

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting (APM) of Harting Parish was held at 7.00pm on 15 March 2019 in the Community Hall, Pease Croft, South Harting. The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the Parish Council Mr Andrew Shaxson and 16 members of the public were present.

Welcome and introduction from the Chairman

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting for 2019, and noted that the reasonably low turn out was most likely due to the late organisation of the meeting as a result of the Purdah period.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Brian and Sue Evans, Pat and Leslie James, Chris Healey, Simon Powys Maurice, Nigel Johnson-Hill, Sheila Bramley and Anthony Palmer.

Minutes

The minutes of the last Annual parish meeting held on 19 April 2018 were approved as a correct record.

Reports by Parish Organisations

Fetherstonhaugh, Warren, Weaver, Feoffee and Henry Smith Charities - report provided by Pauline Barnfield and read by the Chairman.

The Trustees comprise of the Rev.Mark.Morton, -Chairman.

Pauline Barnfield—Treasurer-----

Sue Small, Jane Healy, Liz Lawrence, Peter Albury

John Villars has now agreed to inspect the Accounts

We have received £2,000 from the Henry Smith Charity during 2018

And a representative came to inspect the Policies including Data Protection , Privacy and Safeguarding .

At the end of February 2019 there was £2,297.73 in the Current Account

And £583.66 in the reserve account

During 2018 we distributed Vouchers at Christmas to the value of £800.00

And £900.00 over three terms to the School to assist disadvantaged children

And finally £900.00 to persons in need.

Fetherstonhaugh Charity for Poor Men – report provided by Steve Walker and read by Trish Walker

A capital sum of £265 was left in 1896 by Miss Featherstonhaugh and passed into the hands of the charity commission in 1916.

Interest was paid by the charity commission up to 25th February 2019 leaving a balance in the current account of £61.29. In December 2018 five sums of £10 were paid to 5 men in the parish.

The trustees are Mr Paul Glue, Mr Stephen Walker and Mr Kevin Clue.

War Memorial Playing Field –

No report was received from the War Memorial Playing Field.

Harting Community Hall - Report provided and read by Vivien De Beer, Chair of HCH

We have had another relatively pain free year except for one incidence. Some idiot stuck a face flannel down the toilet which broke the pump which we had to replace. Fortunately, it was covered by insurance.

We now have a successful website which has increased our hirings and, as a result, several people have been disappointed when unable to hire the hall when they wish. Also, the Film Nights have become hugely popular which will bring in an extra 4 figure sum this year.

Last year I said that we would charge people for taking advantage of our annual liquor licence but we have now waived that fee, thanks to the increase in our income. Our hiring fees have also not increased since 2011 and I don't foresee any increase in the near future. So, a successful story and again I would like to thank the P.C. for paying our insurance fee and for our annual grant, which we have not touched for the last couple of years. We are saving it for the new floor as the present one is nearing the end of its life.

The final exciting project is the solar panels for which we have a very generous anonymous donor but I have yet to receive planning permission for them from CDC.

The hall is now happy to confirm that it has WiFi installed.

Hospital Car Service – report provided by Heather Tuke and read by the Chairman.

During the last 12 months the Hospital Car Service has done 106 trips to hospitals, doctors, dentists, opticians and any medically related appointments.

At the moment there are 18 drivers on the list.

I would like to thank all the drivers who give their time so cheerfully to help people. I know the service is much appreciated by all the passengers.

It was agreed that the clerk would write to thank Mrs Tuke for arranging the hospital car service as it provides such a helpful service.

Lunch Club – report provided and read by Edmund Torrens, chairman of the Lunch Club.

The lunches continue to take place every third Thursday of the month with the exception of August and are open to all – not just the elderly in our community. The highlight of the year is our Christmas lunch which is always very popular.

The Village Hall provides an excellent venue and facilities.

Fiona Mullett, HeadTeacher at the school, has continued to provide occasional 'entertainment' by the pupils. We have enjoyed singing, dancing and poetry which has been very much appreciated by all.

