

## **Annual Parish Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting (APM) of Harting Parish was held at 6.30pm on 20 April 2017 in the Community Hall, Pease Croft, South Harting. The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the Parish Council Mr Andrew Shaxson and 37 members of the public were present.

### **Welcome and introduction from the Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting for 2017.

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Mrs Sheila Bramley, Mrs Fiona Mullett, Mrs Daphne Gammon and Mrs Caroline Norman

**Declarations of interest** – none.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the last Annual parish meeting held on 28 April 2016 were approved as a correct record.

### **Reports by Parish Organisations**

#### **Fetherstonhaugh, Warren, Weaver, Feoffee and Henry Smith Charities** - Pauline Barnfield

The Trustees comprise the Rev. Mark.Morton, Rev.Ken.Jacques (Chairman and Secretary), Mrs. Pauline Barnfield (Treasurer), Sue Small, Jane Healey, Liz Lawrence and Peter Albury. Mr. Ron Beckett has stepped down after 40 years as a Trustee and we thank him wholeheartedly.

Colin Walller will audit the accounts when they are ready.

We have received £2,000 from the Henry Smith Charity during 2016 and £660.32 from Black Rock Investments with bank interest of 25p.

At the end of December 2016 there was £1,677.38 in the Current Account and £583.05 in the reserve account.

During 2016 we distributed Vouchers at Christmas to the value of £1,400.00 and £300 to the School to assist disadvantaged children and £300.00 to the Mother and Toddler Group and finally £1,500.00 to persons in need. A total of £3,500.

#### **Fetherstonhaugh Charity for Poor Men** – Paul Glue

On 25th Feb 2016 the balance was £48.76 interest paid by the charity commission up to 25th Feb 2017 was £51.09. In December 2016 5 sums of £10 were paid to Mr D Slaughter, Mr J Ward, Mr L Lawrence and Mr R Beckett leaving a current balance on 25th Feb of £49.85.

The trustees are Mr Paul Glue, Mr S Walker, Mr K Clue.

### **War Memorial Playing Field – David Barnard**

The Playing Field has had a successful year. A new mower has been purchased with funds from Chichester District Council, and this has enabled the committee to keep the field in good condition. There are 7 new benches at the Playing Field, courtesy of the Parish Council. A big thank you goes to the committee who work hard to keep the Playing Fields such a good place. Any new volunteers are always welcome. The local sports clubs seem to be doing well.

### **Harting Community Hall - Vivien De-Beer**

By the spring of 2016 the upgrading of the alarm system with the addition of the extra emergency and outside lighting was completed. We are probably one of the safest halls in the kingdom now but we are not really wanting another fire to prove it.

We have put in the new oak posts on the entrance bend. It has made a huge difference to protecting the grass and slowing down the traffic, especially the school Mums who were inclined to career round the bend and park on the grass.

Chris Brown ran another Quiz Night, which was much more successful this year with more people attending. Unfortunately I missed it as I was away and I also missed the Christmas Fayre, at which I normally run a table with proceeds going to the hall. Julie kindly runs this every year now and I am extremely grateful to both Chris & Julie for their efforts to raise money for the hall.

We are indebted to the Parish Council giving us enough money from the 106 fund to build steps in the front and a safer path at the back for the 2 emergency exit areas and some more wooden posts down the school side of the car park.

Plans for the future? Our next project which we hope to complete next year is to change the lights to LED lights and to provide Chris with some soft lighting for his dances etc. At present these strip lights cost £15 a piece as they are no longer a standard size. We are also hoping to set up a website for the hall.

### **Hospital Car Service – Heather Tuke.**

The Harting Hospital Car Service has made 155 trips since April 2016. The numbers are down on the previous 12 months. This is partly due to some of our older customers dying or moving into Care Homes.

The journeys are made to Hospitals and Doctors surgeries and for anything medically related. We to go Petersfield, Midhurst, Chichester, Portsmouth, Bognor Regis, Worthing and 2 trips to Southampton.

