

HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Harting Parish Council held on **Thursday 17 September 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 Bramley, 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 5 members of the public in attendance.

81.Apologies for absence: None.

82.Declarations of Interest: None.

83.Minutes from Meeting held on 16 July 2020.

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 16 July 2020 were agreed as a true record and would be signed by the Chair when circumstances allow.

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

- A meeting had been held between some of the members of public present and a representative of the Woodland Trust. It was suggested the representative was unhappy with the result of the tree works in the Warren and would be getting in touch with the Parish Council.

The Chair responded to confirm that the Council had not been contacted by the Woodland Trust.

- Could the total weight of the timber removed from the Warren be confirmed
The clerk confirmed she would forward this information in due course.
- Have the councillors taken full responsibility for the works in the Warren
The Chair confirmed that the councillors were fully informed of all aspects of the tree works and decisions had been taken at Council meetings.
- The works have caused a scar and will not be forgotten, should the Council have stopped the works during the wet weather
The Chair agreed the weather had been a huge problem but noted that if the contractors had been stopped there would inevitably have been other problems arising.
- Is the Council prepared for the consequences of installing deer fencing
The Chair confirmed the Council is very aware that the perimeter of the fencing will need to be regularly monitored and that the ground along the route of the proposed fencing will be levelled to ensure the fencing fits closely to the ground.

The Chair reminded the members of public that the councillors were all volunteers and were working in the best way possible. He urged everyone to start to look forward to the

replanting and restoration project and highlighted the positive Tree Report which was to be discussed later in the agenda.

85.Matters of Urgent Public Importance:

None.

86.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 Government consultation on pavement parking and the potential impact on South Harting where this is common practice.
Dr O'Kelly confirmed she was in contact with the Cabinet member on this subject.
- Concerns about the lack of feedback and joint working that had been anticipated from the local authorities, particularly in light of the successful 'buddy system' set up in the Parish.
Dr O'Kelly suggested a contact within CDC (Chichester District Council) who may be able to help. It was agreed the clerk would contact them to raise concerns.
- Will the County Local Committee (CLC) meet via Zoom
Dr O'Kelly confirmed the CLC's had been cancelled.
- The members asked to be kept fully informed of any local government reorganisation anticipated as a result of the Government white paper

87.Tree Report

It was noted that on 15 September 2020 the Council had been awarded a grant of £32,179 by the Tree Council as part of a Network Rail Community Planting initiative. This was very welcome news, particularly as it was previously thought the grant would be in the region of £25,000. The grant confirms the great level of support, in both financial and advisory terms, that the Tree Council is giving the Restoration project.

It is anticipated the Parish Council will receive the funds directly to enable the reclaim of VAT. The increased level of grant now includes some of the areas that were to have been covered by the timber sales income, such as the ground preparation for the deer fencing and the protective guards for the regeneration. It is anticipated that the cost of future maintenance can be covered by the timber sales money. The grant does not cover the display boards that were planned for the north and south entrances to outline the project and acknowledge the support of various bodies.

The members noted the invaluable support given by Petra Billings, the chartered ecologist appointed by the Council, over the last weeks. She has liaised with both the Forestry Commission to determine the best areas for replanting and to agree the levels of restocking needed to fulfil the felling licence conditions, and the Tree Council in relation to the grant application.

It is anticipated that 3800 tree and shrub saplings will be planted in the Warren during the 2020/21 season. A further 500 saplings will be planted in the 2021/22 season to allow the replacement of trees that fail and to fill in any gaps once the second year regeneration is evident. Some of the saplings will be planted by volunteers with professional contractors planting the more difficult areas.

The saplings have been ordered from a local supplier who has previously supplied the Tree council, the anticipated range is as follows:

Trees (60-90 cm)

Beech	800
Field maple	650
Lime (small-leaved)	750
Whitebeam	225
Yew	225

Shrubs (40-60 cm)

Hazel	350
Hawthorn	150
Guelder rose	225
Wayfaring tree	225
Spindle	100
Dogwood	100

The timing of the supply of the saplings is unknown at this stage as they have to be dormant before they can be lifted, this can be as late as December.

