



**HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2022/23**



## Your Parish Councillors



Larry Abraham  
(Vice Chairman)



Chris Alford



Penny Cole



Perry Cole



Jim Colwell



Lesley Driscoll



Laurence Glander



David Graeme



Mally Malham



Anne Oxtoby  
(Chairman)



Ian Ross



Brian Ramsay



Vincent Sewell

Councillors can be contacted via the Parish Clerk, Helen Boden, at the Parish Office, Hartley Library, Ash Road, Hartley, Longfield, Kent, DA3 8EL by email: [enquiries@hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk) or by telephone: 01474 709441

*The Annual Report is printed and published by Hartley Parish Council*

## Chairman's Report 2023

Dear Resident,

This year has been the last of the four years of the current Council's tenure. A new Council will be elected in May. Thankfully we have seen everything return to normal with no restrictions.

Thankfully since the Pandemic we have seen an increase in lettings at Manor Field Pavilion. Manor Field is also well used with two football clubs one including a girls team, and the Cricket all continuing at full throttle.

The Manor Field Burial Ground is open and there have been several interments. We have put in motion a project to improve the car park for visitors to the Pavilion and Burial Ground.

In June we celebrated the Queens Jubilee at Manor Field with Local Vocals singing, a BBQ, the lighting of the beacon and the evening ended with a grand firework display.

In September, the Nation mourned the death of Queen Elizabeth and we opened a book of Condolence for residents to record their thoughts.

The Neighbourhood Plan steering group has been set up consisting of both councillors and Hartley residents. It has received government funding and the Parish has also allocated funds to support the Consultant work needed to create the plan for Hartley.

Our councillors work hard attending meetings throughout the year to ensure that Hartley remains a pleasant village to live in.

Thanks also to our Clerks Helen and Jane who manage our affairs with efficiency and thoughtfulness.

I commend the Committee reports to you  
Anne Oxtoby, Chairman of the Council.

## Finance Committee

The Council's accounts for the year to 31st March 2023 are set out in pages 5 and 6. In this year there is a surplus, as income exceeded expenditure by £18,159. This has increased our reserves at year end and is mainly due to the large amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds received from Sevenoaks District Council.

In 2022/23 we continued work on the Neighbourhood Plan which it is anticipated will cost in the region of £15,000-£25,000 over probably a three year period. The Amenities & Open Spaces Committee has agreed to resurface the Manor Field Pavilion car park in rolled gravel, and the cost will be alleviated by funding from the CIL funds which will also be used to repair safety surfacing in the three children's playgrounds.

After no increase to the precept since 2013, for the year to March 2024, the precept was set at £160,390, an increase of £22,622 to ensure a cost neutral budget unless unforeseen price rises occur.

Our biggest cost in any year are staff costs. Our two excellent staff have been considerably stretched keeping up with the ever changing regulations during the year. Our thanks, as always, to them for their hard work and diligence.

The Finance Committee closely monitors the Parish Council's expenditure and is responsible for ensuring that its accounts are properly prepared in accordance with strict audit rules. We are also responsible for setting the budget for the next financial year and proposing to Council what the precept for the year should be.

The council's accounts are internally audited by an independent auditor on a half yearly and annual basis. The Committee notes the auditor's comments and ensures that action points are attended to.

The Committee reviews the systems of internal audit during the year and is satisfied that the controls in place fulfil the fiduciary duties of the council.

The council's accounts for 2021/22 were approved by the council at its Annual Meeting in May 2022 and were made available for public inspection. The approved accounts were submitted to the Audit Commission to be externally audited.

After being properly advertised, local parishioners have the right and are welcome to ask questions about the accounts and to raise any objections they may have. Parishioners are requested to initially raise their concerns with the Parish Council. If objectors are not satisfied with the council's reply, they have the right to raise their concerns with the external auditor.

The Committee endeavours to ensure that our Council Tax is well spent for the benefit of all parishioners.

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors; \*Mr L Abraham, Mr C Alford, Mr J Colwell,  
\*Mrs A Oxtoby, Mr B Ramsay (Chairman), and Mr V Sewell. \*ex officio

**Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee**

The Parish Council is pleased to announce that the Manor Field Burial Ground is now open after many years of preparation. The first burial took place in 2022 and there are currently 6 graves.

