

# HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Harting Parish Council held on **Thursday 18 February 2021**  
**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 no members of the public in attendance.

**193. Apologies for absence:** None.

**194. Declarations of Interest:** None.

**195. Minutes from Meeting held on 21 January 2021.**

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21 January 2021 were agreed as a true record and would be signed by the Chair when circumstances allow.

It was pointed out that there was a grammatical error, and the attendees should have stated "there were three members of the public".

**196. Questions from the Public:**

There were no questions from the Public.

**197. Matters of Urgent Public Importance:**

Mr Miller indicated that there had been a spate of burglaries recently in West Harting involving both farm property and domestic houses. Other recent incidents were also highlighted by Council members in Tipper Lane, where peddlers had been knocking on people's doors, which it was pointed out is illegal at this time due to coronavirus restrictions. A fake RSPCA van had also been exploring the area worrying residents about possible pet theft. It was agreed that a message would be placed on the Parish Council website and the village Facebook page advising residents to be extra vigilant at this time and report anything suspicious to the police.

**198. 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 following points were discussed:

- Covid data – Cases were reducing, but still 968 new cases in west Sussex over previous 7 days to 12 February. Vaccination programme proceeding well and now focussed on over 65s and clinically vulnerable.
- Budgets for the forthcoming year beginning April 2021 had been finalised. This includes the possible closure of all but 11 of the 43 children and family centres. A Cabinet meeting on 23 February will decide finally whether the consultation on these planned closures should go ahead. It was confirmed that Highways

maintenance levels would be maintained. Council taxes were due to increase by an average of 4.95% from April.

- Welcome news that Chichester Court is reopening as a 'Nightingale Court', which will mean greater local access to justice during the pandemic. This might be temporary as Chichester District Council has included the court site in their masterplan for the Southern Gateway redevelopment.

#### **199. Tree update**

The latest Tree Survey had been carried out by Mark Welby on 22 January 2021. The area of land owned by the Council in both South Gardens and The Warren was surveyed. The report recommended that two trees, a diseased ash tree and a 20m high beech tree, showing wounds and decay, should be removed as soon as possible due to the health and safety risk to the general public.

*The following proposal was agreed:*

*To note the report.*

#### **200. Councillor Code of Conduct 2020**

All Councils are required to adopt a Code of Conduct for Councillors. The current Code was adopted in November 2012. The Local Government Association (LGA) produced a new draft Model Member Code of Conduct during 2020 and this was put out for consultation between June and August 2020. Harting Parish Council had no comments on the draft document.

The final draft has now been produced by the LGA's Executive Board. The new Code addresses issues arising through the increased use of social media. The Code focuses upon setting high standards and expecting demonstrable good conduct but also looks to ensure they can undertake their role without being intimidated or bullied.

*The following proposal was agreed:*

*To adopt the Councillor Code of Conduct 2020.*

#### **201. Parish Council Emergency Group (PCEG)**

Mrs Gaterell, Chair of PCEG, summarised the report of the Group. This included an update on the Art Trail which was currently taking place around the village in 18 venues and with 22 exhibitors. It was reported that an event similar to the VE Day was planned for the village on the first weekend in May, subject to Covid rules at the time. The Working Title is May Day Madness, and the outline concept is that parishioners would remain in their front gardens and display artwork or plants they had been working on during lockdown.

The Council also discussed the merits of permanently positioned grit bins around the parish, as detailed in the Winter Maintenance Plan, and concluded that the current arrangements, whereby in adverse conditions WSCC grits the main roads and gritting bags are placed around the village, were satisfactory

The following proposals were agreed:

- To note the report*
- That the current arrangements for gritting were satisfactory and preferred to having permanently positioned grit bins around the parish.*

## 202. WSALC (West Sussex Association of Local Councils)

The Parish Council, at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020, agreed to appoint two voting representatives (Mr Shaxson and Mrs Bramley) to attend and as necessary vote at matters of the WSALC.

Since then, it was noted, there had been a blizzard of correspondence, which will culminate in an EGM on 23 February 2021 of CDALC, (the sub group which represents all parishes in Chichester District) with elections for the Chairman, Vice Chair and clerk of WSALC and for new directors to be appointed to WSALC Ltd. Other branches will be holding similar EGMs. The AGM of WSALC is to take place on 25 February 2021 and the indications are that it will be a very well-attended meeting. If the elections are unsuccessful and most parish councils resign from WSALC, which at least 40 have already done, WSALC Ltd would be hollowed out and implode. A new organisation could be created to fulfil the tasks that WSALC should perform.

The following proposals were agreed:

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

## 203. Grass Cutting for 2021

MH Kennedy & Son Ltd have cut the grass in south Gardens for several years and are considered to have always provided a reliable and satisfactory service. For 2021, a quote of £141.00 + VAT per cut has been provided, the cost having 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).

The members agreed the grass cutting is a continuation of a current contract.

*The following proposal was agreed:*

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

## 204. Finance

It was agreed that the following payments should be made:

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
SSALC Limited	Transparency course - clerk	36.00

**204.1.** The income for February 2021 was noted:

Vat refund £5209.46

## 205. Bank Reconciliation for February 2021

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.

**206. Bank balance as of 31 January 2021 £78,913.42**

Noted.

**207. Budget statement for January 2021**

Noted.

**208. Planning Committee**

The minutes of the Planning meeting held on 21 January 2021 were noted.

**209. Correspondence**

There had been no items of correspondence.

**210. Clerks report**

The report was noted. An update was given on the SID (Speed indicator Device) pole to be erected in Nyewood, further information was awaited from Mike Dare at WSCC.

The clerk reported that the Annual Parish Council meeting may need to be held early in May 2021, as recommended by NALC (National Association of Local Councils), as the current law allowing councils to meet remotely will expire on 7 May 2021. The change of date to 6 May would allow the councillors to meet safely to conduct this statutory meeting .

**211. Items for future meetings**

Online banking and deposit account

**212. Date of next meeting** – The next meeting would be held on Thursday 18 March 2021 via video conferencing, the time will be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.38 pm.