



HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
2019/20



Your Parish Councillors



Larry Abraham
(Vice Chairman)



Chris Alford



Sheila Bennett



Penny Cole



Perry Cole



Lesley Driscoll



Annette Ewing



David Graeme



Mally Malham



Matthew Mohr



Anne Oxtoby
(Chairman)



Ian Ross



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 e mail: 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,

Elections for the Council were held in May 2019 and your new councillors were elected without opposition. Councillor Tremain did not stand for re-election but we welcomed Councillor Perry Cole onto the Council in his stead.

It has as always, been a busy year as the Council deals with matters to look after the village of Hartley. The Manor Field Burial Ground is now ready to be used and burials will cease in the old Burial Ground.

Another completed project was the Puffin Crossing on Ash Road which was duly installed in August and also clearance of fly tipping from Gorsewood.

Following the closure of the public hearings of the Sevenoaks District Council's Local Plan, Sevenoaks District Council has begun Judicial Review proceedings after the Government Planning Inspector refused to endorse its new Local Plan. The Parish Council continues to support the District Council and will keep residents updated.

The year has ended with the country entering lockdown because of Covid-19. We have followed guidance and the Clerks are now working separately from home and in the office and we have closed the play spaces and both halls. However the work of the Council continues as best it can.

Unfortunately, this virus brought to a halt many plans that the Council had started including some outreach youth work and also plans to celebrate VE Day 75th Anniversary.

I thank all the Councillors for their hard work through the year and of course all our thanks go to our clerks Helen Boden and Jane Tyrrell for running our affairs as efficiently as ever.

I commend the committee reports to you.

Anne Oxtoby, Chairman of the Council.

Finance Committee



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 are satisfied that the controls in place fulfil the fiduciary duties of the Council.

The Council's accounts for 2018/19 were approved by the Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2019 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 Council's accounts for the year to 31 March 2020 are set out in pages 5 and 6. In this year there is a deficit as expenditure has exceeded income by £27,705. The reason for the deficit was the contribution of £32,500 that the Council made towards the Puffin Crossing on the Ash Road near Hoselands Green. This money was in reserves at March 2019 but it was actually spent in this financial year, so is included in this year's expenses. Other large unusual expenses were £6,488 for the pergola and

ancillary costs for the New Burial Ground and over £5,000 for Consultants Fees concerning Sevenoaks Council's proposed local plan for development in our Parish. We received £13,753 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which we had not budgeted for as it is unknown and difficult to estimate. This money can only be spent on certain expenditure to improve our parish amenities. The Council are considering the best use of these funds in the next financial year.

Our biggest cost in any year are staff costs. We are very fortunate to have two excellent staff who carry out their duties administering the Council's affairs and finances extremely efficiently.

Members of the Committee: Councillors; *Mr L Abraham, Mr C Alford, Mrs S Bennett (Chairman), *Mrs A Oxtoby, and Mr V Sewell *ex officio

Northfield Management Committee

Northfield, the 68 acres of open space that separates Hartley from New Ash Green, is managed jointly by Ash-cum-Ridley and Hartley Parish Councils.

Barnett's Wood is thriving and the glades with their scalloped edges are a peaceful place to walk and listen to the birds and observe the flora and fauna.

The open area is well used by walkers with or without dogs and horse riders as well.

We have received funding from the Rural Payments Agency again this year so the Parish councils have only needed to contribute a nominal sum.

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

Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee

I am pleased to report that at the Parish Council meeting in April, Councillors agreed to officially open the Manor Field Burial Ground, adjacent to the existing burial ground.

An oak pergola was installed a few months ago and plants to adorn the pergola will be planted in due course. Raised brick plinths have also been installed as a place for floral tributes to be laid.

Lavender bushes were planted around the new Garden of Remembrance in this area but unfortunately they were devoured by rabbits within days of planting so we are now looking at a different option to complete the area.



In the Old Garden of Remembrance, some new planting was carried out as well and this area will be regularly maintained so that it remains a lovely and calm place to sit, rest and to reflect.

There have been 7 burials and 9 interments of ashes this year. The current Burial Ground is now closed.

Members of the Committee:

Councillors; *Mr L Abraham, Mrs P Cole (Chairman), Mr P Cole, Mrs A Ewing, *Mrs A Oxtoby and Mr I Ross.