The New Garden of Remembrance by All Saints Church is full, and interments of ashes will now take place in Manor Field Burial Ground.

In order that the Manor Field Burial Ground is perceived as a private area, separate from the future development, new benches have been installed and a picket fence is being considered, to ensure that the area is more amenable for respect and contemplation.

The Parish Council is currently looking into the possibility of installing a pathway from Hartley Burial Ground into Manor Field Burial Ground for ease of access between the two areas.

There have been 3 burials and 17 interments of ashes this year.

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors; \*Mr L Abraham, Mr P Cole, Mrs L Driscoll  
\*Mrs A Oxtoby, Mr B Ramsay (Chairman), and Mr I Ross. \*ex officio

## **Planning Committee**

**Meetings** - The Parish is a consultee on all planning applications submitted to Sevenoaks District Council that affect Hartley. The Planning Committee meets fortnightly, on a Wednesday morning at 10.00 a.m. and the meetings are usually held at Hartley Library, Ash Road.

**Residents' Views** - Notice of the meetings are displayed on the Parish notice board outside Hartley Library. All residents are welcome to attend the meetings and are given an opportunity to express their views on any application, before the Committee reaches its decision.

**If an application affects a resident they can write to Sevenoaks District Council with their views. It is also helpful if a copy of the letter is sent to the Parish Office.**



**Applications** - Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the Parish Council was consulted on 63 planning applications. No objection was raised to 37 of these and objections were raised to 12. 3 applications were withdrawn and 11 applications have yet to be decided. The District Council gave a decision contrary to the Parish Council's views on 8 applications, all of which were delegated decisions. 2 decisions were taken to appeal by the applicants. 1 has been allowed and 1 is awaiting a decision.

**Planning breaches** - If you wish to make a complaint against a breach of planning control please use Sevenoaks District Council's on line form. This will help you provide all the information needed;

[https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069126/planning\\_enforcement/15/make\\_a\\_planning\\_enforcement\\_complaint](https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069126/planning_enforcement/15/make_a_planning_enforcement_complaint)

**All information will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.**

*Hartley is a desirable area for developers and the Parish Council remains very aware of this and continues to do everything in its power to preserve the village envelope and surrounding Green Belt.*

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors; \*Mr L Abraham (Chairman), Mr C Alford, Cllr J Colwell

\*Mrs A Oxtoby, Mr B Ramsay, Mr I Ross and Mr V Sewell \*ex officio

**Hartley Parish Council  
Income & Expenditure  
Account  
01/04/2022 to 31/03/2023**

(Last) Year Ended 31st March 2022		(Current) Year Ended 31st March 2023
<b>£</b>	<b><u>Income</u></b>	<b>£</b>
136,451	Precept	137,768
5,298	Income	31,469
6,211	General Costs	4,987
9,445	Burial Grounds	7,750
1,016	Allotments	1,201
4,169	Open Spaces	3,570
2,190	Manor Field Pavilion	5,048
<hr/> <b>164,779</b> <hr/>		<hr/> <b>191,792</b> <hr/>
	<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	
77,228	Staff Costs	83,725
18,101	General Costs	34,212
6,035	Office Costs	6,395
6,552	Burial Grounds	6,454
1,449	Allotments	993
42,673	Open Spaces	33,936
10,070	Manor Field Pavilion	7,216
10	Northfield	10
2,755	Youth Services	692
4,430	Hartley Village Hall	0
<hr/> <b>169,304</b> <hr/>		<hr/> <b>173,633</b> <hr/>
	<b><u>General Fund</u></b>	
<b>193,332</b>	Opening Balance	<b>112,461</b>
<hr/> 164,779	Plus: Income for Year	<hr/> 191,792
358,111		304,253
<hr/> 169,304	Less: Expenditure for Year	<hr/> 173,633
188,807		130,621
<hr/> 76,346	Transfer to/from Reserves	<hr/> 19,002
<hr/> <b>112,461</b> <hr/>	Closing Balance	<hr/> <b>111,619</b> <hr/>