There will potentially be four volunteer planting days taking place during the planting season November to March, ideally some will be in the National Tree week running from 28 November to December, although this does depend on the availability of the saplings.

The volunteer days will be supported by SDNPA (South Downs National Park Authority) rangers and Petra Billings. There will be challenges in relation to the Covid-19 restrictions, in particular the 'rule of six', but the 'Best practice for tree planting events with social distancing' will be used.

There is a significant amount of natural regeneration in the Warren and it is essential to protect this before the leaves drop. A 'crib' sheet has been produced and volunteers are being asked to help in this work.

It was noted that the Harting Tree Project leaflet had been delivered to all the households in the Parish during the month of August, there had been a good response and several 'Tree Champions' had come forward as a result of the leaflet. The Chair thanked Paul Martin for his assistance in designing the leaflet.

The Clerk confirmed that Kevin Dewitt, WSCC Rights of Way Officer, had confirmed that he has visited the Warren and was happy that the paths have been reinstated to the appropriate level. The widths of the paths will be reduced with shrub planting.

The application to erect four gates across the footpaths to secure the deer fencing had also been approved.

The members noted that Ali Hollingbery, one of the Council's tree wardens, had resigned due to her commitments with her voluntary role with Search and Rescue.

The planning permission for the bund across the entrance to the loading bay had been granted on 15 September 2020.

The members discussed the pile of brash stacked in the area of the loading bay and it was noted there was an intention to burn this once the CDC advice on bonfires allowed. The clerk noted disappointment that the members of public, attending the meeting to raise issues about the Warren, had not remained to hear the Tree Report.

The Chair thanked Mrs Bowman and the clerk for their role in gaining the Tree Council grant.

The following proposal was agreed:

To note the report

88.Website

Mrs Bull confirmed the website was ready to 'go live' and the address is:

www.harting-pc.gov.uk

The old website will be deactivated and any traffic will be directed to the new site.

The website will now meet the statutory requirements to provide an accessible website with functionality to include screen readers and speech recognition.

All the statutory items are now on the website, but this will be a constantly developing project and the councillors were urged to look through the various sections and suggest any changes or improvements

The Chair thanked Mrs Bull for her work in the development of the website.

The following proposals were agreed:

- i. *That the committee should recommend that the Council agree to launch the new Harting Parish Council website on 21/9/2020*
- ii. *That the committee should recommend that the Council agree the Accessibility Statement /*
- iii. *That the committee should recommend that the Council agree the Tree Project date, once agreed, should feature on the front page of the website when it is launched.*

89.Footpath Lights

The members were informed that, following the decision made at the Council meeting held on 18 June 2020, an article had been placed in the August Parish Magazine stating that the replacement of the footpath lights was not justified due to the perceived lack of demand and the high cost of replacement.

There had been no feedback received from the public in response to that article.

The proposal was considered. An amendment was proposed to remove the words 'from local electricians' from the original proposal which read:

That having received no feedback from the public following the article in the August parish magazine, the existing lights be removed and not replaced, and that quotes are obtained from local electricians for their removal.

The amendment was agreed.

The following proposal, was then agreed:

That having received no feedback from the public following the article in the August parish magazine, the existing lights be removed and not replaced, and that quotes are obtained for their removal.

90.Flooding at the B2146/Cow Lane junction

Mr Palmer was pleased to report that, following a site inspection on 28 August 2020, a WSCC representative had suggested that a hump should be constructed on the north side of the B2146 opposite the Cow Lane junction. This will channel a lot of water into the French drain and stop the water running off the fields into the Petersfield road during periods of very wet weather.

WSCC has approved this project and will be funding it too.

Mr Palmer confirmed that WSCC had also been asked to clear the vegetation on the footway on the north side of the road leading up to the Playing Fields.

The following proposal was agreed:

To note the report

91.Government consultation on pavement parking

The Government consultation on pavement parking was noted. This is due to end at 11.59pm on 22 November 2020.

