

HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Harting Parish Council held at Harting Congregational Church
on **Monday 26 September 2022** at **7.30 p.m.**

Present: Mr Shaxson (Chair), Mr Bonner, Mrs Bramley, Mrs Gaterell, Mrs Martin, Mrs Maxwell Davies, Mr Miller, Mr Olphert and Mr Palmer.

In attendance; Trish Walker, Parish Clerk.

There were no members of public in attendance.

A minute's silence was held prior to the commencement of the meeting to pay respects to the late Queen Elizabeth II following her death on 8 September 2022.

110. Apologies for absence: Mrs Curran, Mrs Dawson and Dr O'Kelly (County and District Councillor)

111. Declarations of Interest: Mrs Gaterell and Mr Olphert in agenda item 14 as representatives of the War Memorial Playing Field
Mrs Martin in agenda item 12 & 13 as part of the group designing the interior of the Henry Warren Hall.
Mr Shaxson in agenda item 28 as a member of Elsted Parish Council.

112. Minutes from Meeting held on 21 July 2022.

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21 July 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

113. Questions from the Public: There were no questions from the public.

114. Matters of Urgent Public Importance: None.

115. Reports from the County and District Councillor

Dr O'Kelly, the County and District Councillor was unable to attend the meeting but had circulated a report ahead of the meeting.

116. Civility and Respect Pledge

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) have asked parish councils to consider a civility and respect pledge which would demonstrate the council is committed to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public and representatives of other organisations with civility and respect. To sign up to the pledge, among other things, the Council would need to adopt a Dignity at Work policy.

There was a good discussion around this subject and it was agreed that, although there were currently no concerns in this area, situations can easily change and so the Council was willing to consider the Civility and Respect pledge further. However, this would be considered once other qualifying criteria was in place.

The following recommendation was proposed and agreed:

That the Council agreed to consider signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

117. Completion of 2021/2022 External Audit

It was noted the external auditors, Moore had concluded the audit on 12 August 2022 and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit was posted to the Council website on 17 August 2022. There were no major issues raised in the audit.

The following recommendation was proposed and agreed:

To note the completion of the 2021/22 External Audit.

118. Option to opt out of the central procurement of external auditors

Every five years the SAAA (Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments) undertakes a procurement process to appoint external auditors to each County. The next period runs from 2022-23 until 2026-27 and councils have been advised of the option to opt-out of the next five year round of external audit. In the previous round there were no councils opted-out of the external audit provision.

If a decision were taken to opt-out the council would have to arrange its own external audit provision which is very complicated and costly.

The following recommendation was proposed and agreed:

That the Council agreed to remain opted-in to the central procurement of external auditors.

119. Tree report

The 18 monthly 'leaf on' Tree Survey, covering the area of the Warren and South Gardens, had been carried out on 8 June 2022 by Mark Welby, arboricultural consultant. There were 7 trees detailed in the survey report of which one requiring urgent work had already been felled, one is not on Council owned land and another was just for comment with a further review in 2 ½ years. The Clerk will request quotes for the necessary works and bring them to the Council for consideration. This work will include cutting through a large beech which has fallen across the southern end of footpath 842.

A concern had been raised by a member of public regarding accessibility problems caused by the location of the latches on the self closing gates in the deer fencing at the Warren. The contractor who erected the fencing had suggested a potential solution could be the use of Trombone latch systems, although there was no certainty this would improve the situation. The cost to supply and fit the four latches would be £580 + vat. The members discussed the matter and given there had not been any other concerns raised and the high cost to change the latches, it was agreed that signage would be purchased and affixed to the gates to indicate the location of the latches.

The members discussed the benefits of a Tree Popper as it is an easy and useful way to remove unwanted trees and plants. It was agreed, given the ongoing management of the Warren, that a medium sized Tree Popper should be purchased at a cost of £272 + vat.

It was reported that although the extremely hot summer and lack of rain had affected the growth of the newly planted saplings, and a low number had been lost to the heat, the overall impact had been less than expected. There will be a need to weed and clear in the coming months and volunteer working parties will be organised to help with this work.

The following recommendations were proposed and agreed:

- i. To note the report*
- ii. To agree to investigate signage for the deer fencing gates in the Warren to indicate the location of the latches*
- iii. To agree to purchase a medium Tree Popper from Nature Conservation Services for the sum of £272 + vat (plus delivery)*

120. Play Area Inspection Report

The annual Play Area Inspection, covering the play equipment in south Gardens, had been carried out by ROSPA Play Safety on 27 June 2022, although the report was not received until later in July. The overall risk score for the site was 'Low' although some refurbishment and minor repairs were recommended. The Clerk will seek quotes for this work.

