

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF HARTLEY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

HELD IN THE PAVILION, MANOR FIELD, CHURCH ROAD

ON MONDAY 13th MARCH 2023 AT 7.30 P.M.

Present :

Cllr Larry Abraham
Cllr Chris Alford
Cllr Penny Cole
Cllr Jim Colwell
Cllr Lesley Driscoll
Cllr Laurence Glander
Cllr Mally Malham
Cllr Anne Oxtoby – (*Chairman*)
Cllr Brian Ramsay
Cllr Vincent Sewell

In attendance:

Mrs Helen Boden - (*Clerk*)
Cllr David Brazier – (*Kent County Councillor*)
Clerk to Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
5 members of the public

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Perry Cole due to work commitments, Cllr David Graeme due to family commitments and Cllr Ian Ross due to family commitments.

RESOLVED: That,

the absences of Cllr Perry Cole due to work commitments, Cllr David Graeme due to family commitments and Cllr Ian Ross due to family commitments, be accepted and approved.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Oxtoby declared an interest under agenda item 12, Donation Request, as she is a member of the Ash Green Sports Centre and withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the matter.

Cllr Cole declared an interest under agenda item 12, Donation Request, as a member of her family is involved with the Committee that has been formed to look at securing the future of the centre.

3. Dispensations

There were no requests from Members for a dispensation.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meeting of Hartley Parish Council held on 13th February 2023, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.31 p.m. to receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillors.

The meeting resumed at 7.40 p.m.

Pursuant to Standing Order 3 (e) the Chairman of the Council invited members of the public to express an interest should they wish to make representations, answer questions or give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.

The Clerk and the RFO to Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council expressed an interest under agenda item 12, Donation request.

5 members of the public expressed an interest under agenda item 9, Planning Committee.

RESOLVED That,

pursuant to Standing Order 10 (a) (ix), the order of business be altered so that agenda item 12, Donation Request, be brought forward.

5. Donation Request

Members considered a letter dated 6th March 2023 and signed copies of the 2021/22 accounts and 2022/23 accounts up to 20th February 2023, received from Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council, requesting a donation for the sum of £4,000 to support the revenue costs of running the Sports Centre.

Members noted that the Sports Centre has shown a steady loss for several years. These losses have, historically been covered by reserves which were built up when the Sports Centre was smaller and the pattern of use and costs were very different.

Since 2011, Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council has supported the Sports Centre financially with a grant and this has increased to a current annual grant of £15,000.

Members noted that the Sports Centre has practised rigorous cost containment, reducing hours of operation and staffing hours. It is still recovering from the effects of COVID-19, with January 2023 being the first month to reflect pre-COVID income.

Racket sports are available for all ages. Teen gym provides supervised sessions for 14 and 15 year olds, along with two coached basketball sessions for 9-11 year olds and 11 yrs +.

The Centre was used for the Parish Council sponsored Summer Scheme, which was very successful with the majority of families coming from New Ash Green and Hartley.

Members noted that currently 27% of gym members are resident in Hartley. Non member users and racket sports are not included in this figure.

The Chairman proposed and Cllr Sewell seconded the proposal that a sum of £4,000 should be donated to the Ash Green Sports Centre, as a one off donation in support of the services to local young people.

It was noted that there was still £3,300 remaining in the youth budget for 2022/23.

The Clerk reported that any unused funds remaining in the youth budget as at 31st March 2023 would automatically be transferred in the Council's General Reserves.

Cllr Oxtoby left the meeting at 7.53p.m.

In Cllr Oxtoby's absence, the Vice-Chairman Cllr Abraham took the Chair.

Cllr Sewell asked the RFO to Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council what the potential grant would be used for. The RFO confirmed that it would be used to reduce expenditure.

The RFO reported that the Sports Centre was gradually seeing an increase in members and that it was in the process of changing its use to provide more community activities and more youth facilities.

On being put to the vote, the Chairman's motion was CARRIED.

RESOLVED: That,

1) a donation in the sum of £4,000 be made to Ash Green Sports Centre, as a one off donation for the financial year 2023/24;

2) the total cost of the donation be met from the Parish Council's General Reserves.

Cllr Oxtoby returned to the meeting at 7.55p.m.

The Clerk and RFO to Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council left the meeting at 7.56p.m.

RESOLVED That,

pursuant to Standing Order 10 (a) (ix), the order of business be altered so that agenda item 9, Planning, be brought forward.

6. Planning Committee

At the Chairman's invitation members of the public were invited to express their views.

At its meeting held on 22nd February 2023, the Planning Committee had considered planning application 22/02930/FUL, Sancta Maria, Manor Drive.

The members of the public present at the meeting asked whether there was any update with regard to the application.

The Chairman advised that the Planning Committee had objected to the application, but that the Parish Council was a consultee only and that the final decision would be made by Sevenoaks District Council.