We're grateful to all those who contribute to the lunches to make them such a success – the organizers, the cooks, those who lay the tables, serve the meal and clear away, run the raffle and clear the hall at the end. There would be no Lunch Club if it wasn't for this great band of volunteers.

Harting CE Primary School – report provided by Fiona Mullett and read by the Chairman.

Harting School continues to be a hub of learning, enabling children to make good progress irrespective of their starting points. We have a committed, experienced staff who inspire curious learners through a host of topics, linked to the national curriculum. Secondary schools comment on how well they are prepared for the next stage.

Not only do we build strong learning foundations, in a range of subjects, but we hear what great ambassadors pupils are for the community. We know that much exemplary behaviour is modelled by adults and are therefore pleased to have plenty of supportive volunteers.

We love our involvement in village life and enjoy:

- * Participating at Harting festivities as part of our enterprise projects
- * Celebrating our talents eg songs, poems and dance, shared with the luncheon club
- * Holding school events at Uppark eg school walk and picnic
- * Using National Trust land for weekly forest schooling
- * Welcoming musicians and visitors who demonstrate the impact of practice – every child is offered instrumental lessons
- * Enjoying visits as part of the curriculum
- * Attending services and assemblies, run by local churches
- * Participating in sport and inter-school tournaments at the local grounds

Following on from last year's maths success, the DfE have recognised our excellence in teaching phonics and reading. Basic standards continue to rise - complimented by inspiring humanities, arts and science teaching.

We have strong leadership, described as 'outstanding', at a local authority review - our governing body expects that the school will provide excellent education for years to come, despite tight funding. This report gives a taste of what we do. Interested Hampshire and West Sussex families are welcome to call the school to arrange a visit.

Harting Bell Ringers Report – report provided by Chris Rose and read by the Chairman

We currently have eleven ringers including two learners who started to learn last year and are all progressing well. Unfortunately, we have lost three ringers, one has stopped due to family commitments and two have moved away from the village.

We practice on a Tuesdays from 7.30 until 9pm and ring on the first and third Sunday of each month for the Sunday morning services. We also ring for weddings and are one of the few churches that ring before and after the wedding ceremony.

Harting bells are recognised to be some of the most difficult bells to ring due to the long draft.

Last year we renewed the muffles for our bells as our old ones were getting a little tired, and were difficult to keep in position on the clapper due to the leather being worn. They

had to be hand made to suit our bells and each clapper had to be measured and the sizes sent off to the muffle maker. They finally arrived and were used on Remembrance Sunday for the first time, everyone agreed that they enjoyed the new sound ringing with our new muffles

Pat James is our secretary and Leslie James looks after our funds and is our treasurer, Pru Barlow looks after the Sunday and wedding ringing rotas and Chris Rose and Richard Dale are our steeple keepers and look after the maintenance of the bells.

Chris Rose is the current Tower Captain helped by Luke Trewin who is the vice captain

Harting Parish News – report provided by Julie Cragg and read by the Chairman

The Harting Parish News continues as a successful, smooth-running operation. The feedback I received is consistently positive. There had been more editorial content over the past year, often requiring four (or, even sometime eight) additional pages. We are looking for further contributions that might be included for example: a regular column of gardening tips and observations (I don't know if the Harting Horticultural Society could assist with that?) and the White Hart or Harting Stores, may want to 'advertise' upcoming events. As editor I will be approaching these people to see what they think.

We currently print 500 copies a month and the number of subscribers has increased by 28 and the sales in Harting Stores are very buoyant too. There had been several volunteers who have joined us to fill the latest vacancies that we had in the distribution network.

At our last AGM the accounts showed a surplus for the year of nearly £800, despite a small increase in printing costs (because of the extra pages). This surplus brought the current balance close to £8,000. While this seems a large sum of money I need to point out that each edition without the extra pages costs £1.43 to print including the fact that printing costs have just risen again by 5%. We are still holding the cost of the magazine at 90p. The main source of our income to provide this subsidy comes from the advertising in the magazine and as a committee we are looking at how we can support our advertisers in respect of rates/costs.

