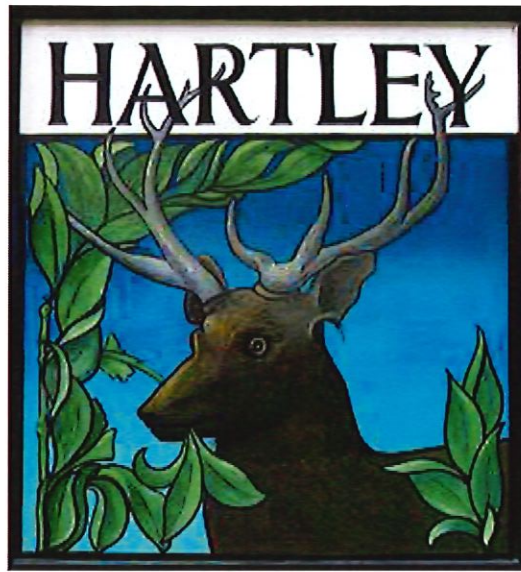




HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
2025/26

Your Parish Councillors



Larry Abraham



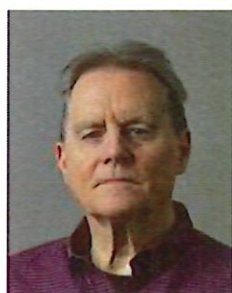
Penny Cole



Perry Cole



Jim Colwell



David Conroy
(Vice Chairman)



Lesley Driscoll



Laurence Glander
(Chairman)



David Graeme



Mally Malham



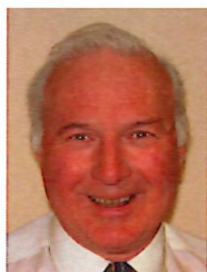
Anne Oxtoby



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 or by telephone: 01474 709441

The Annual Report is printed and published by Hartley Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2026

Dear Resident,

Once again over the last financial year Hartley Parish Council has been successful in managing its business affairs, especially during these unstable and uncertain times.

During this last year we have seen the resignation of one of our Parish Councillors, Councillor Malham due to him moving away from the area, our Clerk's Assistant, Anne-Louise-Broome, also left the Parish Council and I would like to thank them both for their hard work and dedication to the Council and the residents of Hartley.

Carl Crane has been co-opted onto the Parish Council to fill the vacant post of Councillor and we welcome Cllr Crane to the Parish Council.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, made up of Parish Councillors and local residents, has been very busy compiling Hartley's Neighbourhood Plan and I would like to thank them for their hard work and commitment. You can find out more information about the draft plan on the Neighbourhood Plan's website www.hartleynp.org.uk

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our Councillors for their hard work on the Parish Council. Being a voluntary role it sometimes seems a thankless task, and I appreciate their commitment to our village.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to our Clerk Helen Boden and our Assistant Clerk Jane Tyrrell, without their knowledge and professionalism the Parish Council could not efficiently function.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Council's accounts for the year to March 2026 are set out in pages 5 & 6. This year there has been a surplus of £23,503 as income exceeded expenditure. This amount will be used to replenish our General Reserves.

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan continues and it should be presented to Sevenoaks District Council shortly.

Also Kent County Council withdrawing funding for our Community Warden, Jackie West for this parish and Ash-cum-Ridley has led to the two parishes agreeing to fund the cost of her continuing support for parishioners. The cost of this is approximately £30,000 inclusive of all fees, to be shared over 3 days per week.

For the year to March 2027, the precept was set at £226,607, an increase of £4,511, with the years Tax Base set by Sevenoaks District Council at £2,580.73. This gives an average yearly increase per household of £1.75 (for a Band D property).

The Finance and General Purposes 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. It is 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 2025/26 were approved by the council at its Annual Meeting in May 2025 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.

Youth

Millwall Community Trust provided 12 weeks of football sessions funded by Hartley Parish Council at Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground. These sessions were free to attend and proved very popular.

Family Fun Day

A Family Fun Day was held on 12th August 2025 at Woodland Avenue Recreation Ground. This was funded by Sevenoaks District Council and the event was hugely successful with large turnout.

