

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF HARTLEY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN THE PAVILION, MANOR FIELD, CHURCH ROAD
ON MONDAY 8th JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30 P.M.

Present :

Cllr Penny Cole
Cllr Perry Cole
Cllr Jim Colwell
Cllr David Conroy
Cllr Lesley Driscoll
Cllr Laurence Glander
Cllr Anne Oxtoby – (*Chairman*)
Cllr Brian Ramsay
Cllr Ian Ross
Cllr Vincent Sewell

In attendance:

Mrs Helen Boden - (*Clerk*)
Cllr David Brazier – (*Kent County Councillor*)
Mr C Alford – (*Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group*)
8 Members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr David Graeme due to family commitments.

RESOLVED: That,

the absence of, Cllr David Graeme due to family commitments, be accepted and approved.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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 11th December 2023, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.31p.m. to receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillors and to take questions from members of the public.

The meeting resumed at 7.41p.m.

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

Two members of the public expressed an interest in making representations answering questions or giving evidence in respect of agenda item 10. Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan, if necessary.

RESOLVED That,

pursuant to Standing Order 10 (a) (ix), the order of business be altered so that agenda items 9, Neighbourhood Plan and 10, Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan, be brought forward.

5. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Oxtoby reported that Housing Needs survey cards had now been sent to all residents by post.

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group explained that the Group was trying to establish the need for affordable housing and for the elderly.

Mr Alford reported that following a recent consultation process, 515 responses had been received, with 98% of residents expressing a view to retain the Green Belt.

Mr Alford reported that “pop in sessions” were in the process of being arranged and that the dates of these would be confirmed in due course.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the above reports be noted and,

(2) the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 13th December 2023, be received and noted and the actions approved.

6. Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council’s draft response to Regulation 18 Plan 2040 Sevenoaks Local Plan, 2023 had now been received from Tony Fullwood Associates and that Members had been issued with a copy and were, in general, extremely satisfied with the proposed response.

Cllr Ross reported that in order to assist the Parish Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had studied the report in great detail, at a meeting held earlier in the day.

Members noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had supported all of the consultant’s recommendations.

Cllr Ross went through the proposed amendments to the response, some of which were just typos.

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reported that the Group had welcomed the draft response and Members agreed that the consultant had done a very good job in such a short timescale.

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

A resident commented on the fact that there were still many residents that are unaware of the consultation.

Members agreed that the alterations/additions to the draft response, as recommended by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group should be sent to Tony Fullwood Associates, to enable the response to be amended.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the alterations/additions to the draft response, as recommended by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be sent to Tony Fullwood Associates, to enable the document to be amended;

(2) Cllr Ross be authorised to liaise with Tony Fullwood Associates and that once the document has been amended, he and the Clerk be authorised to submit the response to Sevenoaks District Council's "Regulation 18" (Part 2) Consultation, on behalf of the Parish Council and,

(3) the finalised response document be published on the Parish Council's website.

8 members of the public and the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group left the meeting at 8.10p.m.

7. Amenities & Open Spaces Committee

Cllr Oxtoby commented on minute item 10. Security of Open Spaces and informed Members that she intended to donate her Chairman's allowance to the planting of the mature trees on Hoselands Green.

Members noted that once planted, it would be necessary for the trees to be watered 2 – 3 times per week for at least the first year.

The Clerk reported that quotations had been sought for the watering of the trees, but that initial enquiries had highlighted the fact that this was likely to be somewhat expensive.

In addition, Members noted that it was a requirement of the contractor planting the trees, for the Council to produce an accurate plan of the underground services at Hoselands Green, or for them to be marked out on site, prior to the team arriving.

The contractor has advised that they do have a CAT scanner which can double check for underground cables (not water), however, the information would need to be provided by the Parish Council.

Cllr Perry Cole reported that he is in possession of a map obtained from Line Search Before You Dig (LSBUD), showing basic utility services contained underground at that location. It primarily shows gas supplies but only the main pipe work - supplies to individual properties are not shown - neither are any other utility company's assets. Enquiries will need to be made with each individual utility supplier - gas, water, electric, cable, telephone etc.