As always I would like to thank everyone involved for their efforts all the volunteers make the whole process run so smoothly.

Nyewood Village Hall – report provided and read by Tania Chaplin.

Since our last report in Spring 2018, we have continued to offer residents a varied social programme in Nyewood using the green at Furze Meadow and other nearby venues.

We held our first Summer Fete to raise monies to help Nyewood bloom, which was very well supported with numerous stalls and live music. The event raised over £1,000, with funds being used for projects such as bulb planting (Autumn 2018) and new planters. Another highlight was our fifth Magic of Christmas concert held in December 2018 which raised over £2,500 - shared equally by The Rosemary Foundation, Home-Start Butser and Nyewood's Henry Warren Hall rebuilding project.

Progress continues to be made towards replacing Nyewood's old hall with a new fit for purpose building. A planning application was submitted to South Downs National Park at the end of October 2018 for a new hall on an alternative site at the northern end of Nyewood

(opposite the industrial estate - where we have an option to purchase land) and two replacement houses on the old site, in order to fully explore the feasibility of this option. Sadly, progress of our application is proving disappointingly slow due to the SDNP awaiting reports from various council departments and personnel changes causing a backlog of work. We currently do not have a date for the planning hearing.

Meantime, we approached Action in Rural Sussex, an independent charity that offers advisory services on village halls, to undertake an objective assessment of options for a new hall in Nyewood, including refurbishment, building a cruck building on the existing site, a new hall on the old site and on the new alternative site. AirS were given access to all documentation, undertook site visits and interviews with residents, the Trustees and Operating Committee. The AirS report is now complete and posted in full on Nyewood's village hall website and in print for everyone to read. AirS scored the 'New hall new site' highest (as the preferred option), following analysis of all key factors.

Harting Scouts

No report was received from Harting Scouts.

Harting Minibus Community Interest Company (HMCIC) - report provided and read by Cliff Parry

During the financial year just ended, the company has been faced with some new challenges, presenting it with issues requiring action and some changes. Chief amongst these have been proposed legislative reforms which could outlaw Community Transport throughout this country. The matter is complicated but, in essence, it is alleged that community minibus services are competing unfairly with commercial transport undertakings. Central government appears to support the larger operators but small organisations such as ours are cooperating in an endeavour to counter these changes. The situation is not helped by the fact that our scheduled services have experienced a decline in passenger numbers over the year, presenting a threat to our financial viability which we have been able to countervail, to some extent, by increasing our private hires and embarking on a programme of commercial sponsorship. Nevertheless, our scheduled services are at the core of our continued existence and we shall be campaigning to encourage Harting residents to use the Minibus on a more regular basis.

An operational problem regarding our pool of volunteer drivers has been addressed. Since 1997, the automatic D1 driving licence entitlement has been discontinued. This meant that new drivers with licences issued after 1997 were not qualified to drive our existing minibuses without prohibitively costly training. A solution was found with the development of new lighter vehicles, which have the passenger capacity we would require but could be driven, after assessment, by holders of the now standard B1 licence. In November of this year HMCIC purchased such a vehicle and is now able to recruit drivers with licences issued after 1997. This recruitment will form part of our campaigning in the coming months. It appears that HMCIC is about to face a testing time in the coming year but with continued support from our community and the invaluable input provided by our team of volunteers, we should come out on top, having faced these challenges.

Harting Society – report provided and read by John Stevens

The Harting Society has enjoyed a most successful year with attendance at our 6 talks reaching record levels and a virtually full house at several of them. Particularly encouraging is the increasing number of visitors from outside the parish, a number of whom have also joined the society. Membership in recent years has hovered around the “watershed” figure of 100 but we now have an unprecedented 120 members.

The society has continued to enjoy the use of the village hall for its talks and social events and has always found it to be well presented, although there have been inconsistencies with the sound system. If funds became available an enhancement in the hall’s acoustic and audio-visual facilities generally would be very welcome.