I would like to thank all the drivers who give their time so willingly and cheerfully. It is very much appreciated by the customers. But we do need more drivers.

### **Lunch Club – Vivien De Beer.**

The lunch club continues to be well supported with attendance between 30-45 on each occasion during the year increasing to 70-80 at Christmas time – all who attend enjoy the lunch.

### **Harting Youth Club – Daphne Gammon**

Although many attempts have been made to find a new leader to run the Harting Youth club, these have been unsuccessful.

Unfortunately this is the same for a number of other youth clubs in the county who have been forced to close.

We are at the discussion stage with the intention of finally completing the closure of the club.

Funds and other assets have to be considered. We are in the process of assessing these. *( Mr Sladden stated that the Youth Project had passed £280 to the Youth Club, and hoped this would be kept for youth work)*

### **Harting CE Primary School – Fiona Mullett**

The school continues to thrive and we currently have 124 children on roll. At this point, there are significantly more boys than girls, especially in the older age groups so topics have a leaning towards their interests to inspire learning. Ofsted continues to grade the school as 'Good' (July 2016), following a more rigorous inspection than previously (due to changed criteria) and it remains a vibrant learning environment.

We have a full calendar of events which are supported by the active PTFA. This term, children have represented the school by playing football in the Rother Valley Tournament (which they won); winning their debate in the Rother Valley debating competition, speaking about internet safety; singing in a Voices for Freedom concert in Chichester Cathedral; and presenting a contemporary dance at the Rother Valley Arts Festival. We are looking forward to a busy summer with many activities.

We avoid putting children under great pressure for next term's SATs testing - we endeavour to invest in their future mental health by preparing them, rather than making them feel that exams, at this stage, are the 'be all and end all' in their lives! Our topic-based curriculum allows children to develop skills and knowledge, 'hanging' new learning on themes that they understand. Older children are looking forward to working with the National Trust at Uppark on a venture, related to sustainability, which will require them to use maths, literacy, science and IT skills for design technology - to be presented at the Harting Festivities.

The school still offer a wide range of clubs for pupils, in addition to the main curriculum – something highlighted in the Ofsted report. This year, clubs have included: dance, hockey, art and craft, outdoor activity, music, recorder, sports coaching, judo, table-tennis, maypole dance, art appreciation, along with homework and book clubs. We anticipate adding running, golf, go-karting and pottery clubs for the summer term. In addition to these extra-curricular activities, there is also established breakfast and a care clubs, which support working parents with child care. These are extremely well run and enable children to relax before they go home, as well as prepare for the school day.

The children remain enthusiastic, generous- hearted young people and the feeling of family remains central to school life. There is a very strong, experienced staff providing excellent teaching across the classes, who truly care about each child and their well-being. We remain really well supported by both village churches along with many volunteers from the community. The school extends thanks to everyone who offers their time and expertise for the benefit of the children.

### **Harting Bell Ringers Report 2016 – Chris Rose**

Harting Bell ringers continue to meet every Tuesday at 7.45pm to practice and ring for the 10am service twice a month also ringing for weddings and events throughout the year.

We have an enthusiastic team of ringers but sadly we have lost two of our younger ringers due to job changes and moving away. Ringers continue to visit other towers and Pru and Trish have been visiting Stourton on Wednesday evenings. We welcome visiting towers to ring at Harting usually offering a special Harting Tea to which we are renowned,

Harting bells are known throughout the ringing world to be difficult to ring due to the long draft this is rare as most other churches with a long draft have guides positioned to guide the rope making it considerably easier to ring. Many experienced ringers will think twice about ringing at Harting.

Our bells are in a good state of repair and are constantly monitored by our three steeple keepers Richard, Paul and Chris making repairs where necessary.

Our New ringer Rosie has continued to improve and is now ringing on Sundays and for weddings.

Chris Rose is the present tower captain and is now into his third year at this position. Pru Barlow is our rota secretary taking over some of the secretarial duties from Pat James. Lesley James is our treasurer.

The group welcome anyone wishing to learn to ring the bells to come up to a practice on Tuesdays at 7.45pm.