It is currently unknown how the Local Council will be handling this matter, the local councillor, Kate O'Kelly, had confirmed earlier in the meeting that she would engage with the Cabinet member for Highways to register the local interest and the importance of this consultation.

The Highways and Byways Advisory Committee (HABAC) will take a look at the document in relation to the potential impact on the Harting Parish

The following proposal was agreed:

To note the report

92.Furze Meadow Play Area

The members were extremely pleased to hear that all the old play equipment in Nyewood had been replaced by Hyde.

The issue of the play area, and who was responsible for it, had been a matter of concern for the Parish Council for many years. The Council has investigated several ways over the years to secure the area and to improve the play equipment, culminating in a decision to purchase the area for the sum of £1 in May 2018. However, an audit of stock undertaken by CDC and Hyde delayed this purchase and the Parish Council received notification that the site would not be sold in January 2019.

Hyde have now taken responsibility for the area and, as detailed above, the equipment has been replaced.

Mrs Curran noted that all the residents of Nyewood were delighted with the new play equipment, especially as everything had been replaced.

It was agreed that the clerk would thank Hyde for the new equipment.

The following proposal was agreed:

To note the report

93.Grant application War Memorial Playing Fields (WMPF)

The members considered and agreed a grant application totalling £2766.67 + vat from the WMPF committee to cover some necessary repairs to ensure the pavilion stays waterproof, safe and usable.

The WMPF committee have been considering ways to raise the funds for a new pavilion, but in light of the coronavirus and the current economy it has become evident this may be a longer term project.

The members noted the pavilion was a resource that was currently under used and hoped it would be able to produce an income stream in the future.

The following proposals were agreed:

- i. That the Council agree a grant to WMPF for a total sum of £2766.67 for works to carry out necessary repairs and updates to the pavilion to make it weatherproof, usable and safe.*
- ii. That the Council agrees to pay the agreed level of grant to the contractors for the repair works to the pavilion*

94.Aims and Objectives Advisory Committee (AOAC) Update

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2020 were noted.

The proposals were considered. An amendment was proposed to replace the word 'wave' with 'lockdown' in the original proposal (iv) which read:

that the Council agree to ask the trustees of the Village Hall to allow the establishment of a temporary office space in the Upper Room of the village hall to be used in the event of a second wave of Covid-19

The amendment was agreed.

The following proposals, including substantive proposal (iv), were then agreed:

- i. that the Council agree to ask the local county councillor to ask WSCC to provide a breakdown of resources, both physical and monetary, that are available to parish councils*
- ii. that the Council agree to ask the local county councillor to confirm that WSCC will produce an information leaflet for each household in the event of a second wave of Covid-19*
- iii. that the Council agree to allow a further contingency sum of £500 which can be used by the PCEG in the event of a second wave of Covid-19.*
- iv. that the Council agree to ask the trustees of the Village Hall to allow the establishment of a temporary office space in the Upper Room of the village hall to be used in the event of a second lockdown of Covid-19*
- v. that the Council agree to set a date for the public meeting to be held on Saturday 5 October at 4pm, subject to satisfactory risk assessments and confirmation of guidance from SSALC (Surrey Sussex Association of Local Councils), to be held at The War Memorial Playing Fields if available, otherwise in South Gardens*
- vi. that the Council agree to appoint a volunteer project manager to assist the Tree and Woodland Sub Committee organise the Harting Tree Project*

95.Allotments

The clerk confirmed a letter had been received from Mr Christie confirming his purchase of the area known as Hutts Orchard, the site of the allotments. He confirmed that he is pleased to continue to lease the area of the allotments to the Parish Council and the level of rental payable, ie £25 per annum, will be retained.

The original lease, issued in 1993, was for a period of one year and was signed in 1993, when the allotments were moved due to the development of the school in Tipper Lane. It was agreed that this change in ownership highlights the need to establish a more permanent basis for the allotments.

The previous Allotment working group is still in existence and will look at the status of the arrangements and report back to the Council.