With a strong membership base and sound financial footing the society is already planning a program of talks for 2019 and beyond. The society continues to take advantage of the high standard of service and facilities offered by the Harting village hall.

Harting Parish council chairman’s report – report given by Andrew Shaxson, Chairman.

The Parish Council continues to be very busy on your behalf. As ever, there are issues that have dragged on longer than we would have liked, most due to factors beyond our control. The Council’s meetings agendas and minutes can be viewed on the parish website, and the monthly article in the Parish magazine strives to provide both information and a running update on many current issues.

In last year’s report I referred at length to the work being undertaken in South Gardens. That area has been further transformed during the past 12 months, both by the raising of the tree canopies and recent work to clear undergrowth, mostly adjacent to the two northern ponds. We hope you appreciate the change; there is quite a lot more to do, but not during the spring and summer nesting period. More volunteers will be welcome when working parties re-convene later in the year. The other open space in the parish is Furze Meadow, and whilst there is agreement between the Parish Council and Hyde homes for us to purchase it for £1, the process has been halted since last autumn by the asset review of all the ex-CDC property bought by Hyde. Whilst the review has finished and has been written up, it is quite likely that we will be no movement for some months. We can only hope there isn’t a hiccup.

The Traffic Working Group of the Parish Council, which is looking into highways issues in South Harting, has met several times during the year. It sent a questionnaire to various groups in the village, which has provided some useful information including clarification of people’s wishes and priorities. This group will soon be calling an open meeting, that all parishioners with an interest in traffic-related issues can attend. In the meantime it is becoming ever more difficult to find a reasonable place to park in an expanding area of South Harting. Concerning traffic in a wider sense of the word, whilst the organisation who had planned to put on the Velo South event last year are not doing that hereabouts this

year, there are strong indications that they intend to run the event in 2020. But what will be the route, and will they have learnt any lessons about consultation and communication, and the localised impact of what they aimed to do on 23rd September last year? The Parish Council, and numbers of local residents, expressed their concerns about the cancelled 2018 event very strongly. If it is decided by WSCC that Velo should return the Parish Council will be keeping a very close eye on how it is handled, and react as necessary.

It is a year and a half since an extra-ordinary parish meeting was held in this hall to consider the parish reaction to the allocation of the housing sites opposite Smithfield and in New Lane in the SDNPA Local plan. The Parish Council have been monitoring the progress of the Local Plan since the process started, and on your behalf attended the relevant sessions of the Examination in Public last November and December. We were most concerned by the unsympathetic attitude of the Inspector to some of the well-reasoned arguments we put forward. Note, these included the National Park's cavalier attitude to consultation, the democratic process and us. We believe we did our best. Almost all the plan appears to be heading towards formal adoption, though amongst the small number of matters currently subject to the further Main Modifications consultation is the issue of the reversion back to a single entrance to serve all the houses in New Lane, with a presumption that traffic will use the road through South Acre to access the wider road network. It is not too late to comment as the consultation runs until 23.59 hours on 28th March. I am aware of people who are intending to do so. Otherwise, the SDNPA is now using the uncontroversial policies to consider planning applications, indeed the development permitted at Sky Park farm, West Harting on 14th February was said by the SDNPA Director of Planning to be the first application so handled. Noting the above an ironic planning first for Harting Parish?

The very current planning issue is the Soft Sand Review that the SDNPA has carried out to either provide sound arguments why soft sand should not be quarried in the National Park, or failing that identify sites where it could happen. One of them is a new site half kilometre east of the existing site at West Heath, West Harting. Earlier today the Parish council submitted detailed argument why that site should not be allocated. The consultation has been running for eight weeks and closes this Monday 18th March.