### **Harting Parish News – Julie Cragg**

The Parish News continues to go from strength to strength. Extra pages are often added to cater for the extra reports that are received, and to allow for extra advertising space. The new articles “Voices of Harting” and the “Planning permissions” have proved to be popular. It would be lovely to get some reports from the Sports Clubs. The Parish News is in a sound financial position with the balance at £5,000. Printing costs continue to rise, and with the slight drop in circulation, currently 450, the magazine cost may have to rise to £1. The magazines success is due to all the help from the many volunteers, from proof readers to distributors and, of course, the many readers.

### **Henry Warren Village Club - Ken Smith, chairman**

On behalf of the residents in Nyewood, The Henry Warren Village Club trustees and operating committee, I would like to thank the parish council for their continued support which is always much appreciated.

The ongoing situation with regards to the rebuilding of the Henry Warren Hall being that further funding was required. Further options have been explored by the trustees and the I am pleased to report that the project is on the move again and we hope to commence the eagerly awaited community building in 2017.

The operating committee has been hard at work fundraising despite not having a hall to use. Various events were held including Quiz nights, Call my Bluff, Easter egg hunts and the return of the annual Nyewood Scarecrow Festival that attracted over 90 entries for the amusement of all driving past, culminating in a celebratory picnic with fun and games for the areas children. The big 'Magic of Christmas' concert this year was staged at Bedales school last December and over 200 people enjoyed an evening's entertainment provided by the 50 piece 'Emsworth Concert Band' and renowned tenor Gari Glashyer. Apart from raising funds the Committee took the decision to use the event to raise money for 'The Rosemary Foundation' and I am happy to report we raised just short of £1,500 for the foundation that do such a fantastic job in the community.

We were disappointed to have the Parish Councils insurance support removed this year, and understand this decision was taken on the basis that we are a club and the council could only help community related projects. The Henry Warren Club was formed in the early 1900's to provide a venue for the community, and it is something we want to continue to do with the re-building of the hall and the committee will continue to organise community events. The Henry Warren club is not exclusive and operates as a charity organisation and we would ask the Parish Council to reconsider their policy of not supporting this vital part of the parish community.

*(Mrs Church asked where the new Hall would be sited. Mr Smith said it was unknown at this stage, it might possibly be on the original site, or on another at the far end of the village. Negotiations are still underway)*

### **Harting Minibus Community Interest Company (HMCIC) - Cliff Parry**

The company was incorporated on 6th August 2016 and started trading, officially, on 1st December 2016. It was necessary to form this limited company as the constitution of the Harting Minibus Management Committee (HMMC), operated by Harting Parish Council did not comply with current legislation.

The volunteer officials of the new company 'ghosted' the activities of existing HMMC officers for several months before the takeover date of 1st December 2016 and this cooperation led to a smooth and almost seamless handover. The board of directors of HMCIC would wish to record their appreciation for the help and guidance afforded to them during this period.

The Minibus operation continues as before and it can be confirmed that formal arrangements are in place with appropriate county councils and government bodies to ensure that all grants, concessionary fare refunds and necessary licences have been successfully transferred to HMCIC.

Cash surpluses accumulated over the past years by HMMC have been transferred to HMCIC. These funds will be held in reserve against the purchase of replacement vehicles.

Unfortunately, the National Savings Bonds used by HMMC are not available to limited companies, so the Directors of HMCIC decided to place the funds with the Nationwide Building Society. Whilst interest rates are low, it was considered that such an institution would be the safest haven for these funds, rather than making higher interest investments with their inherent risks in the current economic climate.

HMCIC has its financial year end on 31st March and a draft P&L statement and balance sheet are available.

As a footnote, HMCIC would like to remind our local residents that the bus service can only survive if it is supported by plenty of regular passengers, as well as a sufficient number of volunteer drivers.