*ex officio

**Hartley Parish Council
Income & Expenditure
Account
01/04/2019 to 31/03/2020**

(Last) Year Ended 31st March 2019		(Current) Year Ended 31st March 2020
£	<u>Income</u>	£
132,803	Precept	133,697
16,920	Income	14,370
7,113	General Costs	6,121
9,850	Burial Grounds	8,645
823	Allotments	930
4,202	Open Spaces	3,755
4,635	Manor Field Pavilion	4,557
<hr/> 176,345 <hr/>		<hr/> 172,075 <hr/>
	<u>Expenditure</u>	
69,162	Staff Costs	71,684
25,372	General Costs	19,618
9,866	Office Costs	9,645
7,154	Burial Grounds	11,738
970	Allotments	872
39,553	Open Spaces	71,436
7,250	Manor Field Pavilion	11,966
2,663	Youth Services	2,820
<hr/> 161,991 <hr/>		<hr/> 199,780 <hr/>
	<u>General Fund</u>	
173,249	Opening Balance	155,510
<hr/> 176,345	Plus: Income for Year	<hr/> 172,075
349,594		327,585
<hr/> 161,991	Less: Expenditure for Year	<hr/> 199,780
187,603		127,805
<hr/> 32,093	Transfer to/from Reserves	<hr/> 41,848
<hr/> 155,510 <hr/>	Closing Balance	<hr/> 169,653 <hr/>

**Hartley Parish Council
Balance Sheet
31/03/2020**

(Last) Year Ended 31st March 2019 £	LONG TERM ASSETS	(Current) Year Ended 31st March 2020 £
0		0
0		0
	CURRENT ASSETS	
242	Debtors	550
2,920	VAT Control A/C	6,250
17,701	Current Bank Account	9,102
198,082	Business Saver Account	164,396
68	Petty Cash	1
64,846	Unity Bank Current Account	75,592
283,857		255,890
283,857	TOTAL ASSETS	255,890
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
4,231	Creditors	934
7,950	Accruals	10,985
12,181		11,919
271,677	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	243,972
	Represented by:	
155,510	General Reserves	169,653
43,679	EMR Capital Reserve	43,679
10,000	HVH Earmarked Reserve	10,000
9,163	New Burial Ground Reserve	2,675
25,581	EMR Highway Improvements	0
8,609	CIL Receipts A	3,889
10,139	CIL Receipts B	8,090
92	EMR Nation's Tribute	0
8,904	EMR Local Plan	0
0	VE Day - 75th Anniversary	5,986
271,677		243,972

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31/03/2020 and reflects its income and expenditure during the year.

Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

Meeting regularly throughout the year, our brief is to manage the various open spaces owned by the Parish Council.

We are also responsible for the Pavilion at Manor Field and liaise with various agencies to ensure that grass is cut, hedges are trimmed and bins are emptied.

The Committee is responsible for all the open spaces which include Manor Field, Longfield Hill, Rectory Meadow, Billings Hill Shaw, Gorse Wood and part of the woodland known as Hartley Wood.

The woodland trees are a vital part of our village heritage; managing the trees contained within these areas is a particularly important task as we seek to maintain their preservation and ensure that damaged trees are dealt with to prevent risk to the public.

Unfortunately these areas are often targeted for fly-tipping and on a couple of occasions recently, the Parish Council has had to pay to have dumped rubbish removed, at a significant cost.

We are also responsible for the three recreation grounds in the parish; Longfield Hill, Woodland Avenue and Chantry Avenue, as well as the allotment site in Woodland Avenue/Larks Field.

The recreation grounds are regularly inspected to ensure compliance with the appropriate safety standards and their upkeep is important to ensure that they can be enjoyed by the younger members of our community.

Unfortunately all play areas and halls had to be closed due to Government guidelines in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic. We are hoping that they will be allowed to re-open soon to be enjoyed again by Hartley residents.

The facilities at Manor Field are regularly used by New Ash Green and Hartley Cricket Club and Hartley De Sales Football Club throughout their respective seasons.

Meopham Cricket Club makes use of the pitch at Longfield Hill.

The Pavilion at Manor Field is regularly used for meetings, social events and indoor sports and leisure activities.

The maintenance of the building requires constant attention to ensure its safe usage by the Community and it is currently being redecorated.

Paving has recently been installed around the beacon brazier at Manor Field. This will ensure that any embers from the lit beacon will not cause damage to the surrounding area.