**Hartley Parish Council Balance Sheet**  
**31/03/2023**

(Last) Year Ended  
31st March 2022

(Current) Year Ended  
31st March 2023

£	LONG TERM ASSETS	£
0		0
0		0
	<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	
342	Debtors	763
4,695	VAT Control A/C	2,726
31,504	Current Bank Account	35,356
82,136	Business Saver Account	94,224
70,098	Unity Bank Current Account	73,446
85,073	Nationwide	85,541
273,848		292,057
<b>273,848</b>	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>292,057</b>
	<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	
1,577	Creditors	504
14,103	Accruals	15,060
0	Credit card y/e balance	305
290	Receipts in Advance	150
15,969		16,019
<b>257,879</b>	<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>276,039</b>
	<b>Represented by:</b>	
112,461	General Reserves	111,619
43,679	EMR Capital Reserve	43,679
5,570	HVH Earmarked Reserve	5,570
1,193	New Burial Ground Reserve	719
50,000	Manor Field Car Park	49,750
2,996	CIL Receipts A	14,036
11,445	CIL Receipts B	28,126
7,000	Platinum Jubilee	0
0	Local Plan	336
23,535	EMR Neighbourhood Plan	22,204
<b>257,879</b>		<b>276,039</b>

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31/03/2023 and reflects its income and expenditure during the year.



## Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

This Committee met regularly throughout the year to manage the facilities and property which are the responsibility of the Parish Council. These include maintenance of the allotments, hedge and grass cutting of Manor Field - including the cricket and football areas and white lining of pitches, maintaining the Pavilion, tree work and grass cutting in Gorse Wood, Hoselands Green, Rectory Meadow, Longfield Hill, Billings Hill Shaw, Hartley Wood and the three playgrounds.

In line with safety requirements all public areas are routinely risk assessed, which includes a weekly "litter pick"/inspection and repairs of fences etc. The overall annual budget for this work for 2022/23 was £48,700

Football and cricket continue to be popular activities using Manor Field and this year, the council supplied pitches for two football clubs, including a female side.

Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground has seen the return of football training for youngsters and teens. Provided by Millwall Football Club Community Trust in partnership with Sevenoaks District Council and the Parish Council, the Thursday evening sessions have been very well attended by boys and girls of all ages and abilities, making full use of having professional coaches offering their help and advice.

The trees and woods in Hartley continue to be a vital part of our village heritage and managing them is an important task to maintain their preservation and ensure damaged or diseased trees are dealt with for the benefit and safety of residents. Particularly due to Ash "dieback" and storm damage, this has come at a cost this year in the region of £5,000 and as a result the Parish Council will not prune or remove healthy trees unless advised to by their Tree Risk Assessment Consultant.

Unfortunately these wooded areas also attract a large amount of "Fly Tipping" which is not only unsightly and hazardous but extremely costly to remove and dispose of properly. It is in all our interests to ensure that any waste, both household and trade, is disposed of by proper means or by using a correctly licensed waste carrier. The cost of removing fly tipping this year has been £783.00

On Rectory Meadow, the North West Kent Countryside Project continues to work with volunteers carrying out brush, ivy and bramble clearance etc. to stop woody species encroaching onto the chalk meadow. Residents are actively encouraged to help out on workdays, advertised in The Hartley Herald and on the Parish Council website.

In Billings Hill Shaw, in response to "Plant a tree for the Queen's Jubilee" initiative, seven apple and pear trees (one for each decade of the Queen's reign) were planted in a circle around the remaining old trees in the orchard and despite the very dry summer all seven trees survived with some even bearing fruit in the autumn.

The Parish Council is progressing with the project to resurface the car park at Manor Field with Sevenoaks District Council's preference for a permeable surface. Preliminary meetings with suitable contractors have now taken place and works will hopefully commence early in the next financial year. Funding for the carpark will consist mainly of monies gained from C.I.L. the Community Infrastructure Levy, the 'levy' is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area.

As part of the Sevenoaks District Council - Welcome Back Fund the Parish Council has obtained two picnic benches and two standard benches made from re-cycled plastics. The picnic benches were installed at Manor Field and Longfield Hill Recreation Ground, the standard benches at Rectory Meadow and at Manor Field Burial Ground.

