

HANNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes for Tuesday 20th September 2016 at 7.00 pm
Hannington Village Hall

1. Apologies for absence & declarations of interest

Apologies were received from County Cllr Keith Chapman and Cllr Donald Sherlock.

All Parish Councillors were present.

Three members of the public attended the meeting. Their main items of interest centred on:-

Agenda Items 17.a Transfer of registration of village green, 17b Maintenance of adopted roads and 17d Village fair 2017.

2. Minutes of Council Meeting held on 10th May February 2016

The Minutes, previously circulated to the Council and to the residents, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th May 2016;

These were available for information only, providing useful background information for any items elsewhere on the agenda. The Clerk advised that formal adoption of the Minutes is undertaken by the next Annual Parish Meeting to be held in 2017.

4. Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda).

4. a Review of actions sheet from previous February meeting

This item was deferred to the end of the meeting in order to identify what actions, if any, had not been addressed or satisfactorily resolved. The meeting agreed the 'status' of the items on the Action List, including those shown as being 'Completed' that could therefore be removed by the Clerk. The only items deemed to be outstanding that were not of an 'ongoing' nature were:-

- Freedom of Information and Data Protection drafting of PROCEDURES; policy agreed in August 2013!
- Upgrading Broadband (with Openreach etc.)
- Transfer of village green (with HCC legal)
- Creation of Parish Council website (with Clerk/JH)
- Flooding on Hannington Road (with BT Openreach HCC had cleared the drain on 3rd August)
- 'Unsuitable for HGV' signs in wrong position (with HCC Highways).

ACTION: Clerk to update 'Actions Outstanding List'

5. Correspondence (including)

5.a HALC e-updates incl Local Authorities Information Service (LAIS)

The Clerk confirmed that all relevant correspondence had been circulated to Cllrs in advance of the meeting and, where necessary, was included on the current Agenda.

5.b Any other items (of correspondence)

The Clerk confirmed that all relevant correspondence had been circulated to Cllrs in advance of the meeting.

6. Broadband (Update from Cllr Hertz):

As at 19th September 2016 from the HCC Broadband Programme. BT Openreach are re-planning the rollout of superfast broadband in Hampshire. The planning output will become available at the end of October. It is understood that 'three structures' are in the plan for Kingsclere Exchange. More

money is becoming available to extend the rollout to those hard to reach. Further details are expected in October.

Cllr Hertz is waiting for an update from BT Group as to the BT Openreach planning/analysis outcome following the Openreach survey conducted in early July 2016. This survey was to investigate an alternate route for the provision of fibre to the village for superfast broadband.

7. **Hannington Parish Website Development** (update Cllr Hertz)

Initially, Parishcouncil.net, a website package supplier, was shortlisted as the preferred organisation for the new Hannington Parish website that would comply with the Transparency Code. However, since 16th May the parish council, through Cllr Hertz) has not received either a response to its submission for a quote nor any acknowledgement to its telephone calls.

Given this situation, no viable alternative other than "HugoFox" has been found. This is the organisation that has already provided to Hannington PC and to its residents access to an automated website '*planning tool*' covering Hannington Parish. Cllr Hertz met with HugoFox management team in their Andover offices on 2nd August to discuss the various technical and functional aspects of their product. The outcome was that HugoFox were willing to develop additional functionality to enhance their website product. These innovations are supported by the project work they are undertaking with the HALC and with other councils within Hampshire.

Based upon Hannington Parish Council Clerk's suggested file organisational structure, as at the 30th August, a draft website framework has been constructed. 'Live file data' is yet to be loaded onto the website plus the Parish Clerk's introductory explanatory commentary as to what the data represents. The design detail for this is yet to be firmed up. At present, the website is 'fluid' and will change as we come to a final conclusion as to the framework and content.