The allotment site at Woodland Avenue/Larks Field continues to be popular. There are currently no vacant plots. Anyone interested in being added to the waiting list for a plot should contact the Parish Office on 01474 709441 or by email on mail@hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk

Rectory Meadow is classified as a Local Nature Reserve and the Parish Council consults with a number of experts to ensure its upkeep is managed in the appropriate way.

Whilst we are all fortunate to live in Hartley, the Parish Council does rely on the ongoing support of ALL residents to help maintain tidiness and cleanliness by dealing with litter and ensuring that our ever growing dog community is not allowed to foul any public areas.



Members of the Committee:

Councillors; *Mr L Abraham, Mrs S Bennett, Mrs L Driscoll (Chairman), Mrs A Ewing, Mr D Graeme, Mr M Malham, Mr M Mohr, *Mrs A Oxtoby and Mr V Sewell *ex officio

General Purposes Committee

This Committee deals with a variety of matters which fall outside the responsibilities of the Council's other Committees.

Highway Matters;

The Committee saw through the installation of the new pedestrian crossing in Ash Road during the Summer and it was very much welcomed, especially by parents of children who use the school buses during the rush hour. However, the Council has been disappointed that the lights have failed on a number of occasions and has expressed its views to the Highway Authority at Kent County Council.

A number of residents have expressed concern about the speed of traffic through the Village and the Committee has made further representations to the Police about enforcing the 30 mph speed limit. The Police have advised that due to the volume and speed of traffic, the route has been upgraded from 'green' to 'amber' which means that more frequent speed checks will be made in order to encourage compliance.

New Village Gateway signs are due to be installed at each end of the village. These signs will welcome drivers to Hartley and thank them as they leave, for driving safely.

The Committee supported two requests from residents. One for the installation of warning signs in the narrow section of Church Road where there is no footpath and pedestrians and horse riders could be in the road and secondly at the entrance to Old Downs to advise drivers that it is a 'no through road'.

If residents have suggestions for works or improvements to the Highway, would they please send them to the Parish Council and, if they are supported, they will be submitted to the Highway Authority for their consideration.

Commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the end of WW2

Following the Government's announcement last year that the anniversary day, 8th May 2020, would be a Bank Holiday, the Parish Council decided to support the National programme and hold an event similar to the successful Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1. A Working Group consisting of Parish Councillors and representatives of local

organisations were well organised with planning for the day, when the Government postponed the event due to the Covid-19 issues. The Parish Council hopes that its plan can be implemented later in the year and, further notice of this will be given as appropriate.

Remembrance Sunday;

The Parish Council organised the Service of Remembrance on Sunday 10th November. The service at the War Memorial on Ash Road was very well attended by approximately 250 residents and their families, together with the local Scout and Guide groups. Refreshments were provided by the ladies of Hartley WI in the Church Centre afterwards.

Youth Services;

For many years the Parish Council has funded a Youth Service which provided support one evening per week and Fun Days. Unfortunately the organisation which provided the service closed down in the Autumn, due to problems in recruiting youth workers. Discussions have taken place between Hartley, two neighbouring Parishes and the KCC youth team based in Swanley, to provide a jointly funded programme. It had been hoped to fund the programme for a year, as an experiment, but unfortunately this has been delayed by the Covid-19 issues.

Other Matters;

The Parish Council was consulted on numerous matters throughout the year including NHS Consultation Papers about the creation of an Urgent Treatment Centre for Dartford, Gravesend and Swanley, in which the Committee expressed a preference for it to be located at the Gravesend Community Hospital because of parking problems at Darent Valley Hospital. The result was an overwhelming support for Gravesend and the NHS opted to have two centres, one at Darent Valley Hospital and the other in Gravesend.

Members of the Committee:

Councillors: *Mr L Abraham, Mr C Alford (Chairman), Mrs P Cole, Mr P Cole, Mrs L Driscoll, Mr D Graeme, *Mrs A Oxtoby and Mr V Sewell

*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 10.00a.m. at Hartley Library, Ash Road. Before each meeting, the Committee conducts site visits as deemed necessary by the Chairman.

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 will be 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 2019 and 31st March 2020, the Parish Council was consulted on 52 planning applications. No objection was raised to 29 of these and objections were raised to 21, with no comment on 2. The District Council gave a decision contrary to the Parish Council's views on 11 applications, all of which were delegated decisions. 4 decisions were taken to appeal by the applicants and all were dismissed.

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, Mrs S Bennett, Mrs A Ewing *Mrs A Oxtoby, Mr I Ross 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: mail@hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk, for the Pavilion or villagehall@hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk, for the Village Hall.