### **Harting Parish council chairman's report – Andrew Shaxson.**

The past year has thrown up a number of challenges, as well as matters which have been satisfactorily dealt with. I shall touch on the latter first. Trish Walker has now been the parish clerk for seven months, and has got her feet well under the table. She is indeed

becoming the Responsible Officer. There is no doubt that this arrangement is working very well, and I am sure we all hope that she will be our clerk for the foreseeable future. You have already listened to the minibus reports. The parish council has been very involved in sorting this out throughout the year, from the circulating of the light blue 'Your minibus and its future' information letters calling for volunteers, the subsequent meeting on 12th May in this room at which 'the volunteers' agreed to become responsible for various tasks, and by working behind the scenes throughout the process ensuring that various legal matters were covered – and paid for! Many people have been actively involved, but I would specifically like to thank Sheila Bramley for her legal overview and Nigel Johnson-Hill, who perhaps unwittingly has found himself in a pivotal role in the new organisation. We have previously publically thanked all those involved in the HMMC, that is both recently and since it started in 1973, but I would like to do so again, as without those volunteers the organisation would have failed. We wish the Harting Minibus Community Interest Company well in the future.

The Parish Council have recently utilised the spending of the final tranche of grants ensuing from the Smith Field development. This was spent on extending the post and rail fencing against the brook on the parish path, on benches which will shortly be put into South Gardens and the War Memorial Playing Field, and lastly and importantly the creation of the steps and handrails in front of this hall's main fire escape, the need for which was illustrated by the fire in autumn 2015.

Turning to the challenges, the major long-term one facing the parish council, both financially and logistically, is the future maintenance of South Gardens, the Warren and the two ponds we own. It is a great privilege on paper to own such a physically attractive area, but it requires continuous management. The play area and equipment is kept under constant supervision and my thanks go to Tim Bonner who undertakes a weekly inspection of it. We are currently investigating what needs to be done to make the ponds and surrounding areas more attractive and potentially an asset that attracts fishing. The area is part of the South Harting Conservation Area, consequently to do any tree work requires Conservation Area consent. We are beginning to get an indication of the work that needs to be done, and money which would need to be spent to desilt the two ponds of many decades of deposited material. Based on that information we can decide how to move forward. I would like to thank both James Claydon who last summer by single-handedly removing a fair amount of weed from both ponds improved the habitat for the remaining fish, and Bevis Gladwyn who like James gets on and puts various things right when they need attention.

Hand in hand with this is the need to ensure that all the trees growing on Parish Council owned-land are in a safe condition. The rapid development of Ash Die-back has amplified this, and we are subsequently ensuring a proper process is put in place. Ownership of the land next to the road on the Uppark hill out of the village, the Warren and Wace plantation, and the fact that all our land has Open Access status means that many hundreds of trees need to be checked by a properly qualified professional on a regular basis. This will undoubtedly be expensive, and although we have allocated a considerable sum for maintenance of South Gardens and the Warren in the parish budget, it is likely that a fair amount of it will have to be used for this task. Incidentally, if you own a tree that overhangs a publically accessible area it is your responsibility to ensure it is safe. We have recently written to a landowner pointing out that some trees we believe he owns look dangerous.

At previous APMs there have been requests that the Council's accounts are available. They are not yet ready, but there are some copies of the Income and expenditure sheet in the room, and councillors will consider the balance sheet at the meeting which follows this one. For much of the last year we have been trying to get Hyde Housing to draft a legal agreement for the future management of the Furze Meadow play area that the parish council can agree to and work with. To be polite, it has been a thoroughly frustrating process. In spite of regular reminders Hyde have been very slow in responding to our correspondences, and when they have their proposals have been quite unworkable. We are currently at an impasse; the ball is in Hyde's court.

You have heard the reports from the Community hall and War Memorial playing fields. They both belong to the Parish Council but are managed by Trusts. The Parish Council has little direct input into their day-to-day management, other than by providing grants. I would like to thank the trustees on behalf of the Parish Council for their work on behalf of us all.

