



HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
2021/22



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



Vince 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: mail@hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk or by telephone: 01474 709441.

The Annual Report is printed and published by Hartley Parish Council

Chairman's Report

Dear Resident,

This year continued as last year with many regulations about how to stay safe from COVID 19. The Council continued to meet via 'Zoom' until May, when the Government decided that we should have face to face meetings. We brought forward the Annual Parish Council meeting by 2 weeks so that we could use 'Zoom'.

Regrettably however, we were unable to find a venue that would allow safe distancing space for the number of residents who normally attend, so the Council took the decision to cancel the Annual Parish Meeting.

Meetings in June and July were held in Hartley Primary Academy to enable us to maintain social distancing, but by September, we returned to our usual meeting place at the Pavilion, Manor Field.

Gradually the rules around COVID have been relaxed and all our facilities and open spaces are open for business as usual.

The Council decided to lead a Steering Group to create a Neighbourhood Plan. This has sought Government funding, arranged for a Landscape Character Assessment, a Green Belt Appraisal and spoken with a planning consultant to advise on how best to achieve the Plan.

We have also begun plans for tree planting and events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Councillor Sheila Bennett resigned as she moved out of the area but she continues to have links with us as a Consultant. Councillor Fiona Hughes also resigned due to work commitments.

We have welcomed new councillors, Councillor Jim Colwell and returnees Councillor Laurence Glander and Councillor Brian Ramsay.

My thanks go to all the Councillors for their continued commitment to making Hartley a good place to live and to our Clerks Helen and Jane for their continued hard work through yet another difficult year.

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 2022 are set out in pages 5 and 6. In this year there is a deficit, as expenditure exceeded income by £4,525. This has decreased our reserves at year end.

In 2021/22 we started work on the Neighbourhood Plan which it is anticipated will cost around £24,000 over probably a three year period. We also need to spend a considerable amount of money on resurfacing the car park at Manor Field now that Manor Field Burial Ground is open. Options will be explored to reduce the costs involved.

For the year to 31st March 2023, a precept was set of £137,768 to prevent an increase in Household Contribution. This has meant that the money received will be £17,275 less than our budget, requiring continued vigilance on expenditure.

Our biggest cost in any year are staff costs. Our two excellent staff have been considerably stretched keeping up with the ever changing COVID regulations during the year. It has been a difficult time. 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 2020/21 were approved by the Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2021 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 January and there are now 4 graves. Once the New Garden of Remembrance by All Saints Church is full, future interments of ashes will also take place in Manor Field Burial Ground.

The Parish Council is looking to provide bins for any dead flowers and other rubbish and plans are under way to plant up the pergola area.

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 6 burials and 16 interments of ashes this year.

Members of the Committee:

Councillors; *Mr L Abraham, Mrs P Cole (Chairman), Mr P Cole,
*Mrs A Oxtoby, Mr B Ramsay 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. Due to the COVID restrictions, up to May 2022, meetings were held remotely via 'Zoom' instead and plans were looked at online, replacing the site visits that usually take place.

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 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022, the Parish Council was consulted on **75** planning applications. No objection was raised to **49** of these and objections were raised to **20**. **1** application was withdrawn and **5** applications had yet to be considered. The District Council gave a decision contrary to the Parish Council's views on **12** applications, all of which were delegated decisions. **2** decisions were taken to appeal by the applicants. **1** has been dismissed 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

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 & Mr V Sewell *ex officio

**Hartley Parish Council
Income & Expenditure
Account**

01/04/2021 to 31/03/2022

(Last) Year Ended 31st March 2021		(Current) Year Ended 31st March 2022
£	<u>Income</u>	£
137,773	Precept	136,451
134	Income	5,298
16,457	General Costs	6,211
6,295	Burial Grounds	9,445
922	Allotments	1,016
885	Open Spaces	4,169
560	Manor Field Pavilion	2,190
163,026		164,779
	<u>Expenditure</u>	
77,888	Staff Costs	77,228
14,678	General Costs	18,101
6,575	Office Costs	6,035
5,016	Burial Grounds	6,552
1,813	Allotments	1,449
32,603	Open Spaces	42,673
6,000	Manor Field Pavilion	10,070
20	Northfield	10
0	Youth Services	2,755
0	Hartley Village Hall	4,430
144,593		169,304
	<u>General Fund</u>	
169,653	Opening Balance	193,332
163,026	Plus: Income for Year	164,779
332,679		358,111
144,593	Less: Expenditure for Year	169,304
188,085		188,807
5,247	Transfer to/from Reserves	76,346
193,332	Closing Balance	112,461

Hartley Parish Council Balance Sheet
31/03/2022

(Last) Year Ended
31st March 2021

(Current) Year Ended
31st March 2022

£	LONG TERM ASSETS	£
0		0
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
	CURRENT ASSETS	
650	Debtors	342
3,257	VAT Control A/C	4,695
105	Prepayments	0
26,720	Current Bank Account	31,504
91,173	Business Saver Account	82,136
1	Petty Cash	0
70,096	Unity Bank Current Account	70,098
85,030	Nationwide	85,073
<u>277,031</u>		<u>273,848</u>
<u>277,031</u>	TOTAL ASSETS	<u>273,848</u>
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
1,380	Creditors	1,577
13,247	Accruals	14,103
0	Receipts in Advance	290
<u>14,627</u>		<u>15,969</u>
<u>262,404</u>	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	<u>257,879</u>
	Represented by:	
193,332	General Reserves	112,461
43,679	EMR Capital Reserve	43,679
10,000	HVH Earmarked Reserve	5,570
2,255	New Burial Ground Reserve	1,193
0	Manor Field Car Park	50,000
3,889	CIL Receipts A	2,996
8,090	CIL Receipts B	11,445
0	Platinum Jubilee	7,000
1,159	EMR Neighbourhood Plan	23,535
<u>262,404</u>		<u>257,879</u>

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31/03/2022 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 2021/22 was £52,000.