The following website developments have been discussed with HugoFox which are currently under review by their developers;

- (i) ***BDBC Planning Tool*** – add '*Standard Consultation Expiry Date*'. Impact: this means that the Parish Clerk does not need to circulate the planning notice content and specifically the consultation expiry date.
- (ii) ***A visual calendar of meetings and events*** – ideally, with a list of Agenda and Minutes associated with a PC Meeting in the calendar entry. The visual aspects of the calendar are key from a user experience perspective – cross selling another event say, e.g. Michaels Field.
- (iii) ***Councillor's private secure login area*** – access to documents/reports that are under development or approval or private to the Cllrs due to regulatory criteria of some sort, e.g. data protection.
- (iv) ***A-Z / Services*** – Search function - for user speed of access to documents and services held on the website.
- (v) ***Online Consultations Editor*** - consultations to engage the local community, including consultation documents and summaries. Visitors can then leave their responses which will be automatically sent to the Clerk as an email [initially]. This development may potentially be enhanced to cover 'online voting' with real time status of the votes viewable to the whole community.
- (vi) ***Document Archive*** – viewable by the users of the website and to comply with 'regulations', some documents are required to be kept for 'ever' and others for instance for 6 years.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The meeting noted the detailed financial implications in the current year had been reported both in the formal written report (agenda item 7) and had been incorporated in the "Revised Budget

2016/17" (agenda item 19.c), and that there were no 'unfunded' costs anticipated in the current year.

CONCLUSION:

The expectation is that the website will go live before the end of the current year 2016/17.

8. Aims and Objectives of Parish Council

This item had been deferred from the May meeting with the action for the Clerk to produce a report.

The Chairman opened the discussion by saying the volume of paperwork had increased massively in the last four years. Analysing his in box, whereas he had received 300 emails in the year 2014/15, this had increased to nearer 1,300 emails in 2015/16. The workload being generated by HALC/NALC and by the various Government bodies and agencies, who do not distinguish readily between the smaller and the larger parish councils, was a key, but not the only factor, contributing to the heavy workload of the parish council. As an example, the Chairman cited the issues recently raised regarding health and safety in relation to the village green and the village fair (see agenda item 17.d). He considered the level of bureaucracy was now 'out of kilter' with the size of the parish and a budget of only £5k. Three parish councillors had full time employment and were struggling to cope with the volume of work, and to give the necessary consideration to the items being brought to them. His conclusion was there needed to be dramatic change or the parish council would cease to function effectively, or to even exist. His two concerns centred on the Parish Council:

- a) spending a disproportionate amount of its limited time and resources on meeting Aim C: "to be a well managed" at the expense of meeting its other two Aims A "to improve the development, appearance, and environment in which we live, and Aim B "to be a strong voice on behalf of the local people and businesses",
and,
- b) being over burdened with emails and paperwork.

With regards (a) being 'over managed'.

In response to the question from Cllr Hertz "what can be cut out?" the Clerk advised the meeting that a substantial amount of time and effort had been invested in recent years getting 'sound basics' in place such as Standing Orders (9.c), Financial Regulations (9.d), Risk Register (9.a), Skills Audit (9.b). If they did exist before there was a question as to whether or not they were 'fit for purpose'. Policies covering Data Protection and Freedom of Information had been established. Other Government bodies had imposed regulatory changes. For instance, HMRC now require Clerks to be 'employees', and as such are subject to tax and NI, whilst the Parish Council must now submit monthly online NIL tax returns, or suffer financial penalty. Similarly, the Pensions Regulator has now required 'employers' to offer a pension to its employees... including the Parish Clerk (agenda item 20.b). Failure to comply will again be met with financial penalty.

The Clerk advised that now these 'administrative' policies and procedures have been adopted and are in place, the documents would only need an annual review for any proposed changes, if any. He suggested that the bulk of the work has now been done, and he was only aware of the two further documents that were on that evening's agenda; Complaints Procedure (9.e) and Health & Safety Policy (16).