We have had a dry winter - and spring - and consequently the drainage work at Hurst carried out last year hasn't been tested. It is worth noting that it is essential to keep the grips west of the Ship junction, and the gulleys near that Junction clear of debris, as they could easily fail in a period of heavy rain, flooding properties in the centre of the village. One of the properties habitually at risk is the Ship. With both my chairman and District Councillor hats on I have been reminding CDC officers that this Grade II listed building in an iconic location has been in a sad and worsening state for some time. Further planning applications are required to seek listed building consent for most of the work needed to make two houses out of one, and to create an area of parking in the garden.

The planning committee of the Council currently has a heavy work load and usually meets twice a month, on the first and third Thursdays. It has considered nearly 100 applications and associated issues over the past 12 months. It is ably chaired by Chris Healey with the help of Sheridan Bowman as his vice-chairman, and it is clear that the committee members do their homework before commenting on the sites under consideration. Both the parish council and residents have expressed their concerns about the procedure by which CDC deals with enforcement issues, which can effectively disappear for too long into a black hole. Harting PC approached CDC about this at the end of 2016, and it was informally agreed that a protocol would be considered. Nothing appeared to happen – but at a parish's meeting on 28th March a representative from another parish council expressed precisely the same concern as we have, which was then echoed by other parishes.

Confronted by the weight of parishes speaking in unison, CDC has now agreed to draft a working protocol without further delay. We await that development, to benefit all parties. The South Downs National Park Authority, as LPA for the Park area, has for some years been drafting planning policy for the emerging Local Plan. The parish council has been as involved as it can be, and has some real concerns about the way the process is being handled. Last autumn the public were invited to comment on all the @preferred Options' draft of the plan, including one allocation site in South Harting, for 6 to 8 houses in New Lane. The Parish Council, while recognising the need for some development in the village, drew attention to details that should be borne in mind including their concern that due to the lie of the land 8 houses was too many on that site. All comments were considered by the SDNPA, and emerged on 1st March when the agenda for the SDNPA planning meeting was published. As I said in the last parish magazine, Sheridan Bowman and I were fortunate to become aware of it, and able to express to that committee our critical views not only about this site where it seemed the Parish Council's concerns had not been taken into account but

also one located opposite Smith Field which had subsequently been 'allocated' for five to six houses. Did what we say to the committee have any impact? We thought it might have done, as the SDNPA subsequently asked if they could talk to parish councillors in private session, on the pretext that new, confidential and helpful information would be imparted in a result of our comments and concerns. Understandably as your representatives we hoped that light would be shone into the gloomy corners of the current position, not least the fact that the numbers are too great for the two sites, describable as 'rural cramming'. So what happened when we met on 11th April? There was absolutely no new information, confidential or otherwise, but the officers did say that even since the SDNPA planning committee met on 9th March there has been some tinkering to the sites and policies, and more will be done in the future. To say we were disappointed is a gross understatement. I think we (and therefore by projection, you) were badly let-down. The public will not have an official opportunity to 'comment' on these, or any other, proposals until the document goes out for public consultation this autumn, to test its 'soundness'. Unlike the revision of the Chichester District planning area Local Plan, which is currently under way, there will not be any specific consultation on a 'New Sites Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)'. I queried whether this process would be sufficient for the Local Plan to be found 'sound' by the Planning Inspector, to be told that I should address that concern to the Head of Planning at the SDNPA. He has just replied to my letter, and councillors will consider what further action they wish to take on behalf of the parish.

So, interesting and busy times – and if you have any interest in any of the topics I have raised please get actively involved. Can I finally thank all the parish councillors for the work they have undertaken during the past year, and yet again thank Trish for her solid start as clerk, noting her enthusiastic attitude to the frequently challenging work she does on behalf of both the parish council and you the parishioners.