The following recommendation was proposed and agreed:

To note the report

121. Nyewood Hall grant request for defibrillator

A grant application had been received from the Henry Warren Village Club in Nyewood requesting a sum of up to £1000 towards the cost of a defibrillator to be installed as the newly built hall in Nyewood. The overall cost of the defibrillator and lockable cabinet is £1500, and a local company had pledged £500 towards the cost. It was noted the Henry Warren Village Club would have the ongoing responsibility for the maintenance of the defibrillator.

There was some discussion about the purchase of defibrillators for other areas of the parish and the need for each case to be considered fairly. It was noted that no other formal applications had been received.

The members agreed the grant to be paid from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The following recommendations were proposed and agreed:

- i. That the Council agreed the grant application from the Henry Warren Club for the amount of up to £1000 + vat to purchase a defibrillator for the village of Nyewood to be sited at the Henry Warren Hall and that this should be gifted to the Henry Warren Club.*
- ii. That the Council agreed to offset the grant against the Community Infrastructure Levy income*

122. Update to Nyewood Village Hall Grant for chairs and tables

At its meeting on 21 July 2023 the Council agreed a grant in the sum of £4270.96 to Henry Warren Village Club in Nyewood for the purchase of table and chairs for the new Village Hall. Subsequently it was discovered the 3' tables, ordered to match the 6' tables, would not fold down and this would cause a storage issue. Some 4' tables were ordered instead which along with a general raise in prices, increased the total cost.

As there was no Council meeting in August, the Clerk discussed the extra cost with the Chair and the Chair of the Finance Committee and, in accordance with section 4.1 of the Financial Regulations, agreed to an additional cost of £546.52 bringing the total grant allocated to £4817.48.

The proposal was then considered. An amendment was proposed to change the sum of £193.92 to £546.52 in the recommendation that read:

To note that the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair and Chair of Finance, and in accordance with section 4.1 of the Financial Regulations, agreed an additional £193.92 should be granted to the Henry Warren Village Club for the purchase of tables and chairs.

The amendment was agreed.

The following proposal, including substantive, was then agreed:

To note that the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair and Chair of Finance, and in accordance with section 4.1 of the Financial Regulations, agreed an additional £546.52 should be granted to the Henry Warren Village Club for the purchase of tables and chairs.

123. War Memorial Playing Field (WMPF) advance on grant for 2023-24 and 2024-25 for replacement of pavilion windows

The Trustees of WMPF had approached the Council to ask for an advance on the annual grants for 2023-24 and 2024-25 to purchase and fit new windows in the pavilion.

Although there may be a move to consider a new pavilion, this would not be for a few more years and in the meanwhile to keep the building usable it is essential to replace the windows.

The members discussed the request and agreed the grants for 2023-2024 and 2024-25 should be advanced for the purchase of the pavilion windows.

The following recommendations were proposed and agreed:

- i. That the Council agreed an advance on the 2023-24 and 2024-25 annual grants paid to the War Memorial Playing Field to enable replacement of the pavilion windows*
- ii. That the replacement windows are gifted to the War Memorial Playing Field at a cost of £3760 + vat.*

124. Highways and Byways Advisory Committee (HABAC)

The unconfirmed minutes of the HABAC held on 7 September 2022 were noted and the following recommendations were proposed and agreed:

- i. To note the unconfirmed minutes of the Highways and Byways Advisory Committees held on 7 September 2022.*

- ii. *To note that the Terms of Reference were reviewed, and the following changes are recommended:*
 - a. *Section 7 - that the wording in the second sentence should be changed to read "The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of HPC are ex- officio members, and there shall be at least three other councillors appointed by HPC"*
 - b. *Section 7 - that the wording in the final sentence should be changed to read "The maximum membership will be ten."*
- iii. *To agree that Vicky Maxwell Davies and Alex Olphert become members of the Highways and Byways Advisory Committee*

125. B2146 from Stanbridge Farm to Hurst Farm

The safety of the B2146 from Stanbridge Farm to Hurst Farm was noted as a longstanding concern, not only to residents of Harting and Buriton parishes but people from much further afield. The road is busy, and the overgrowth lining much of the road has not been cut back for many years causing restricted visibility and a road that is too narrow for two wide vehicles to pass without care.

