

HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Harting Parish Council held on **Thursday 16 July 2020**
at 6.30 p.m.

The meeting was held via Zoom video link in accordance with the Coronavirus Act 2020

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

In attendance: Mrs Walker (Parish Clerk).

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

55.Apologies for absence: Mrs Bramley.

56.Declarations of Interest: None.

57.Minutes from Meeting held on 18 June 2020.

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 18 June 2020 were agreed as a true record and would be signed by the Chair when circumstances allow.

58.Questions from the Public: the following questions were raised by a member of the public present at the meeting:

- Can the works in the Warren be put on hold until the Parish have had a chance to look at the restoration project which would have been presented at the Annual meeting
- When will the public meeting, noted in the June 2020 minutes, be held
The Chair responded to confirm that it was very important to progress the deer fencing to ensure it is in place in sufficient time for the 2020/21 planting season. It is important to plant this year to ensure the restoration project gets under way. The Council have committed to holding a public meeting as soon as the COVID-19 restrictions allow more than 30 people to meet together. Information has been published over the last year regarding the tree works and restoration project, the Council has made every effort to communicate with the community.

59.Matters of Urgent Public Importance:

None.

60.Reports from the County and District Councillor

Dr O'Kelly, the County and District Councillor had circulated a report prior to the meeting and the members raised the following points:

- concerns about the budget revisions being discussed at both District and County Council level to address the deficits resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic arrangements
- Is the District Council going to reinstate the posting of planning notices and notification letters to neighbouring properties.
Dr O'Kelly confirmed she would follow this up.

61. Tree Report

The members were informed that the deer fencing information had taken longer than expected to gather and so the anticipated special Council meeting in July had not taken place. Five contractors had been approached but three had been too busy to visit the site, one giving a verbal quote in the region of £20 per metre. The other two contractors had visited the site and provided quotes for the members to consider. It was noted that the quotes included kissing gates which were originally thought to be the best way to secure the access routes to the footpaths, however WSCC Rights of Way have now indicated these many not be agreed as they are not easily accessible by people with pushchairs. Self-closing gates will now be necessary, and this will slightly reduce the quoted costs.

It is necessary to have the deer fencing in place by November, if possible, to ensure planting can take place during the 2020/21 planting season, this is also a condition of the Tree Council grant. Each of the contractors had been asked to quote for the preparation and levelling of the ground along the line of the deer fencing to ensure the base is within 10cm of the ground, one contractor would carry out this work in September and the other would do this at the same time as the fencing. The length of fencing quoted by the two contractors was slightly different but this was thought to be due to the differing measuring methods used. The Chair had visited sites to view the work of both contractors and confirmed they were of an equal standard.

The members discussed the quotes and agreed that Contractor A should be appointed to erect the deer fencing as it was important to complete the ground clearance work as soon as possible. There was discussion about the perceived lack of communication surrounding the restoration project in the community. Despite articles published via the Parish magazine, Council website and Village Facebook page it appears the message had still not reached everyone.

The councillors confirmed they were all committed to the project but felt it was important to commit to hold a public meeting, as soon as the COVID-19 restrictions allowed, to publicise the works and hopefully recruit some volunteers. A provisional date of 3 September was agreed, the venue and time would be confirmed in due course and further details will be placed on the Council website. It was also agreed there would be a household leaflet drop detailing the restoration project along with the placement of posters in the area of the Warren. It is hoped this will create a better understanding of the project as well as encourage volunteers to come forward.

The members were informed that the South Downs National Park Authority's Ranger for the area had recently visited the Warren and had noted that almost all the trees planted last February were growing despite the dry weather and the attentions of the deer. She had been excited to see that the regeneration was doing well and noted there would be rapid growth as the necessary soil fungal relationships are already established.

The following proposals were agreed:

- i. To note the report*
- ii. That posters would be placed in the area of the Warren giving a pictorial representation of what has happened and why*
- iii. That a leaflet detailing the work carried out in the Warren and the proposed restoration project would be distributed to households in late August/early September*
- iv. That a provisional date would be set for 3 September 2020, subject to COVID-19 restrictions, to hold a public meeting to discuss the restoration project*
- v. that contractor A would be appointed to erect the deer fencing in the Warren*

62. Internal audit 2019/20

The Council noted that the Internal Audit had been completed by Peter White Ltd without any issues.

The following proposal was agreed:

To note the completion of the Internal Audit for 2019/20

63. Annual Governance and Accountability (AGAR) statement 2019/20

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 agreed to sign and date the Governance Statement.

The following proposal was agreed:

that the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20

64. Accounting statements 2019/20

The accounting statements had been circulated to the members in advance of the meeting. The Chairman proposed that the Accounting Statement for 2019/20 should be approved and the Annual Return submitted to the external auditor.