The Chairman thanked all those who had provided reports and opened the meeting to public questions and comments

## **Open Forum**

**John Stevens** said that although Harting Society is not listed as one of the contributors to the APM, as Chairman of a society with more than 100 members, he felt he would give some details during the open forum. The Society talks are both varied and interesting, with details advertised in the HPN. Reports of the talks also appear in later magazines. The annual membership is £8 which is extremely good value, everyone is encouraged to come along. *The chairman suggested that this organisation should be encouraged to provide a report to future APMs.*

**Eleanor Harradine** raised concerns on behalf of herself and other members of the community over the loss of the monthly amenity vehicle. The mobile vehicle in the village had been very well utilised, and was essential for those that do not have the ability to travel to the central amenity sites. Mrs Harradine raised the fact that CDC had spent £150k on clearing up fly tipping, and questioned whether this was a true saving. She said there was a lot of resentment in the village about this. *(The chairman responded that since charges had been applied at tips, and the local amenity services had been ceased, CDC had reported a 100% increase in fly*

*tipping. The County Council had previously supplied the monthly amenity vehicle, so they are making a saving. However, CDC foot the bill for the fly tipping. Talks are ongoing between the two councils to try and resolve this issue.)*

**Colin Waller** thanked the Chairman for a detailed report and for outlining all the work being done, such a detailed report had not been received in a long while.

**Angela Church** questioned why the Harting Parish Council noticeboard by the Village Stores is not used by the Parish Council. She asked if it was possible for notices to be posted in there as well as on the other boards, as they are more likely to be read.

*(The chairman confirmed that this had been debated previously, and there is a notice on the board to say where notices are displayed. The use of the board is now slightly hampered by the post box. He confirmed that the Council will give it consideration)*

**Brian Evans** said he was pleased to hear the Parish Council is looking at trees on public land and encouraged those with trees on their own property to keep them in good order. He also raised concerns about the brook, and how it seems to be clogged up at the beginning and at the Smithfield end. He suggested an effort should be made by the Parish Council and volunteers to clear it.

Mr Johnson-Hill noted that he had seen a brown trout in the portion of the brook that passes through his garden.

*(The chairman suggested he would address this issue in the next HPN article)*

**Ron Beckett** raised some issues from previous years which he felt needed some sort of resolution. The bar at the end 40 Acre lane was broken, and was in need of repair, especially to protect the area from travellers and fly tipping. The plaque on the water pump by the Old School is illegible and it would be nice for people to be able to read the inscription. Also, the noticeboard from South Gardens has not yet been replaced.

*(The Chairman advised that the Parish Council would look at these matters)*

**Geoff Prosser** raised concerns about the ability of young local people to remain living in the village due to the high cost of housing. Mr Prosser had spoken to SDNPA, the local MP and local residents regarding the need for affordable housing and possible new sites for such housing. He suggested that these sort of issues needed consideration by the Parish Council. He said he found it hard to speak and raise debate at the Parish Council meetings because of the restrictions of the Standing Orders. Mr Prosser said there was a need for a substantive base to start this process and that he had the necessary skills and experience to help.

*(The chairman reiterated his report when he said the Parish Council was always grateful for anyone with an active interest to get involved. However, the article via the HPN asking for anyone interested in a local housing survey to come forward had received a nil response. Mrs Bowman, councillor, detailed that in the initial proposals, 6 houses had triggered the need for affordable housing. This threshold has now been reduced to 3 houses. The Chairman also confirmed that if a*

*landowner is willing to release land at a low cost, and there was an identified housing need, then 100% affordable housing would be achievable. This would be via the creation of a Community Land Trust (CLT))*

**John Stevens** voiced concern over the definition of “affordable housing” and whether it really is affordable. He also raised concerns about the problems where individuals buy properties at low cost and then sell them on at high cost.

**Pauline Barnfield** said she knew of a local family who are now living in Midhurst. They had been offered low cost housing in the village, but were unable to guarantee a place for their children at the local school.

*(The Chairman asked all present to encourage the community to feed their views on this through himself and the clerk)*

**Pru Barlow** asked about the situation regarding the fingerposts, and whether the Parish Council was still looking for a group to work on them.

*(The Chairman confirmed that two of the fingerposts have been adopted, and will shortly be renovated. Dealing with the two posts being mended by a contractor working for the Parish Council has been very problematic and the situation is needing a resolution.)*

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.50pm.