Does the Parish Council have a choice? Apart from those 'policies and procedures' that are primarily for internal management purpose e.g. SOs and FRs, 'failure to comply' can have serious financial consequences. For instance, there can be direct financial penalties i.e. HMRC/Pensions Regulator/Data Protection Registrar, and, although the Council has adequate insurance cover in

place, there is an expectation by the insurers that the Parish Council and its employees will act reasonably, especially with regards to risk management. This has been highlighted most recently with the advice from BDBC and other parties on the subject of health and safety especially in relation to the Council's assets i.e. public access and the use of the village green for the Village Fair.

Later in the agenda, the Clerk will be reporting that the Government Auditors have not issued their Auditor's Report 2015/16 as they have yet to decide if the Parish Council met its legal obligation last year to formally minute its 'approval' to the Risk Register... which it is required to do at least once a year.

With regards (b) 'too much paper work'

In addition to the effect of reviewing, agreeing to and introducing the above policies and regulations, Parish Councils were informed by HALC recently that under the 'Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities' they were required to not only issue/circulate the Parish Council agenda and minutes to residents, but also all supporting papers. In the past, the Agenda simply identified where there were supporting reports. In the absence of a Parish Council website, the Clerk was only able to meet this requirement through the kind support of 'Barbaramail'. With 21 items on the agenda and 17 supporting papers, this was excessive and burdensome for all: the Clerk in writing the reports, Barbara MacMurchy in circulating them and Cllrs and residents in reading them. It was suggested at the meeting that the pure volume of reports had probably had an adverse effect. Residents did not read them, and if they did... would not come to the meeting!

Cllr Hertz suggested that the process of communicating with residents would be substantially streamlined once the Hannington Parish Council website went live later in the year (Agenda item 7).

The Council **AGREED:**

- a. the Clerk would look to circulating either weekly/monthly a simple statement of items for consideration, rather than issuing them as they arose. Items with tight deadlines might still have to be circulated 'as received', and,
- b. the Parish Councillors would monitor the volume of emails they received and their workload, and would consider the issue again at its December meeting.

Aims and Objectives of Parish Council (substantive document)

The Council **AGREED:**

- 1. "The Parish Council's VISION is to improve the Quality of Life for people of the Parish; building upon the character and community spirit within the Parish, addressing their needs and encouraging all social sectors of the community to develop as an inclusive and vibrant community."**

The Council **AGREED:**

2. The Parish Council's THREE AIMS are:

- i. To improve the development, appearance, and environment in which we live; ensuring that these changes do not cause future harm.*
- ii. To be a strong voice on behalf of the local people and businesses, representing their views.*
- iii. To be well managed; providing sound governance and financial management, and be an exemplar employer".*

The Council then **AGREED** that in order to achieve these AIMS, the Council would look to deliver the following OBJECTIVES... subject to the need for further detailed discussion as necessary e.g. 1.1 to develop a Neighbourhood Plan (see Minute 10).

2. The **Parish Council's OBJECTIVES** are:

Aim i: To improve the development, appearance, and environment in which we live; ensuring that these changes do not cause future harm.

- 1.1 *To develop a Neighbourhood Plan; involving local residents, businesses and organisations.*
- 1.2 *To develop and support business and economic activity in the parish; including the encouragement of local residents to use local services, and actively support the improvement of broadband and mobile services.*
- 1.3 *To support the work of village and voluntary organisations; through access to BDBC and parish grants, providing practical support where appropriate.*
- 1.4 *To work with the BDBC and HCC to provide safe, healthy and timely opportunities for recreation, leisure and education; by adding value to their statutory activities.*
- 1.5 *To promote a safer community through liaison with HCC Highways Dept, local Police and the Neighborhood Watch.*
- 1.6 *To improve and maintain public recreation space e.g. village green, Michael's Field, and the local footpath/bridleway network.*

Aim ii: To be a strong voice on behalf of the local people and businesses, representing their views.