The members agreed and the RFO and Chairman agreed to sign and date the Accounting Statement.

The following proposal was agreed:

that the Council approves the Accounting Statements for 2019/20.

65. Notice of public rights and publication of unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability statement

The members noted that the unaudited AGAR and the notice of public rights would be published and the 30 working days of inspection would be set for the period 17 July 2020 to 28 August 2020.

The following proposal was agreed:

To note that the period for the public inspection of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2020 will be from 17 July 2020 to 28 August 2020.

66. Review of Terms of Reference for Personnel Committee, Complaints Committee and Finance Committee.

At the Annual meeting on 14 May 2020 it was agreed that, due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on meetings, each committee of the Council should review the Terms of Reference specific to them and report any proposed changes to the Council.

The following proposals were agreed:

- i. To note the Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee have been reviewed by that Committee and no amendments were proposed*
- ii. To note the Terms of Reference for the Complaints Committee have been reviewed by that Committee and no amendments were proposed*
- iii. To note the Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee have been reviewed by that Committee and a revision to add the words “at least” to section 6 was agreed*

Mrs Martin left the meeting.

67. Committee membership

The members considered the outstanding vacancies on the Personnel and Complaints Committee.

The following proposals were agreed:

- i. that Mrs Bull be appointed to the Personnel Committee*

ii.that Mr Johnson Hill, Mr Miller and Mrs Gaterell be appointed to the Complaints Committee

68.Review of Council Policies & Procedures

The following proposals were agreed:

- i. To note the Complaints procedure policy was reviewed and agreed
- ii. To note the Grants policy was reviewed and subject to the removal of the word 'Youth Club' from paragraph 2 was agreed
- iii. To note the Retention of documents policy was reviewed and agreed

69.Local Government Association consultation on a new model Code of Conduct

At the June Council meeting the members were notified of the consultation on a new model Code of Conduct and agreed to review the document, passing any comments to the clerk. The clerk had not received any comments indicating the need for amendments.

The following proposal was agreed:

That the members agree the comment "Harting Parish Council has no comment to make on the new model Code of Conduct" should be submitted to the Local Government Association consultation on a new model Code of Conduct

70.Finance

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

Undisclosed	Clerk & RFO Salary - July	866.26
M H Kennedy & Sons	Grass Cutting	169.20
Debra Harknett- Godfree	Year end account guidance	101.25
Debra Harknett- Godfree	Community Hall Bookkeeping	135.00
V Signs UK	Signage for play area	132.00
Trish Walker	Zoom Monthly fee	14.39
JRB Enterprises Ltd	Dog gloves - dispenser waste bags	101.94
Stephanie Ayres Consultancy Ltd	Emergency group leaflets	145.00

70.2. The income for July was noted.

£1460.00 WMPF Insurance claim

71.Additional hours worked by clerk

The members discussed the additional hours that had been undertaken by the clerk in helping to set up the Parish Council Emergency Group, acting as the central contact point for the parish during that time and setting up new systems to enable the Council meetings and work to continue.

The clerk had indicated that she would like to claim for 45 additional hours over the previous four months and contribute all the other extra hours as a 'volunteer'. The cost to the Parish Council would be £568.80.

The following proposal was agreed:

To agree to authorise payroll to pay the clerk for an additional 45 hours worked during the period March - July 2020 arising as a consequence of the Parish Council Emergency Group work.

72.Bank Reconciliation for July 2020

It was noted that the bank reconciliation had been scrutinised and will be signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee. The Chairman of the Council will sign the

reconciliation in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations when circumstances allow.

73. Bank balance as of 30 June 2020 £64,525.58

Noted.

74. Budget statement for June 2020

Noted.

75. Finance

The unconfirmed minutes of the Finance Committee held on 8 July 2020 were noted and the following proposals were agreed:

- i. that the Financial Regulations have been reviewed.*
- ii. That the Health & Safety and Risk Management Strategy has been reviewed*
- iii. That the risk assessments for Finance, Homeworking, Reputation and Expertise and Safeguarding Information have been reviewed*
- iv. To note the Finance Committee has reviewed the Insurance Schedules and recommend they are left at the current levels until a meeting can be arranged to discuss the policies with the insurers.*
- v. that the subscriptions to NALC and WSALC should be retained at the current level.*

76. Planning Committee

The minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 18 June 2020 were noted.

77. Correspondence

None.

78. Clerks report

The report was noted.

79. Items for future meetings

Report from public meeting

80. Date of next meeting – The next meeting would be held on Thursday 17 September; the venue and time will be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 8.23 pm.