Remembrance Sunday 16th November 2025

The Remembrance Sunday Service at the Hartley Memorial Green was well attended by local residents, local Scout and Guide groups and representatives from local community groups.

The ladies of the WI provided refreshments at the Fawkham and Hartley Church Centre after the service.

Members of the Committee:

Councillors:, Mr J Colwell, *Mr D Conroy, Mrs L Driscoll, *Mr L Glander, Mr B Ramsay (Chairman), and Mr V Sewell. *ex officio

Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee

Manor Field Burial Ground is starting to look more established after many years of preparation. The first burial took place in 2022 and there are currently 11 graves.

In order that the Manor Field Burial Ground is perceived as a private area, benches have been installed and notices erected requesting that dogs are kept on a lead, to ensure that the area is more amenable for respect and contemplation.

There have been 8 burials and 8 interments of ashes this year.

Several maintenance projects have been completed in the Burial Grounds including;

- Repairs have been made to the paved area in The Old Garden of Remembrance
- Works to various dangerous/overhanging trees have been completed

Members of the Committee:

Councillors; Mr L Abraham, *Mr D Conroy, Mr P Cole, Mrs L Driscoll
*Mr L Glander, Mr B Ramsay (Chairman), and Mr I Ross. *ex officio



**Hartley Parish Council
Income & Expenditure
Account
01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026**

(Last) Year Ended
31st March 2025

(Current) Year Ended
31st March 2026

£	<u>Income</u>	£
188,797	Precept	222,096
8,780	Income	7,625
11,372	General Costs	5,349
7,965	Burial Grounds	8,920
1,341	Allotments	1,562
7,319	Open Spaces	4,593
7,587	Manor Field Pavilion	7,128
146	Hartley Village Hall	298
5,271	NMC Income	2,699
238,578		260,270
	<u>Expenditure</u>	
103,043	Staff Costs	119,456
19,112	General Costs	44,948
6,315	Office Costs	2,225
13,118	Burial Grounds	8,885
1,319	Allotments	926
62,319	Open Spaces	37,349
11,409	Manor Field Pavilion	15,278
2,000	Northfield	2,000
3,545	Youth Services	1,063
146	Hartley Village Hall	298
679	NMC General	1,080
5,074	NMC Maintenance	3,258
228,080		236,767
	<u>General Fund</u>	
107,074	Opening Balance	188,710
238,578	Plus: Income for Year	260,270
345,652		448,979
228,080	Less: Expenditure for Year	236,767
117,573		212,212
(71,137)	Transfer to/from Reserves	(7,343)
188,710	Closing Balance	219,556

Hartley Parish Council Balance Sheet
31/03/2026

(Last) Year Ended 31st March 2025		(Current) Year Ended 31st March 2026
£	LONG TERM ASSETS	£
0		0
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
	CURRENT ASSETS	
78	Debtors	4,553
0	NMC Debtors	13
6,578	VAT Control A/C	7,123
748	NMC VAT Control	586
192	Prepayments	0
10,735	Current Bank Account	122,162
92,945	Business Saver Account	23,949
0	Barclaycard	243
78,118	Unity Bank Current Account	47,491
89,016	Nationwide	90,443
2,206	NMC Current Account	581
5,470	NMC Buiness Reserve A/C	5,536
<u>286,085</u>		<u>302,680</u>
<u>286,085</u>	TOTAL ASSETS	<u>302,680</u>
286,085	CURRENT LIABILITIES	302,680
3,881	Creditors	2,993
5,140	Accruals	173
68	NMC Accruals	0
80	Credit card y/e balance	0
915	Receipts in Advance	11
<u>10,085</u>		<u>3,177</u>
<u>276,000</u>	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	<u>299,503</u>
	Represented by:	
188,710	General Reserves	219,556
43,679	EMR Capital Reserve	43,679
5,570	HVH Earmarked Reserve	5,570
8,096	CIL Receipts B	3,383
336	EMR - Local Plan	47
20,773	EMR - Neighbourhood Plan	18,913
4,698	NMC General Reserve	4,216
1,639	NMC Earmarked Reserves	1,639
2,500	NMC Future Planting Reserve	2,500
<u>276,000</u>		<u>299,503</u>

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31/03/2026 and reflects its income and expenditure during the year.