The road is increasingly used by cyclists, pedestrians and sometimes horse riders, and is hazardous.

The Chairman has spoken to the Chairman of Buriton parish council and the relevant Hampshire County Councillor, Robert Mocatta who both agreed that proper consideration must be given to improvements. Kate O'Kelly is in touch with WSCC about the stretch of road too, although their response has been less promising.

The members agreed this stretch of road was a concern and that the County Councils should be urged to carry out a survey.

The following recommendation was proposed and agreed:

That as a first step the Council approach Buriton Parish Council with the intention of agreeing a joint approach to ask the two County Councils to carry out a survey of the stretch of the B2146 from Stanbridge Farm to Hurst Farm.

126. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bid for South Gardens crossing

In January 2020 the Council applied for a CIL grant from the South Downs National Park Authority for £25k to install a crossing point on the B2146 to South Gardens.

The members were pleased to hear the application had been successful in the 2022 round of bids.

The crossing has been included as one of the features in the WSCC Community Highways Scheme application so the outcome of that will be awaited before any further action is taken.

The following recommendation was proposed and agreed:

To note that the Parish Council's bid to South Downs National Park for funds to install a road crossing to South Gardens has been successful and a sum of £25,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy has been allocated.

127. SDNPA Parish Workshop

The following recommendation was agreed:

That Mr Bonner and Mr Olphert will attend the SDNPA Parish Workshop on 18 October 2022.

128. Review of Terms of Reference

The following recommendation was proposed and agreed:

To note the Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee and the Complaints Committee have been reviewed by that Committee and no changes were recommended.

129. Internet Banking

The Internet Banking Policy was reviewed and agreed.

130. Habitual and vexatious complaints

The Habitual and vexatious complaints Policy was reviewed and agreed.

131. Health and Safety Risk Management

The Health and Safety Risk Management Policy was reviewed and agreed.

132. Emergency Plan

The Emergency Plan was reviewed and agreed.

133. Finance

133.1. The payments made in August 2022 were noted:

Undisclosed	Clerk and RFO Salary	1,289.17
M H Kennedy & Son Ltd	Grass cutting	181.75
Trish Walker	Monthly Zoom subscription	14.39
Moore	External Auditor	360.00

133.2. It was proposed and agreed that the following payments should be made:

Undisclosed	Clerk and RFO Salary	1,343.17
HMRC	Tax and NI contributions	366.93
M J Visuals Systems Ltd	Audio Visual equipment - Community Hall	6,308.40
Trish Walker	Information Commissioner - Data Protection Fee Renewal	40.00
Surrey Hills Solicitors	Land Registry for Village Hall	1,223.00
M H Kennedy & Son Ltd	Grass cutting	181.44
Trish Walker	Monthly Zoom subscription	14.39
Gopak	Nyewood hall tables - Grant	3,164.98
Trent furniture	Nyewood Hall chairs - Grant	2,616.00

133.3. It was agreed that Mrs Bramley and Mrs Gaterell would authorise the September online payments.

133.4. The income for July and August was noted.

Donation for East Harting Phone Box refurbishment £3575.00

134. Bank Reconciliation for September 2022

It was noted that the bank reconciliation had been scrutinised and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee. The Chairman of the Council then signed the reconciliation in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

135. Bank balance as of 31 August 2022 £88,717.66

Noted.

136. To note the budget statement to 31 August 2022

Noted

137. Planning Committee

The minutes of the Planning Committees held on 21 July 2022 and 23 August 2022 were noted.

138. Feedback from War Memorial Playing Field (WMPF) and Harting Community Hall (HCH) representatives

WMPF

There were no updates.

HCH

There were no updates.

139. Correspondence

None.

140. Clerk's report

Noted.

141. Items for future meetings

Availability of grants for the Jubilee Pump

Management of Harting Community Hall

142. Date of next meeting: The next meeting would be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 20 October 2022 at Harting Community Hall

143. Clerk's employment

The Clerk and the Chairman left the room, and the Council went into private session.

Mrs Bramley took the Chair and introduced the report. The Council was asked to consider the Clerk's request for permission to take on the role of Clerk to Elsted and Treyford Parish Council for three hours a week, her contract states written permission must be obtained.

The members were in agreement and the following recommendation was made and agreed: *that the Council provides written confirmation that Trish Walker can take on the role of Clerk to Elsted and Treyford Parish Council*

The Clerk and Mr Shaxson re-joined the meeting

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.