Members noted that the asset information on which the enquiry results are based has been provided by LSBUD Members, therefore LSBUD will provide no guarantee that such information is accurate or reliable nor does it monitor such asset information for accuracy and reliability going forward. There may also be asset owners which do not participate in the enquiry service operated by LSBUD.

Therefore, LSBUD cannot make any representation or give any guarantee or warranty as to the completeness of the information contained in the enquiry results or accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the mapping images used. LSBUD and its employees, agents and consultants accept no liability (save that nothing in the Enquiry Confirmation excludes or limits their liability for death or personal injury arising from their negligence, or their fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation, or any other liability that cannot be excluded or limited by English law) arising in respect thereof or in any other way for errors or omissions including responsibility to any person by reason of negligence.

Members agreed that even if additional enquiries were made with the individual utility suppliers, there was no guarantee that the information provided would be correct.

Cllr Cole reported that a local Tree Surgeon had access to a CAT scanner and that they may be able to assist with the location of services.

Members were reminded that a method of watering the trees would need to be put in place prior to planting, as without this, the trees would be unlikely to survive.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the Clerk be requested to seek quotations for the area on Hoselands Green where it is proposed to plant the trees, to be CAT scanned, to locate any underground services;

(2) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee, be authorised to accept any resultant quotation, if considered suitable;

(3) the map obtained from Line Search before You Dig, showing the main pipe work gas supply underneath Hoselands Green, be noted and provided to the contractor planting the trees;

(4) no additional enquiries be made with individual utility suppliers;

(5) additional quotations be sought for the watering of the trees (once planted), 2 – 3 times per week for the first year;

(6) the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee, be authorised to accept any resultant quotation, if considered suitable;

(7) the total cost of the above be met from the Parish Council's general reserves;

(8) subject to 1-4 above, the quotation received from Majestic Trees for the supply and planting of 5 no mature trees on Hoselands Green, including tree gators, underground anchors, fertiliser and compost, be accepted;

(9) the total cost of the trees be met from CIL monies and,

(10) the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 13th December 2023 and the recommendations contained therein, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

8. Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr Ramsay proposed and Cllr Oxtoby seconded an amendment to the recommendation contained in the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 20th December 2023, (page 2, minute item 6. Precept 2024/25, so that it reads:

“Sevenoaks District Council be advised that Hartley Parish Council wishes to increase the Precept from £160,390, to £188,797, based on a tax base of 2,586.69 for 2024/25, which will result in an increase in the Band D charge for 2024/25 from £62.63 to £72.99, (an increase of 16.5%)”

The Clerk commented on the fact that the word “RESOLVED” had been omitted from minute item 7. Highways, contained in the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 20th December 2023 and that the minute item therefore required amending to read:

“RESOLVED: That,

(1) Cllr Abraham’s offer to contact Sevenoaks District Council to ask whether they are able to confirm ownership of the land, be accepted;

(2) the Clerk be requested to contact West Kent Housing Association to ask whether they are able to assist with any additional information and,

(3) the Clerk be requested to contact the resident to advise that the Parish Council is unable to assist, other than to make enquiries with Sevenoaks District Council and West Kent Housing Association with regard to ownership of the land and responsibility for maintenance.” RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 20th December 2023 and the recommendations contained therein, as amended, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

Cllr Perry Cole commented on the fact that the Precept had been increased last year and was being increased again for 2024/25.

Cllr Ramsay reported that the increase was necessary to cover the cost of the additional member of staff and predicted increases in the grass cutting and routine maintenance contracts for 2024/25.

9. Planning Committee

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 20th December 2023 and 3rd January 2024 and the recommendations contained therein, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

10. Precept 2024 – 2025

(a) Members considered a letter dated 15th December 2023, received from the Chief Finance Officer at Sevenoaks District Council.

Members noted that the tax base for 2024/25, has been estimated to be 2,586.69. The tax base for 2023/24 was 2,560.84.

RESOLVED:

That,

the letter dated 15th December 2023, received from the Chief Finance Officer at Sevenoaks District Council, advising of the estimated tax base for Hartley for 2024/25, be received and noted.

(b) Members considered the precept for 2024/25 and noted that the information relating to the Council's Precept request for 2024/25 had to be returned to Sevenoaks District Council by the end of January 2024.

