

HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Harting Parish Council held at the Community Hall, South Harting on **Thursday 20 February 2025 at 7.30 pm.**

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

Mr Tim O’Kelly attended in his role as District Councillor and Dr Kate O’Kelly in her role as County Councillor.

In attendance: Trish Walker, Parish Clerk.

There were two members of public in attendance.

238. Apologies for absence: Mrs Cormack, Mrs Hewetson and Mrs Martin.

239. Declarations of Interest: None.

240. Minutes from Meeting held on 20 January 2025.

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 20 January 2025 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

241. Questions from the Public:

One member of public raised concerns about the forthcoming road closure for the Uppark Phase II works at the end of March (the B2146 will be closed for up to 7 weeks from the junction with the B2141). The previous Phase I road closure in October had been problematic and it had been acknowledged there were issues with communication. The member of public asked if there would be communication over the wider road network system to ensure the A3 would not be closed at the same time, thereby gridlocking local villages. Also, would the potholes along the stretch of road be repaired during the closure.

The Chair responded and confirmed there had been better communication and stakeholder meetings this time. He also confirmed the issue with the A3 was more complex and it is hoped Hampshire and WSCC Highways teams will be liaising over this. It had been hoped the potholes would be repaired at the time of the road closure but this was being done in the next week with night time closures.

242. Matters of Urgent Public Importance:

Mr Shaxson confirmed the Parish Council had been invited to participate in the consultation seeking views on the proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, and Brighton and Hove City Council. The consultation had been published after the current Council agenda was issued so had not been included. As the closing date is 13 April 202 a draft response will be needed for the March Council meeting. It was agreed that Mr Shaxson, Mr Bonner and Mr Miller would draft a response.

243. Reports from the County and District Councillor

Mr O’Kelly and Dr O’Kelly had circulated reports ahead of the meeting.

There were some discussions about the concept of the strategic mayoral authority, and it was confirmed the County elections would be delayed for one year.

244. South Downs National Park Local Plan Review and Partnership Management Plan

Work had been progressing on the draft comments for the draft local plan. The proposed change to Policy SD86, Land at Loppers Ash, is the greatest concern for Harting Parish as there is a proposal to remove the recommendation for a single vehicular access to the site from New Lane.

A detailed response was being drafted objecting to this and explaining why it is believed multiple access points would be impractical and undesirable. The draft comments will be circulated to councillors by email for consideration prior to the comment deadline.

The Local Plan Review will be included in the Parish News article and also on the village Facebook page to encourage residents to submit responses.

The following proposals were made and agreed:

- i. *To note the report and any verbal update given at the meeting*
- ii. *To confirm, due to the closing date for comments being before the next Council meeting on 20 March 2025, that the final comments responding to the Local Plan and the Partnership Management Plan will be circulated to councillors for approval by email.*

245. Harting Wastewater Treatment – protracted raw sewage release

Eco Rother Action had contacted the Council to report the Harting Wastewater Treatment Work’s continual release, since early January, of raw sewage into the stream that enters the Rother at Trotton. Although they are legally allowed to release raw sewage during and after exceptional weather, it has continued considerably beyond that time.

The Clerk had sent an email to Southern Water to invite a representative to either the February or March Council meeting and to request an explanation for the current situation. There had been no response at the time of the meeting.

The following proposal was made and agreed:

To note the report

246. VE Day 80th Anniversary – 8 May 2025

Bruno Peek, the Pageantmaster, had announced plans to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day marking the end of the war in Europe and WWII as a whole on 8 May 1945.

A guide had been published listing possible ways the day might be celebrated. Parish Councils were being encouraged to use the occasion to pay tribute to those that gave so much from within our communities. The various suggestions included:

- Raising a VE Day flag (9am)
- Ringing Church bells (6.30pm)
- Lighting of Beacons and Lamps of Peace (9.30pm)

- Community Garden Parties

The members considered the option to light the Beacon either on Harting Down or, as an alternative, at the Playing Fields. However, it was agreed there was unlikely to be very much support for such an event as it would be on a Thursday evening at 9.30pm in term time.

It was felt it would be good to encourage the Church bells to be rung and possible raising the VE Day flag. It was also felt there may be an opportunity for the Church and the school to combine for an event in the daytime, Mrs Maxwell Davies will discuss this with the school.

The following proposals were made and agreed:

That the Council would not organise any events to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE day on 8 May 2025 but would raise the issue with the Parish Church and the village school.

247. Grass cutting contract for South Gardens

Three local contractors had provided quotes for the fortnightly grass cutting (subject to growth) for South Gardens for the year 2025/26.

The members considered the anonymised data and agreed to appoint contractor A to carry out the contract.

The following proposal was made and agreed:

That the Council agreed to appoint MH Kennedy & Son to provide a fortnightly cut (subject to growth) in South Gardens for the year 2025-26 at a cost of £183.75 + vat.