Football and cricket continue to be popular activities using Manor Field. The old metal goal posts and their fittings were in need of major repair which resulted in Hartley De Sales football club being given a donation towards the purchase of 3 sets of replacement portable goal posts which are a better and more practical option.

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 £10,000+.

On Rectory Meadow, the North West Kent Countryside Project has worked with volunteers carrying out coppicing etc. to stop woody species encroaching onto the meadow.

In Billings Hill Shaw another fruit tree came down in the storm with just three trees remaining from the old orchard. 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 which was Billings Hill Shaw. In addition the Scouts planted small saplings around the grass perimeter.

The Parish Council is continuing to review the specification for resurfacing the car park at Manor Field with regard to Sevenoaks District Council's preference for permeable surfaces. This follows site meetings with two contractors, which although seeming positive at the time did not lead to any further communication from them.

A meeting was held with a group planning to start a community garden in a possible site located close to Manor Field. Consideration was given to access and environmental factors. It is hoped that these discussions will lead to the development of a community garden and be a benefit to residents.

As part of the Sevenoaks District Council - Welcome Back Fund the Parish Council were given the opportunity to obtain two picnic benches which we are planning to install at Manor Field. We also obtained two benches which will be installed at Manor Field Burial Ground and Rectory Meadow,

It is hoped that this and many other activities carried out by this committee ensure that Hartley Parish 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, Mr D Graeme (Chairman), Mr M Malham, *Mrs A Oxtoby and Mr V Sewell *ex officio

Northfield Management Committee

Northfield open space, jointly managed by Ash-cum-Ridley and Hartley Parish Councils, continues to thrive and provide a beautiful area for recreation.

The Committee is seeking advice from a tree management firm to prepare a 5 or 10 year plan to manage the woodland areas.

Two benches have been installed near the play/football area for families to enjoy.

The wild flower meadow has continued to do well and it has been decided to extend it by several metres.

Our local farmer has also donated 6 fruit trees, so the fruit will be available for all to enjoy.

The Committee also agreed to a request from Kent County Council to provide a space for them to plant a small copse of trees.

Members of the Northfield Management Committee:

Councillors; Mr D Graeme, 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

Due to COVID, there has been very little interaction by West Kent Housing Association (WKHA) and KCC with our youth this year. However, it is hoped that this will soon change with WKHA carrying out detached youth work in the coming months.

Family Fun Day

Sevenoaks District Council ran a free Family Fun Day at Woodland Avenue recreation ground on 10th August 2021. This was a hugely successful event, attended by over 200 local people.

Remembrance Sunday - 14 November 2021

The ceremony at the Hartley Memorial Green was well attended by the Royal British Legion, local Scout and Girl Guide groups and 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.

Mobile Safety Cameras

The Parish Council recently purchased two cameras which can be strategically placed to catch offenders. Any criminal activities captured from these cameras will be passed on to the police.

Hartley Parish Council Website

The current website is in need of updating and we are currently looking at options for a new website.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Work has started on holding an event on the 2nd June 2022, where the Hartley Scout Group will be lighting the beacon at Manor Field. Residents are welcome to join us at this event

Work has also begun on a second event on the 4th June, where we will be hosting a party for all residents of Hartley.

Review of Public Rights of Way

We have received several requests for the footpath, leading from Beechlands Close into Hartley Wood to be classified as a Public Right of Way. The Parish Council agreed that the landowners be approached to inform them of its intention to register an interest in claiming this footpath as a Public Right of Way. As part of this process, we will be asking users to let us know why this is important to them. Further information will be published in our newsletter and we will be contacting groups who regularly use this footpath to help with input for our registration.

Highway Improvement Plan

A meeting was held, in January with Kent Highway Services and members of the Parish Council, where various issues were discussed. This included the resurfacing of Ash Road between the junctions of Chapel Wood Road and Quakers Close. It is believed that this work will take place within the next six months.

Neighbourhood Plan for Hartley

A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been set up comprising of members of the Parish Council and local residents and a tremendous amount of work has already been carried out by the group to create a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan will give legal powers to our community to produce planning policies which can contain a vision to shape our village's future. The Plan is written by the community itself and will influence development and planning decisions in the Parish and will form part of the Development Plan for Sevenoaks. The Plan could take 2 to 3 years to complete. This is a huge project, but critical in ensuring our village is somewhere people want to live in and accommodates a healthy lifestyle.

Members of the Committee:

Councillors; *Mr L Abraham, Mr C Alford, Mrs P Cole,
Mr P Cole, Mrs L Driscoll (Chairman), Mr D Graeme, *Mrs A Oxtoby &
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: mail@hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk, for the Pavilion or villagehall@hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk, for the Village Hall.