

MEETING OF HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

You are hereby summoned to a Meeting of Harting Parish Council to be held
by video link on
Thursday 18 February 2021 at 6.30pm

The Press and Public are welcome to attend.

This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Coronavirus Act 2020, any members of public wishing to join the meeting should contact the clerk, prior to the meeting at clerk@harting-pc.gov.uk
Trish Walker
Clerk to Harting Parish Council

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** - to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21 January 2021.
4. **Questions from the Public**
5. **Matters of Urgent Public Importance** – raised with consent of the Chairman.
6. **Reports from the County and District Councillor**
7. **Tree Survey** (see supporting document for briefing note)
The following recommendation is made:
To note the report
8. **Councillor Code of Conduct 2020** (to follow)
The following recommendation is made:
That the Council agree to adopt the Councillor Code of Conduct 2020
9. **Parish Council Emergency Group (PCEG)** (see supporting document for briefing note)
The following recommendations are made:
 - i. *To note the report*
 - ii. *That the Council discuss the merits of permanently positioned grit bins around the parish*
10. **WSALC (West Sussex Association of Local Councils)** (see supporting document for briefing note)
 - i. *to note the report*
 - ii. *to delegate the responsibility to the two delegates to take whatever action they feel is necessary to benefit Harting and other parish councils.*
11. **Grass Cutting for 2021** (see supporting document for briefing note)
The following recommendation is made:
That the Council accept the quote of £141.00 per cut for South Gardens from MH Kennedy & Son Ltd for the year 2021.

12. Finance

12.1. To approve expenditure for February 2021

Undisclosed	Clerk & RFO Salary	887.00
Mark Welby	Tree survey	660.00
Ladywell Accountancy Services	Payroll charge for 2020/21	75.00
Trish Walker	Monthly Zoom subscription	14.39

12.2. To note income for February 2021 - Vat refund £5209.46

12.3. To note that the bank reconciliation for February 2021 has been scrutinised and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee and will be signed by the Chairman of the Council in accordance with the Financial Regulations

12.4. To note the bank balance as of 31 January 2020 - £78,913.42

12.5. To note the budget statement for January 2021

13. Planning - To note the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 21 January 2021.

14. Correspondence

15. Clerks report – *(attached)*

16. Items for future meetings

17. Date of next meeting - Council Meeting 18 March 2021 time and venue to be agreed

Supporting document – Harting Parish Council Meeting 18 February 2021

Agenda Item 7 - Tree Survey

The latest Tree Survey was carried out by Mark Welby on 22 January 2021 (see attached survey report). The survey is also available on the Council website. The area of land owned by the Council in both South Gardens and the Warren was surveyed at this time.

The report recommends two trees for felling:

- small diseased ash on the eastern side of the Warren
- 20m tall beech, showing wounds and decay on the lower stem, leaning heavily over the path towards the southern end of the Warren

These trees need to be removed as soon as possible due to the health and safety risk to the general public. The clerk is requesting quotes to fell and stack the timber, with brash being chipped.

It is anticipated that the costs will be within the limit the Chair and clerk RFO can authorise, as detailed in the Financial Regs paragraph 4.1. Therefore, this will ensure the work can be carried out as soon as quotes have been received and reported back to a future council meeting.

The next Tree Survey (leaf on) will be due in the summer of 2022.

The following recommendation is made:

To note the report.

Agenda Item 8 – Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

The updated Code of Conduct will follow in due course.

The following recommendation is made:

That the Council agree to adopt the Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

Agenda Item 9 – Parish Council Emergency Group (PCEG)

Briefing Note

1. There are a number of projects underway:
 - a. Art trail with 18 venues and 22 exhibitors
 - b. Building on the Art Trail it was agreed to have an event similar to the VE Day event on the first weekend in May. Working title is May Day Madness and outline concept is that parishioners would remain in their front gardens but display artwork or plants that they have been working on during lockdown. And, subject to the rules in place at the time, parishioners could walk around and admire these efforts. This is not to replace either the festivities or the End of Pandemic party. It will be further discussed at the next meeting.
2. There has been discussion about vaccination data. West Sussex County Council (WSSC) has been provided quality data and there was a question about receiving the same from Hants given that half of the village are registered with GPs in Petersfield. This information is not available as the parish is formally in West Sussex and there is no cross boundary information passed out to parish clerks.
3. Communications outreach continues via a newsletter, FaceBook and the Council website. Communications are still restricted to electronic communications which are not available to all residents.
4. In the week beginning 8 February 2021, WSSC confirmed an Amber weather warning for snow and ice is in force. This has raised concerns in the PCEG about the community's resilience against snow. The current arrangements are that WSSC grits the main roads identified in their gritting routes and they will also trigger the local arrangements for placing of the grit bags around the village, as detailed in the Winter Maintenance Plan. There are 9 identified sites for these bags across the parish, the bags are held at the Davey's farm in West Harting. If the local arrangements were triggered and the bags were put out, they would stay in situ until the end of the winter months, leading to the potential misuse of the grit and reduction in its effectiveness. The bags are provided free of charge, if required, by WSSC each year and supplies are not renewed within year. There may be a benefit to considering a more permanent arrangement which may consider the following:
 - Wooden clad grit bins permanently sited at the selected sites -filled by WSSC or by local arrangement if necessary
 - 'just in case' bin sited in the Council's carpark at the entrance to South Gardens
 - Permanent bins could hold flowers in pots for the warmer months of the years, this might provide a more 'reassuring visual preparedness'
 - The bins are likely to cost in the region of £200 each.