Cllr Cole reported that the District Council was mindful to grant the application and that as such, both herself and Cllr Perry Cole had asked that the application be considered by the District Council's Development Control Committee.

Cllr Cole advised that a site visit had been requested and that it would take place 5 days before the meeting.

The Chairman advised that members of the public would be permitted to speak at the meeting.

Cllr Cole agreed to inform the members of the public once a date for the Development Control Committee meeting had been set.

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 8th February 2023, 22nd February 2023 and 8th March 2023 and the recommendations contained therein, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

The members of the public left the meeting at 8.07p.m.

7. Finance Committee

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 22nd February 2023 and the recommendations contained therein, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

8. General Purposes Committee

Cllr Driscoll commented on the recommendation contained in the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 27th February 2023, (page 6, minute item 12, (1), King's Coronation, which reads:

"1) the Council participates in the Coronation "Big Lunch" on Sunday 7th May 2023, by opening up Manor Field and the Pavilion for residents wishing to gather with picnics"

Cllr Driscoll reported that a working party consisting of herself, Cllr Oxtoby and Cllr Perry Cole had taken place earlier in the day and it had been suggested that in view of the likely cost involved, lack of volunteers and the fact that the King appeared to want to keep the celebrations low key, that the Parish Council's participation in the Coronation "Big Lunch", should not be pursued.

It was suggested that as an alternative, a donation be made to the two local primary schools.

In light of this, the Council agreed to withdraw the recommendation contained in the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 27th February 2023, (page 6, minute item 12, (1), King's Coronation.

Cllr Driscoll reported that a suggestion had been made by Jackie West, the Community Warden, that perhaps a friendship bench could be donated by the Parish Council to the two schools.

RESOLVED: That,

1) the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 1st March 2023 and the recommendations contained therein, but excluding the withdrawn recommendation (page 6, minute item 12, (1), King's Coronation be received, and where necessary approved and adopted;

2) the Clerk be requested to contact Hartley Primary Academy and Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School, to ask whether they would like to take up the Parish Council's offer of the donation of a friendship bench or picnic table and,

3) once a response has been received from the two local schools, the Clerk be requested to obtain quotations for the supply of the required benches, to include a plaque, for consideration by the Parish Council at its next meeting.

9. Amenities & Open Spaces Committee

Cllr Oxtoby proposed and Cllr Driscoll seconded an amendment to the recommendation contained in the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee held on 1st March 2023, (page 2, minute item 4 (4), Manor Field, Car Park Resurfacing), so that it reads,

“(4) following the meetings with the Contractors, the quotations be brought back to the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee or full Council for consideration and to appoint the successful contractor”.

On being put to the vote the amendment was CARRIED.

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 1st March 2023 and the recommendations contained therein, as amended, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

10. Burial Grounds & Gardens of Remembrance Committee

Cllr Ramsay commented on the recommendation contained in the minutes of the meeting of the Burial Grounds & Gardens of Remembrance Committee held on 2nd March 2023, (page 3, minute item 4, Manor Field Burial Ground), which reads:

“a quotation be sought for the supply and installation of a water butt using water from the gutters of the Pavilion building”.

Cllr Ramsay reported that this recommendation had been made due to an oversight.

The Parish Council’s Standing Orders state (7. Previous Resolutions, (a)):

“A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 5 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9 below, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee”

Members noted that at the meeting of the Burial Grounds & Gardens of Remembrance Committee held on 16th November 2022, it had been resolved that:

“no further action is taken at this time, in regards to the provision of a water supply at the burial ground”.

In light of this, the Council agreed to withdraw the recommendation contained in the minutes of the meeting of the Burial Grounds & Gardens of Remembrance Committee held on 2nd March 2023, (page 3, minute item 4, Manor Field Burial Ground).

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meeting of the Burial Grounds & Gardens of Remembrance Committee held on 2nd March 2023 and the recommendations contained therein, but excluding the withdrawn recommendation (page 3, minute item 4, Manor Field Burial Ground), be received, and where necessary approved and adopted;

11. Neighbourhood Plan

(a) Cllr Alford commented on minute item 11, Appointment of Chairman of the Group after the May Parish Council Elections, contained in the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 15th February 2023.

Members noted that Cllr Alford, the Chairman of the Steering Group would not be seeking re-election to the Parish Council in the May elections and that whilst he would be eligible to serve on the Steering Group after that date, the Terms of Reference of the Group stipulated that the Chairman must be a member of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 30th November 2022 and 15th February 2023, be received and noted.

(b) Members noted that AECOM had been appointed by Locality (a Government department), to produce a draft design code for the village.

In order for them to proceed with the work, Sevenoaks District Council require a Standard Form Contractor Licence to be completed, to enable AECOM to request the mapping.

The Chairman reported that the Licence had been completed and signed by herself and the Assistant Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That,

the completion and signing of the Standard Form Contractor Licence, by the Chairman of the Council and the Assistant Clerk, required by Sevenoaks District Council to enable AECOM to request the mapping required for them to produce a draft design code for the village, be authorised and confirmed by the Council.