The planning committee has otherwise been kept busy. The number of development applications appears to be fewer than the previous year, but because there are three Conservation Areas in the Parish, we are faced with many applications for permission to carry out tree work. A new committee has been set up to deal with many aspects of highways issues in a more pro-active manner. Perhaps this is ambitious, but there is no doubt a need, and nothing ventured, nothing gained. The means of draining roads and keeping that infrastructure maintained is most important, and this committee, the Highways and Byways Advisory Committee (HABAC) is currently considering how to ask parishioners to keep a critical eye on lengths of road. It is very likely that the issue of vegetation growth encroaching onto the highway will also be considered. With 21 miles of adopted roads in this parish there is a lot to consider.

We have recently provided draft year-end financial figures to this meeting, but as it is taking place in March, that isn't possible this year, the running budget figures are published with

the Council agenda's each month. One piece of financial information is that the Council decided to retain the precept at £43,100 for the next financial year, but as the tax base for the parish has increased by 2.1%, the average amount paid per household has diminished by the same amount

This Council comes to the end of its term of office on 2nd May. I would like to thank all the Councillors for their voluntary work on behalf of the parish. I am aware that five out of eleven of current members are not standing for re-election, so at the very least those positions need filling. It would be better for local democracy to trigger a contested election, noting that Nyewood elects two members and the rest of Harting nine. If you, or anyone you know, would be an effective local representative please consider standing. Nomination forms are already available from Trish, and the nominations close on 3rd April. One of those not standing for re-election is Sheridan Bowman, and I would like to specifically thank her for the huge effort she has put into many areas of the Council's work, including not only for ensuring the Council is compliant with current legislation but especially for leading on the research that lead to the Council putting forward its objections to the two previously mentioned Local Plan sites.

Kate O'Kelly has been our county Councillor for two years. Although she represents ten parishes, we are very aware how hard she has worked hard on behalf of Harting. Trish has now been our clerk for 2.5 years. We are very fortunate that the Post Office persuaded her to retire as the Council benefits greatly from her skills, and not least her cheerful and positive personality. She is a huge asset to the Council, and subsequently the parish.

Open Forum

John Stevens gave a vote of thanks to the Parish Council for all the work done on behalf of the community, noting that the community rarely provided any input. He noted the outstanding amount of work that had been done since the creation of the South Downs National Park Authority. He stressed that the work of the Parish Council is all done to protect the area and environment of the community.

The chairman responded with gratitude and noted that all the work of a Parish Council can be challenging, it is at the same time interesting.

Sunny Dawson gave thanks to the Chairman for the considerable amount of work done on behalf of the community.

The chairman stressed that members of the community are encouraged to raise issues with the clerk for consideration at the Council.

Sally Bull said that the meeting had helped her to learn about a lot of organisations, and that it was a real opportunity for organisations to advertise themselves. However, the information was not easily accessible on the Council website and she wondered if the Council had thought to use any of the various means of Social Media to send out information.

The chairman confirmed that the website was an older style but did contain the necessary information. The use of Social Media and the website would be a subject to be considered by the newly elected Council.

Tania Chaplin asked why the Furze Meadow situation was unlikely to move on for several months

The chairman spoke about Hyde Housing, owners of the site, who have just undergone a strategic asset review and seem to be looking at all site strategically rather than individually. The Council will keep pushing for more information on this, and will ensure the community are kept informed.

Pauline Matthews asked if the Council had considered having a younger membership who may be more able to keep up with the demands of Social Media.

The Chairman noted that an individual can become a councillor at the age of 18 years. He also gave details of another Council who had a group of younger shadow councillors who, despite having no vote or statutory position, were able to give a young person's perspective to the council.

Tania Chaplin wondered if it were possible, in light of the previous question, to perhaps involve younger people in certain projects.

The chairman confirmed this might be a possibility and hoped that the new Council to be elected in May 2019 might include a councillor who may have an interest in this area.

Stephanie Gattrell asked what the time commitment was for a parish councillor

The Chairman confirmed that the Council meets once a month, but that there are other committees that also meet monthly or quarterly and working groups that might meet on a more frequent basis.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.05pm.

