.

The aim of the PCEG would be to produce and deliver a pack for each household in the parish which would contain, among other things, information about a buddy scheme, 'traffic light' notices for windows, information about the virus and communication details.

It was noted there would be costs associated with roll out of the PCEG work and the members agreed to release a contingency sum of £1000 to be used for these purposes.

The following recommendations were agreed:

- i. To agree the Emergency Plan*
- ii. to immediately activate the plan with the appointment of a PCEG (Parish Council Emergency Group) as outlined in the Emergency Plan*

- iii. *that the first meeting of the PCEG to address planning requirements and residents' concerns about the coronavirus would be held in the Congregational Church Hall on Saturday 21 March at 9am.*
- iv. *to agree a contingency sum of £1,000 that the PCEG can use at its discretion to enact the Emergency Plan*

267. Tree Update

A report was given on behalf of the Woodland and Tree Sub-Committee (WTSC) which confirmed that the planting scheme for the Warren had been completed in the anticipation it would form the basis for a Forestry Commission Tree Health Grant. Unfortunately, the anticipated 75% of cost of planting expected from that grant did not appear to be the case.

However, further to the planting day arranged by the Tree Council on 6 February 2020, and reported to the Council at the February meeting, a request had been made to the WTSC to provide a detailed budget for the restoration work in the Warren. Petra Billings worked with the sub-committee to produce a budget which gave several options depending on the differing types of tree protection and taking consideration of differing levels of community planting. The Woodland Restoration Planting Scheme & Budget for The Warren is included in Appendix A of these minutes.

Various types of tree protection were included as alternative options to the recycled tree guards used on the planting day, which although bio degradable, would not have sufficient life span to protect the trees and would need replacing at some point. The use of plastic guards was not seen as an option given the move away from single use plastics. Petra Billings and the Forestry Commission officer responsible for deer management suggested deer fencing would be a good alternative to using individual tree guards to protect the area. Although this would be more expensive in the short term, it would protect the trees for a period of 15 years and make the planting process, protection of both planted trees and natural regeneration, and the maintenance of the area much easier.

Due to the timing of the request from the Tree Council the WTSC submitted the budget and circulated the details to the councillors for information.

On 13 March the CEO of the Tree Council had contacted the clerk to confirm that, taking account of the use of deer fencing and decomposable vole guards, the Tree Council would be making a grant of £25,000 to the Parish Council to cover the cost of the restoration work in the Warren. The members were extremely grateful for this offer.

On the basis of the above, the members were asked to consider option E of the Woodland Restoration Planting Scheme & Budget for The Warren which included the deer fencing and community planting for one third of the trees. The councillors were in favour of this option and agreed the planting should ideally take place in November 2020 around the time of National Tree week although it was recognised the coronavirus outbreak may impact on the timescales.

It was noted that final costings for option E would be calculated by the WTSC and details of any required permissions for the fencing and other works would be investigated. The members agreed that any unforeseen costs above the £25,000 grant should be funded from the ring-fenced income from the sale of timber.

The community planting and future maintenance of the Warren will need the help of a good number of volunteers and the members agreed to appoint Mrs Bull to bring a paper to a future Council meeting with ideas of the best way to involve the community.

The members considered the proposals. An amendment was proposed to remove the words 'April' and 'meeting' from proposal (vii) which read "To appoint a councillor to bring a proposal to the April Council meeting on the best ways to involve the community in the restoration plans and subsequently to co-ordinate the agreed approach, including publicity."

The amendment was agreed. The following proposals, including substantive proposals (vii) were then agreed:

- i. To note the report and the Woodland Restoration Planting Scheme & Budget for The Warren, March 2020 (PS&B)*
- ii. To consider the different options presented in the latter, and, in light of problems with other tree protection methods and the offer of a grant from the Tree Council based on Option E, to agree to take forward Option E which is based on using deer fencing and some volunteer planting*
- iii. To agree that the Council's Woodland & Tree Sub-Committee (WTSC) finalises the costings for Option E and submits them to the Tree Council*
- iv. To agree that any unforeseen additional costs associated with Option E, which are unlikely to be covered by the Tree Council but are considered necessary by the WTSC, can be funded from the revenue from the timber sales which has been ring-fenced for the Warren restoration work*
- v. To agree that the WTSC looks into any non-financial aspects of Option E, such as the need for planning permission*
- vii. Mrs Bull was appointed to bring a proposal to the Council on the best ways to involve the community in the restoration plans and subsequently to co-ordinate the agreed approach, including publicity.*

268. Wheelie bin speed stickers

The impact of the recently purchased SID (Speed Indicator Device) has been very positive and appears to have reduced the speed of vehicles entering the village on the main roads into Harting, and hopefully will in Nyewood when a suitable location has been found.