248. Harting Festivities Grant application

In May 2024, in a bid to satisfy the questions from the Council's insurers, a Festivities Working Group had been created to formalise the link between the Parish Council and the Festivities committee.

However, for this to become a long term arrangement the Working Group would need to become a formal Council committee and in turn any funds held by the current Festivities Committee would need to be combined with the Council finances. This approach was not desirable and would cause a great deal more administration and would hamper the good work of the Festivities Committee.

The Clerk had discussed the situation with the Chair of the Festivities Committee and suggested the group may be better placed to organise its own single event insurance, thus enabling the continued independence of the group.

The Festivities Committee subsequently submitted a grant application for £297.76 to cover the cost of the single event insurance premium for the Festivities Day due to take place on 26 May 2025.

The members were unanimously in support of this grant, as the Harting Festivities had been taking place since the 1970's and is a good community event which raises funds for local organisations.

The following proposals were made and agreed:

i. To agree to cease the Festivities Working Group set up in May 2024

- ii. To consider the grant request from the Harting Festivities Committee for the sum of £297.76 to cover the cost of the single event insurance premium for the Festivities to be held on 26 May 2025

249. Aims & Objectives Advisory Committee (AOAC)

The AOAC had met to discuss the priorities for the Council which had arisen as a result of the Parish Priority Statement and from other identified areas.

It was agreed the initial priority was to produce an updated Council information leaflet for each household as this was a way to immediately improve communications.

The following proposals were made and agreed:

- i. To note the minutes of the Aims and Objectives Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 February 2025
- ii. To note the Local Plan review and car parking priorities are being handled by other committees or working groups and therefore do not need action by the Aims and Objectives Advisory Committee
- iii. To agree the Aims and Objectives Advisory Committee will produce an updated Council information leaflet for delivery to all households in the Parish
- iv. To agree that a budget of up to £200 should be allocated to this project

250. Harting War Memorial Playing Field (WMPF)– Proposal for improvements to Playing Field

The WMPF had submitted a grant request to the Council for the sum of £7000 to part fund improvements to the pavilion, grounds scarifying and for the creation of a grid system parking area by the tennis courts as parking in the layby during events can be dangerous.

The estimated costs for the works were estimated to be:

Parking Grid System and rail	£4,500
Pavilion Floor	£2,000
Pavilion Plumbing	£1,500
Pavilion Decorating	£2,000
<u>Grounds Scarifying</u>	<u>£2,000</u>
Total	£12,000 (Parish Council asked to part fund £7000)

The Chair of WMPF was present at the meeting and was able to answer questions regarding the general use of the potential parking area for village events and future marketing strategies to ensure the facility is fully utilised. It was confirmed the car parking area could not be used as a general village car park as the Playing Fields could not be open 24 hours a day due to potential traveller incursions and anti-social behaviour.

There were concerns about the need for planning permission for the car parking area, this would be investigated further.

The members considered the proposal and the following was agreed:

That the request from Harting War Memorial Playing Field for a grant of up to £7,000 should be agreed subject to the following:

- Confirmation of any planning permission requirements

- Further investigation of the need for either post or rail around the parking area
- Removal of the reference to a village car park
- Development of a marketing strategy

251. Finance

251.1. Previously approved payments made during the month were noted:

Gallagher	WMPF Insurance - Grant	1,503.28
Arborlec	Tree works associated with Tree Survey	2,052.00

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

Undisclosed	Clerk & RFO Salary - February	1221.24
Trish Walker	Monthly Zoom subscription	15.59
Mulberry & Co	Year End Account clerk training	18.00
Debra Harknett-Godfree	Hall Bookkeeping (Oct to Dec)	131.25
Harting Festivities	Grant	297.76

251.3. Bank Signatories - It was agreed that Mrs Curran and Mr Miller would authorise the February online payments.

251.4. Income to note for January 2025

WSSC Operation Watershed Grant £54033.60

252. The bank reconciliation was noted and had been scrutinised and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee in accordance with the Finance Regulations.

253. Bank balance as of 31 January 2025 £144,492.69 (earmarked funds £90.1k)

254. Budget Statement to 31 January 2025

Noted.

255. Feedback from WMPF and HCH representatives

HCH – financing options were being investigated to fund the solar panel and heating project

WMPF – there was no update in addition to the earlier agenda item.

256. Correspondence

There had been no correspondence other than regular items and those already included in the main agenda.

257. Clerk's report

The report was noted. It was felt the proposed public meeting for the Phase II road closure was no longer required as the arrangements had been fully discussed at stakeholder meetings and the impact on South Harting would be lesser than the Phase I.

258. Items for future meetings

Local Plan Review & Partnership Management Plan

Local Government Consultation

Restoration of water pump

Car parking

259. Date of next meeting: The next full meeting would be held on Thursday 20 March 2025 at 7.30pm in the Henry Warren Hall, Nyewood.

The meeting was closed at 8.55pm.