It is hoped that this and many other functions carried out by this Committee ensure that Hartley continues to be a pleasant place to live and can be enjoyed by the whole community.

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors; \*Mr L Abraham, Mrs L Driscoll, Mr L Glander (Chairman), Mr D Graeme Mr M Malham, \*Mrs A Oxtoby and Mr V Sewell. \*ex officio

## **Northfield Management Committee**

Northfield Open Space continues to provide a valuable open space for residents of both Hartley and New Ash Green to enjoy a peaceful area to relieve the tensions of everyday life.

The wild flower meadow has been extended and a bid has been submitted to create several copses of trees extending to half a hectare funded by Kent County Council.

The hay is cropped for animal feed in the summer and the boundary hedges have been trimmed and trees examined for any problems they may present.

Government funding has been received for the maintenance of the arable land which helps the Parishes maintain the open space. However, unfortunately, money had to be paid out for the removal of illegal camps set up in Barnett's Wood.

The permitted horse ride continues to be successful and has been used by 19 riders this year.

A request was received to use the gates by Milestone Academy to access the route but as that would mean opening and closing two gates it has been decided that only the gate in Church Road will be used.

### **Members of the Northfield Management Committee:**

Councillors; Mr L Glander, Mrs A Oxtoby, Mr V Sewell and 3 Members from Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council.



## **General Purposes Committee**

This Committee deals with a variety of matters including highway consultations and youth issues, together with the administrative arrangements of the Council and communications.

### **Youth**

West Kent Housing Association has continued to deliver detached work in Hartley. They are building and maintaining relations with our young people by assessing wellbeing and supporting where needed. Members of the Parish Council together with our Community Warden, met with Kent County Council who informed us that they currently have a staff shortage but are hoping to recruit and restart activity in Hartley.

### **Family Fun Day**

We had two Family Fun Days this year. One was funded by Sevenoaks District Council and the other by the Parish Council. These were held at Woodland Avenue recreation ground on 26th July and 16th August 2022. The July event was hugely successful with a large turnout. Sadly, the August event, although successful, had less attendees due to bad weather.

### **Remembrance Sunday - 13th November 2022**

The ceremony at the Hartley Memorial Green was well attended by the Royal British Legion, local Scout and Guide groups, our local Community groups such as the WI and residents. The W.I. provided the decorations for the green as well as refreshments at the Fawkham and Hartley Church Centre, after the service.

### **Hartley Parish Council Website**

Our new website is now up and running and can be viewed at [www.hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### **Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

The Hartley event for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee took place on 2nd and 4th June 2022. We would, once again, like to thank all our volunteers, the WI, Hartley Scout Group and the Local Vocals for helping make this event so successful.

### Review of Public Rights of Way

Work is in progress to have the footpath, leading from Beechlands Close into Hartley Wood, classified as a Public Right of Way.

### Highway Improvement Plan

We reported in last year's Annual Report that Ash Road, between the junctions of Chapel Wood Road and Quakers Close, would be resurfaced. We are now pleased to report that this work has been completed.

### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors; \*Mr L Abraham, Mr C Alford, Mr P Cole,  
Mrs L Driscoll (Chairman), Mr D Graeme, \*Mrs A Oxtoby and  
Mr V Sewell. \*ex officio



## Facilities

Allotments

Billings Hill Shaw

Chantry Avenue Recreation Ground

Foxborough Wood (Part of)

Gorse Wood

Hartley Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance

Hartley Wood (Part of)

Hartley Village Hall\*

Hoselands Green

Longfield Hill Recreation Ground

Manor Field and Pavilion

Northfield

Rectory Meadow (Local Nature Reserve)

War Memorial - Hartley Green

Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground



Hartley Green



Hartley Village Hall



Woodland Avenue

\*Hartley Parish Council acts as the Sole Trustee for the Hartley Village Hall Trust which is a charity registered under Charity No. 1043030

The Pavilion at Manor Field and Hartley Village Hall, Ash Road, are both available to hire for children's parties and similar events, or just for a one off or regular meeting place. For further information please contact the Clerk on Tel: 01474 709441 or email:

[enquiries@hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk) for the Pavilion or

[villagehall@hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:villagehall@hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk) for the Village Hall.