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 10am and the meetings are usually held at Hartley Library, Ash Road.

Residents Views - Notice of the meetings are displayed on the Parish noticeboard, 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 a 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 2025 and 31st March 2026 the Parish Council was consulted on 50 applications. No objection was raised to 33 of these, with no comment given for 1. Objections were raised to 16 applications. The District Council gave a decision contrary to the Parish Council's view on 13 of these, all of which were delegated decisions. None have been taken to appeal. Decisions on 2 applications are yet to be decided by Sevenoaks District Council.

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

https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069126/planning_enforcement/15/report_a_planning_breach

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: - Mr L Abraham (Chairman), Mr J Colwell, *Mr D Conroy, Mrs L Driscoll, *Mr L Glander, Mrs A Oxtoby, Mr B Ramsay, Mr I Ross and Mr V Sewell *ex officio

Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

This Committee manages all of the open spaces and facilities owned by the council.

Playgrounds:

These are located at Chantry Avenue, Woodland Avenue and Longfield Hill. They are well used by Hartley residents and are inspected quarterly to ensure they are safe places for our children.

Manor Field:

Situated next to All Saints Church on Church Road it is home to Hartley De Sales and New Ash Green Football clubs and New Ash Green and Hartley Cricket club.

The Committee ensures the grounds and pitches are kept in good order with regular mowing, line marking and hedge trimming.

Also at Manor Field is Manor Field Sports Pavilion which is used for council meetings, by the cricket club and by many and varied hirers.

In accordance with Health & Safety Guidelines, we have a water hygiene programme for the building which requires that the water outlets are flushed weekly. Testing is also completed to ensure that there is no legionella present in the building.

As part of the ongoing maintenance associated with owning buildings, the roof of the Pavilion has also been refurbished this year.

Woodlands:

Gorse Wood and parts of Hartley Wood, Billings Hill Shaw, Foxborough Woods and Rectory Meadow are managed by this committee. The trees in these areas are inspected by an Arboricultural Consultant every 12 to 18 months to make them as safe as possible.

The Parish Council also has a management plan in place for Gorse wood and Rectory Meadow with North West Kent Countryside Partnership.

It has also been agreed in principle to add more fruit trees to the old Orchard at Billings Hill Shaw to create a Community Orchard.

Allotments:

There is currently a waiting list for allotments.

Budget:

For 2025/26 the Committee had a budget of £57,400 to cover all the grass cutting, maintenance and safety inspections needed to keep our property fit for purpose.

The Committee will continue to ensure that Hartley remains a pleasant place to live that can be enjoyed by the whole community.

Members of the Committee:

Councillors; Mr L Abraham, Mrs P Cole, *Mr D Conroy, *Mr L Glander, Mr D Graeme, Mrs A Oxtoby (Chairman) and Mr V Sewell. *ex officio



Northfield Management Committee

Northfield open space is managed and funded jointly by Hartley and Ash-Cum-Ridley Parish Councils. Regular management meetings take place alternately in each parish where the Chairman of the host parish presides. Before each meeting there is usually a visual inspection carried out by members of the committee to ascertain any problems or issues that need resolving.

The various species of tree whips, that were planted in the winter of 2024, still continue to grow strongly despite the drought conditions last summer, and will hopefully grow to create a diverse wooded habitat. The area of coppiced woodland is regenerating as planned, opening up the woodland floor to encourage more species of woodland plants and insects.

During May 2025 an Ecology Consultant and his team carried out a "Bioblitz" on Northfield to survey and record species that can be found here. They also provided advice on how to help improve the area to increase the biodiversity. We are hoping to include some of his suggestions into the management plan.

The Pay to Ride horse ride trail has again provided a much needed safe place to ride off road for a small outlay. Northfield continues to be a popular place of recreation for many walkers and their dogs.

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.



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 for the Pavilion or
villagehall@hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk for the Village Hall.