- 2.1 *To communicate with our residents, relate their views, needs and aspirations to the appropriate statutory and non-governmental bodies. To work with these organisations to ensure services and future development are responsive to local needs.*
- 2.2 *To increase public involvement through being open, transparent and accountable to our residents by:*
 - a. *providing a public forum at every Parish Council meeting,*
 - b. *facilitating the Annual Parish Meeting,*
 - c. *consulting those affected on planning applications and other matters,*
 - d. *reporting our activities, finances etc. through Noticeboards, the Hannington web site and the Hannington village email network; and seeking feedback.*
- 2.3 *To respond on time to all planning applications and other statutory consultations.*

Aim iii: To be well managed; providing sound governance and financial management, and be an exemplar employer.

- 3.1 *To maintain up-to-date Governance documents e.g. Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Register, etc. that comply with latest guidance and are fit-for-purpose.*
- 3.2 *To produce and circulate comprehensive and timely Council Agendas, Discussion Papers and Minutes to Cllrs and residents.*
- 3.3 *To reach sound decisions; taking into account all the information necessary.*
- 3.3 *To maintain detailed and accurate budget statements and financial records that comply with the Council's Financial Regulations, and to produce timely Final Accounts that are to the satisfaction of the internal and external auditors.*
- 3.4 *To ensure that the Council complies with Government rules and regulations as to its management e.g. risk management, insurance cover, 'open government and transparency'.*

Whilst the contents of the 'Risk Register' had been discussed, amended and agreed at its meeting in September 2015, the Parish Council had recognised at that meeting a discussion on risks would have better resonance if the risks were linked to the Aims and Objectives of the Parish Council. In other words, it would be beneficial to identify, "what risks the Parish Council has in delivering its

aims/objectives', whilst at the same time giving less weight, if any, to a 'risk' that did not, in fact, adversely affect delivery of an aim/objective!

To this end, the Clerk had produced a further paper that linked the previously identified risks (Risk Register) to the aims/objectives that had been identified in this report. (see Minute 9.a below).

9. **Review of Governance Documents... compliance with Standing Order 2.**

9.a Risk Register

The Clerk reported that, at the time of the meeting, he had not received the final report from the 'external' auditors on the Final Accounts 2015/16. He has since received their report dated 21 September. They reported a single 'issue'; that for 2015/16 *'The risk assessment was reviewed during the year, however was not accepted during the year. This is contrary to Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015'*. The Parish Council, in earlier written communication with the auditors have disputed the auditor's interpretation of the relevant Parish Council Minute. Whilst the external auditor has not changed his conclusion, he has NOT followed through with a 'qualified audit opinion', as originally mooted.

ACTION: The Council MUST 'approve' the risk assessment ie Risk Register in each financial year.

The Clerk had circulated in advance of the meeting the latest version of the Risk Register. This version took into account the changes agreed in 2015/16, and other known and anticipated changes that had arisen since then eg risks following the resignation of the Clerk, provision of salt bins and the question of a Neighbourhood Plan (Agenda item 10).

The Council **AGREED** the Risk Register, without further amendment.

At the same time, the Council NOTED that risk related issues with regards the Village Green (agenda item 16) and Events/Village Fair (17.d) were dealt with elsewhere on the agenda, which might require changes to the Risk Register at a later date. These centred on:-

a. recommending the approval of a Health and Safety Policy 'on which subsequent and more detailed and related strategies and documentation eg risk assessments can be constructed'.(see agenda item 16).

b. Cllr Hertz had drafted a 'risk assessment for the village green', pending formal transfer of registration from Kingsclere PC to Hannington PC. The draft page of the risk register identified potential risks of:

- i) Trips, slips and falls (low),
- ii) Health hazard – disease; dog excrement (high),
- iii) Collision hazard (low),
- iv) Utilities (low), and,
- v) Events (medium).