The following recommendations are made:

iii. To note the report

iv. That the Council discuss the merits of permanently positioned grit bins around the parish

Agenda Item 10 – WSALC (West Sussex Association of Local Councils)

At the 19th November 2020 meeting of the Parish Council a report was presented setting out why it was important to appoint two voting representatives to attend and as necessary vote on matters at meetings of the SSALC and the WSALC. What follows builds on that report, which can be read attached to the agenda of the November meeting on the Council's website.

In the intervening months there has been a blizzard of correspondences. It is hoped the current position has been largely clarified by the two emails forwarded to Councillors on Saturday 13th February as this report was being finalised. Any further relevant information will either be forwarded or verbally updated

at the meeting. This will include a report on the virtual meeting of the chairs of all Chichester District Parish Councils with the (current) chairman of WSALC at 10am on the 18th February.

It is hoped that if the chair, vice-chair and clerk of CDALC (the sub-group of WSALC which purports to represent all parishes in Chichester District) are removed at the EGM of CDALC on 23rd February, and if other branches have had similar meetings the 25th February 2021 AGM of WSALC will take place with very different directors in place. If that is so, new directors will have been put in place and enabled to make necessary changes, and there will be no need for any parish council to resign from WSALC. If that doesn't happen on the day and most parishes resign, as at least 40 have already done, WSALC Ltd would be hollowed out and would implode. Whilst that is a far from ideal way to carry on, it is felt that things have come to such a pass that we have little option but to do so. Note we will not have burnt our boats, as there is effectively a 'cooling-off period'; if the desired changes take place in the meantime we and all other such Councils can withdraw our letter of resignation. In the meantime we retain our voting rights and any services.

It is intended to amend the Articles of Association of WSALC Ltd to make it much more accountable to the members.

The following recommendations are made:

- i. to note the report*
- ii. to delegate the responsibility to the two delegates to take whatever action they feel is necessary to benefit Harting and other parish councils.*

Agenda Item 11 – Grass Cutting for 2021

MH Kennedy & Son Ltd have cut the grass in South Gardens for some years. They have always provided a reliable and satisfactory service.

The quote for the grass cutting for the year 2021 has been provided at £141.00 + vat per cut, the costs have been retained at the 2020 prices. There would be one cut a fortnight depending on weather and growth.

The Financial Regulations state that three quotes do not need to be provided for "work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council" (Fin Regs 11.1 (a) iv).

This work is a continuation of a current contract and as the work has been satisfactory the following recommendation is made.

That the Council accept the quote of £141.00 per cut for South Gardens from MH Kennedy & Son Ltd for the year 2021.

Clerk's Reports - Harting Parish Council – 18 February 2021

Agenda Item 15

Items raised at previous meetings:

Topic/Date first raised	Item Detail	Action by	Status
Tree Works March 2016 (Minute 252)	Tree survey and associated tree works, and development of tree management plan	SB/ Clerk/AS Tree Working Group (TWG)	Contractor planting due to have started in week ending 12 Feb 2021, but delayed due to frozen ground. It is hoped the 2900 saplings will be planted in the next couple of weeks. The Tree survey has been completed and there are two trees marked for felling. The clerk will progress this. The Tree Champion badges have been received and will be passed out to the regen volunteers.
Traffic Working Group (Minute 153)	A working group was created to address the problems of traffic and speeding in the village of South Harting	Traffic working group	New post in Nyewood is being investigated and quotes sourced. New bracket for the post is on order.
HABAC November 2020	Quotes for North Lane finger post. South Downs Safer Roads Task Force. East Harting Flood Pond. Durford Lane and Bridge.	Clerk WSCC WSCC	Quote received from one contractor, the second is awaited. Minutes of the meeting on 30 November 2020 still awaited Dangerous pot hole on edge of carriageway still to be filled by WSCC. A resident has coppiced a hazel which has helped, there has been no feedback from WSCC. The bridge is due for repair by the end of February. Historic England has given WSCC permission to go ahead.
Drop in sessions (Minute 127 – Sept 2019)	To hold monthly Saturday morning drop-in sessions at the White Hart	AOAC	There have been no drop in sessions as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions commenced in March 2020

Online Banking	To investigate online banking to enable the setup and operation of a deposit account	Clerk	As agreed at the finance committee on 4 November 2020, Mr Miller is looking at some options for deposit account and will be putting a paper to the next Finance meeting in late Feb/early March
Footpath lights (Minute 89 – Sept 2020)	To disconnect and remove the footpath lights	Clerk	Estimates for the disconnection of the electrical supply and removal of lights are awaited
Allotments	Change of ownership and the potential impact on the allotments	Allotment Working Group	Advise to be sought from SSALC, if necessary, with regard to the current lease and the legal responsibility of the Council
PCEG Minute 266 Mar 2020	Set up of Parish Council Emergency Group in reaction to COVID-19 pandemic	TW, SG and SB	See agenda item 9
Insurance Claim	Claim from Hastings Direct for damage to a car from a tree falling from Council land on 28 February 2020	TW	A claim has been received from Hastings Direct, on behalf of a client, regarding alleged damage to a car from a tree falling from Council land in February 2020. The claim has been passed to the Council insurers who will be investigating the claim. The clerk will update as more information becomes available.
Annual Parish Council Meeting	Possible movement of AGM to first week of May 2021	TW	The current Coronavirus Act allowing Parish Councils to hold virtual meetings is due to expire on 7 May 2021. At this time there is no indication that this date will be extended, and therefore public Parish Council meetings would need to be held face to face. Councils are being advised to consider moving AGM meetings to the first week of May to ensure the statutory business can be carried out with all members present. The clerk will update at the March Council meeting.

Trish Walker - Clerk