12. Community Transport Scheme

Cllr Cole reported that there had been no update regarding the grant application submitted by the Parish Council.

Cllr Brazier reported that 13 bids had been approved by KCC and that it was likely that the Parish Council's bid was not one of them as he had not been notified.

RESOLVED: That,

the reports from Cllr Cole and Cllr Brazier be noted.

13. Trees

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 1st March 2023, the Committee considered a request received from a resident of Gorsewood Road, for trees adjacent to their property to be reduced/removed, as they considered that the roots *may* be affecting their property.

At the meeting it was noted that arrangements had been made for two Tree Surgeons to inspect the trees, but that differing opinions had been received in their reports.

In view of this, the Clerk made arrangements for an additional Tree Surgeon to inspect the trees.

This had not been carried out in time for the meeting of the Committee and the matter was deferred.

An inspection was carried out on 7th March 2023.

Members noted that none of the three inspections had been conclusive and that it had been suggested that the only way to find out for certain would be for the resident to arrange for a qualified Structural Engineer to carry out a survey, as the needless removal of trees could affect the water table and cause issues.

In view of the fact that neither the resident nor the Tree Surgeons could categorically state that the trees in question were affecting the property, it was agreed that the Council could take no further action without advice from a suitably qualified professional.

The Chairman reported that there did appear to be some dead wood on the trees located at the side of the garden and suggested that this be removed.

In addition, it was considered that the tree located adjacent to the garage of the property had become overgrown and required some pruning.

RESOLVED: That,

- 1) the Clerk be requested to contact the resident to suggest that they make arrangements for a suitably qualified professional to carry out an assessment and provide a report to the Council;
- 2) the resident be advised that without such a report, the Council is unable to assess whether any work is required and;
- 3) the Clerk be authorised to make arrangements for the dead wood and the overhanging branches to be removed/cut back by a Tree Surgeon.

14. Payments

RESOLVED: That,

- (a) the payment of accounts for March 2023, attached as **Appendix 1** to these minutes, be approved.
- (b) the Council detail report as at 7th March 2023, setting out actual income and expenditure against budgeted estimates be received and noted;
- (c) the bank reconciliations for the Council's four bank accounts for February 2023, be verified by Cllr Ross after the close of the meeting.
- (d) it be noted that the bank reconciliations for the Council's four bank accounts for January 2023 had been verified by Cllr Graham.

The meeting closed at 8:49 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman of Hartley Parish Council

Date:.....

Schedule of Payments March 2023 - Paid by cheque/DDR from Barclays Bank

Chq No	Payment to	Particulars	Net	VAT	Total
DDR	Barclays Bank PLC	Period 13/01 - 12/02 mixed plan charges	9.39	-	9.39
DDR	EDF Energy	Monthly payment re Pavilion	39.00	-	39.00
			48.39	-	48.39

Schedule of Payments March 2023 - Paid by Barclaycard

Ref:	Payment to	Particulars	Net	VAT	Total
		PAID 07/03/23 - Purchase of fan heater re Parish Office	12.46	2.49	14.95
			12.46	2.49	14.95

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7.31 p.m.

Cllr Brazier reported that a year ago, KCC had submitted a funding application for its Bus Service Improvement Plan and that £19 million had now been received as part of the first tranche.

Cllr Brazier reported that £13.5 million would be spent on capital schemes (bus lanes etc.) and £5.5 million would be spent on new services and that it may be possible for a service from New Ash Green to Dartford to be provided.

Members noted that a Working Party (including the Parish Council) would now be set up to consider how the funding should be spent.

Cllr Brazier reported that the Mayor of London, as part of the ULEZ project had proposed the erection of warning signs at the boundary of the county (on the county side) and the London boroughs, but that KCC have protested to this proposal as there is no pollution problem in these areas.

The Mayor is seeking powers to permit warning signs to be erected on KCC land, but KCC has opposed this and the signs are now required to be placed on the London borough side of the boundary.

The Chairman asked Cllr Brazier to pass on the Parish Council's congratulations for the standard of the resurfacing work on Ash Road.

Cllr Cole reminded Members that a Health and wellbeing day has been organised on 18th March from 2p.m. – 5p.m. at New Ash Green Village Hall.

Cllr Cole reported that there would be a representative from the Jubilee Surgery, the Kent & Medway NHS Health bus offering free health checks and various other health care providers.

Cllr Cole reported that she had put a nomination forward to the Sevenoaks District Council Making it Happen Awards and that the results would be announced on Wednesday.

Cllr Abraham reported that at the Sevenoaks District Council budget meeting, an increase of 2.98% on council tax had been agreed.

Cllr Abraham reported that the Commonwealth flag had been raised at the District Council offices earlier in the day.

The meeting resumed at 7.40p.m