The members were asked to consider the purchase of a supply of Wheelie Bin 30mph stickers which would be given to households living alongside the road. This would mean that, once a week, when the bins were placed out for collection there would be a visible reminder of the speed limit along that stretch of road.

It was noted the stickers can only be placed on the black and red bins as they are the property of the households, the green bins are the property of CDC (Chichester District Council) and could not be included in the scheme.

The scheme would be offered by articles in the Parish Magazine, social media and a leaflet drop to the affected houses.

For maximum effect the stickers would be placed on either side of the wheelie bins, so this would mean 4 stickers for each participating household.

A quote of £279.50 for 500 stickers had been received from SmartWheelie. A further quote had not been available as other companies only sell the stickers in a smaller quantity for individual purchase.

The members considered the proposals and agreed to the scheme being undertaken when the coronavirus pandemic was over.

The following recommendations were agreed:

- i. that the Council agree to promote a campaign for residents to use 30mph wheelie bin stickers*
- ii. that the Council agree to the purchase of 500 30mph wheelie bin stickers at a cost of £279.50*

269. Harting Festivities

The members noted the confirmation from the Chair of the Harting Festivities Committee that the Festivities due to be held on 25 May 2020 had been cancelled as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The decision to cancel the event at an earlier stage ensured the Festivities Committee would retain the current cash reserves to enable the organisation of the event to be held in 2021.

The Chair of the Parish Council had previously contacted the Festivities Chair to confirm that the Council would be fully supportive of the decisions made.

*The following recommendation was agreed:
To note the report*

270. VE75 (Victory in Europe 75 years)

At its February meeting the Council considered an appropriate event to celebrate VE75 (75th Anniversary of the end of war in Europe) in the parish. An event planned in Nyewood was discussed and the agreement was to consider holding the event for the whole parish there. Subsequent to the meeting, the organisers of the event raised concerns that the facilities and space in Nyewood would be insufficient to cater for the whole parish and would not be able to go ahead.

The members considered a further proposal to host a Community Picnic in South Gardens during the afternoon of Friday 8 May 2020. The event would be a “bring your own picnic” and attendees would be asked to bring their own chairs and rugs. It is suggested that a tree might be planted as part of the celebrations.

The Council’s insurance would cover the public liability for the event. The only input from the Council would be provision of bins, the tree and guard, first aid cover and some bunting to decorate the area.

Due to the uncertainty of the spread of the coronavirus pandemic and the impact this may have on public gatherings, the members agreed the VE75 event should be delayed until a future date.

The members considered the proposals. An amendment was proposed to replace “during the afternoon of Friday 8 May 2020” with “on a date in the future when public gatherings can take place” in proposal (i) which read “that subject to the coronavirus situation and advice provided by Public Health England (PHE) a community picnic and tree planting is held in South Gardens during the afternoon of Friday 8 May 2020”

The amendment was agreed. The following proposal, including substantive proposals (i) was then agreed:

- i. that subject to the coronavirus situation and advice provided by Public Health England (PHE) a community picnic and tree planting is held in South Gardens on a date in the future when public gatherings can take place*
- ii. to agree that an event notification and grant request up to a value of £250 to CDC in respect of VE75*

271. Finance

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

Trish Walker	Clerk and RFO salary	911.50
HMRC	Tax and NI contributions	121.80
Mr A Shaxson	Cement for lifebelt post	32.21
Harting Congregational Church	Hall rental 2019/20	70.00
Harting PCC	Law Room rental 2019/20	45.00
Trish Walker	Clerks expenses	174.85
SSALC Ltd	Councillor training	84.00

271.2 The income for March 2020 was noted.

Donation – goal nets 38.30

272. Bank Reconciliation for February 2020

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.

273. Bank balance as of 29 February 2020 – £44,733.40

Noted

274. Budget statement for February 2020

Noted

275. Planning Committee

The minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 20 February 2020 were noted.

276. Finance

The minutes of the Finance Meeting held on 3 March 2020 were noted and the following recommendations were agreed:

- i. to note that the Finance Committee have reviewed the budget statement and no virements are required*
- ii. to note that the Finance Committee have carried out an audit of the Council assets to be reported in the annual accounts for 2019/20.*
- iii. to note that the Finance Committee have reviewed the Internal Control Review*
- iv. that any tree related income will be ring fenced*

277. Health and safety

There were no reported incidents in the last 6 months

278. Correspondence

None

279. Clerks report

The report was noted.

280. Items for future meetings

Plan for the Council in the event of the death of the Royal family.

281. Date of next meeting – Future meetings have been suspended due to the coronavirus outbreak. Further guidance is awaited from government.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.