It is possible that the Council may benefit from some legal advice in this matter, particularly as the provision of allotments is a statutory responsibility of a Parish Council under s23 of the 'Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908'.

The proposals were considered. An amendment was proposed to add the words 'up to the discretionary sum allowed to be authorised by the clerk' in the original proposal (ii) which read:

that the Council agree to allocate a sum to pay for legal advice from Mr Ian Davison, Surrey Hills Solicitors, if required.

The amendment was agreed.

The following proposals, including substantive proposal (ii), were then agreed:

- i. *to note the report*
- ii. *that the Council agree to allocate a sum, up to the discretionary sum allowed to be authorised by the clerk, to pay for legal advice from Mr Ian Davison, Surrey Hills Solicitors, if required.*

96.Sewage

An email had been received from Southern Water on 3 September 2020 outlining concerns over the challenges faced at the local treatment works. It appears that in recent wet weather the local works was at risk of polluting the local environment with raw sewage. The cause of the problems are attributed to the levels of fat, oil, grease and wet wipes.

Southern Water representatives have been delivering flyers to the households and the local school.

The members agreed the Council would display the information on the Council website and place it on the Village Facebook page.

The following proposal was agreed:

To note the report

97.Data Protection Officer

The members noted that, although there is not a legal requirement for parish councils to appoint a DPO, it is considered good practice to do so as they can provide a vital contact with the Information Commissioners Office.

The following proposal was agreed:

That the Council agree to appoint ProcessMatters2 to continue as Data Protection Officer for a further year at the cost of £150 per annum

98.Review of Council Policies & Procedures

The following proposals were agreed:

- i. To note the Correspondence policy was reviewed and agreed*
- ii. To note the Metal Detecting policy was reviewed and agreed*

99. SSALC meeting for Council chairs

The Chair gave a report from a Zoom briefing meeting of all the chairs in the counties of Surrey, East and West Sussex. The meeting had been very useful and it is hoped will be held on a monthly basis.

The topics discussed included:

Planning White Paper

Accessible websites

Pavement Parking consultation

Covid-19 issues

‘Virtual’ Training sessions

Devolution White Paper

The following proposal was agreed:

To note the report

100.Finance

100.1. The members noted the cheques paid in August 2020

Undisclosed	Clerk & RFO Salary - August	1,366.80
M H Kennedy & Son Ltd	Grass cutting	338.40
Trish Walker	Zoom Monthly Fee	14.39

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

Trish Walker	Clerk & RFO Salary - September	1,058.17
HMRC	Tax and NI contributions	277.32
Greentech Limited	Bio spiral guards, stakes and canes	1,227.76
Petaprint	Harting Tree Project Leaflet	165.00
SSALC Limited	Data Protection Course	36.00
Information Commissioner	Data Protection Fee	40.00
M H Kennedy & Son Ltd	Grass mowing	169.20
Trish Walker	Clerk expenses Jul - Sept	69.48

100.3. The income for August and September was noted.

£26,550.00 2nd instalment of precept, it was noted this was not included in the bank balance shown on the agenda.

101. National Pay Scales Award

The members noted the new employment briefing issued by The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the amended national salary pay scales for clerks and other employees. The new pay scales had been agreed for 2020-21 to be implemented from 1 April 2020, the increase is approximately 2.64%.

The model contract has also been updated with an increase in annual leave entitlement from 21 to 22 days for employees with less than five years' service. The clerk's contract will be updated in due course to reflect this change.

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

102.Bank Reconciliation for August and September 2020

It was noted that the bank reconciliations 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.

103.Bank balance as of 31 August 2020 £61,780.21

Noted.

104.Budget statement for August 2020

Noted.

105.Planning Committee

The minutes of the Planning Meetings held on 16 July 2020, 11 August 2020 and 27 August 2020 were noted.

106.Correspondence

Harting school had emailed regarding signage boards they were hoping to place at the end of Tipper Lane.

107.Clerks report

The report was noted.

108.Items for future meetings

Allotments

109.Date of next meeting – The next meeting would be held on Thursday 15 October; the venue and time will be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.