Members noted that the precept will be paid as follows: 50% on 30th April 2024 and 50% on 30th September 2024.

RESOLVED:

That,

Sevenoaks District Council be advised that Hartley Parish Council wishes to increase the Precept from £160,390, to £188,797, based on a tax base of 2,586.69 for 2024/25, which will result in an increase in the Band D charge for 2024/25 from £62.63 to £72.99, (an increase of 16.5%).

Members noted that under amended regulations, any Town or Parish with a precept over £140,000, is required to provide a breakdown of its precept over the following services:

Highways
Planning & Economic Development
Recreation & Tourism
Other Services

11. Equal Opportunities Policy

The Committee considered a draft Equal Opportunities Policy for Hartley Parish Council.

RESOLVED:

That,

the Equal Opportunities Policy for Hartley Parish Council, attached as **Appendix 1** to these minutes, be approved and adopted.

12. Payments

RESOLVED:

That,

(a) the payment of accounts for January 2024, attached as **Appendix 2** to these minutes, be approved;

(b) the Council detail report as at 2nd January 2024, setting out actual income and expenditure against budgeted estimates be received and noted;

(c) it be noted that the bank reconciliations for the Council's 4 bank accounts and Barclaycard for November 2023 had been verified by Cllr Graeme and,

(d) it be noted that the bank reconciliations for the Council's four bank accounts and Barclaycard for December 2023 would be verified by Cllr Ross.

Cllr Brazier left the meeting at 8.40p.m.

Pursuant to Standing Order 3 (d), the public were excluded from the meeting during consideration of agenda item 13, Staff, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, relating to staff matters.

13. Staff

The Chairman reported that the interview selection process had been carried out by the Clerk, the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee on Monday 18th December 2023 and that the successful candidate had accepted the offer of employment.

The Chairman reported that satisfactory references had now been received.

The Clerk reported that advice had been sought from the Kent Pension Fund and that as the initial temporary contract is for exactly 3 months, the new member of staff would not need to be automatically enrolled, just made aware that they can opt in.

Should the contract be extended, they would need to be automatically enrolled from the date of extension, but would have the option to opt out should they so wish.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) Mrs Fiona Hughes be appointed to the position of Clerk's Assistant to Hartley Parish Council on a temporary 3 month fixed contract (with opportunity to become permanent), for 16 hours per week, to be worked over two days per week (initially Monday and Friday, but subject to change) at Local Government Grade LC (Points 13-17), commencing on Friday 2nd February 2024;

(2) the Temporary Three Month Employment Contract attached as **Appendix 3** to these minutes, be approved and,

(3) the information received from the Kent Pension Fund be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

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

HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Mrs H Boden
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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

OBJECTIVES

Hartley Parish Council is committed to oppose all forms of discrimination faced by people and is strongly committed to ensuring that all people have access to equality.

The Council as a corporate body, in partnership with staff, has responsibilities as an employer, service provider and a public authority. The Council will treat all its employees, members and customers with dignity and respect.

LEGAL POSITION

Under the **Equality Act 2010, Section 4**, it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following 'protected characteristics':

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Section 149 of the 2010 Act imposes a Duty on Parish Councils to take into account:

- To eliminate discrimination and harassment, victimisation and any conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- To foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

THE COUNCIL AS AN EMPLOYER

Hartley Parish Council is strongly committed to ensuring that selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability and will ensure that no employee, or potential employee receives less than favourable treatment and that where ever possible they are given the help they need to attain their full potential and to encourage the development of an environment in which all people's rights are respected. Hartley Parish Council will ensure that all staff receive a copy of the equal opportunities policy.

Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

SERVICE USERS/MEMBERS

Hartley Parish Council aims to provide its service users with assistance in an unbiased non-prejudicial manner which encourages a positive attitude to the rights of all individuals, groups and communities within the geographical area.

This policy is fully supported by all Members of the council.

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		13.36	-	13.36
Ref:	Payment to	Net	VAT	Total
	Schedule of Payments January 2024 - Paid by Barclaycard			
	Particulars			
	PAID 05/01/24 - Annual Data Protection Fee	40.00	-	40.00
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		40.00	-	40.00