Even though responsibility for the village green had not yet been transferred, the Council **AGREED:**

- * in relation to (b.i above) Councillors would personally assess the potential severity of the broken concrete posts, flint stones and uneven grass,
- * Clerk to publish a reminder to dog owners in the parish of their legal responsibilities with regards their dogs fouling public spaces, and,
- * the Parish Council to require the production of an Event Management Safety Plan for the Village Fair 2017, and, once satisfied, would issue of a Licence for the village green's use (agenda item 17.d).

9.b Skills Audit

The Clerk had circulated an amended version of the Skills Audit. He drew the Council's attention to those skills where the Council was reliant upon the Clerk, advising that the Council would need to take those 'gaps' into account when appointing the new Clerk. The framework document identified 'third parties' who were available to provide advice and support, if necessary. The exception had been H&S. However, recent discussions with BDBC regarding Health & Safety/Village Fair etc had identified support on that topic.

9.c Standing Orders

The current Standing Orders were last updated in January 2016 to reflect the decisions taken with regards the role and duties of the Clerk.

The Council **AGREED** the current version, noting that the Clerk may need to draft changes to reflect the Complaints Procedure (agenda item 9e) later in the agenda, and to update the duties of the Parish Clerk in relation to being the Health & Safety Officer.

9.d Financial Regulations

The current Financial Regulations were amended in January 2016, in line with recommendations issued by NALC.

NALC issued its latest advice in May 2016. These were circulated by HALC in July.

The Council **AGREED** the two changes proposed by NALC:-

Para 1.6 is amended to provide for the possibility of disciplinary action in the breach of regulations, rather than a definitive statement as to gross conduct.

Para 6.3 is re-written to apply more generally than in respect of 'disclosable interests', and also requiring that the Clerk counter-signs cheques (certifying their accuracy etc) as well as the two Councillors (authorising their payment).

The new wording for the two paragraphs was included in the report to Council.

ACTION: Clerk to amend the FRs accordingly.

9.e Complaints Procedure

The Clerk had circulated a report in advance of the meeting.

Council AGREED to adopt the:-

- i. Complaints Policy, and
- ii. Complaints Procedure.

ACTION: Clerk to circulate the agreed Complaints Policy and Procedure to residents.

On a related matter, the Clerk reminded the Parish Council that Standing Order 25 deals with 'Allegations of Breaches of the Code of Conduct'. This Standing Order applies to Councillors.

ACTION: Clerk to review Standing Orders as to whether or not it needs to be amended for the new Complaints Procedure and to amend the job description of the Clerk.

10. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Taylor introduced this item, explaining that a fundamental prerequisite of a NP is that it actively identifies potential sites for development. It cannot start with the premise, "no development here"; even if the higher tier of the Borough Plan has, itself, NOT identified target growth in that parish. This is the case with regards BDBC Local Plan and Hannington Parish, where there is no target for new build/development in their Local Plan. Therefore beware of the consequences of constructing a NP.

It is argued that where you have an approved NP with designated areas of growth/development, it affords 'protection' from proposals to develop elsewhere within the parish. Whilst this may be the

case, the starting point is that the neighbourhood plan HAS identified alternative sites for growth/development.

Cllr Taylor drew attention to the protection afforded much of the parish due to it being situated within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and/or Conservation Area.

The absence of a NP would not result in 'stagnation' as there remains the option of appropriate in-fill for residential and re-designation of current use for light industry etc.

Whilst advice and help can be sought from BDBC, it is likely that Hannington Parish Council would need to employ specialist professional advice. The typical cost of the production of a Neighbourhood Plan is in the region of £20k.

The Council **AGREED** not to actively proceed with the construction of a Neighbourhood Plan, but to review the position on an annual basis.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: the decision to 'not proceed' releases £1,000 budgeted in the current year (see agenda item 19.c).

11. Options for Local Government in Hampshire and IOW.

The Clerk informed the meeting that a copy of the Letter from Roy Perry, Leader of Hampshire County Council together with the Summary Report had been circulated to residents 27th July. This was followed a few days later with more detailed communications, and an invitation to parish councils to attend one of their workshops. Cllr Hertz attended the seminar held on 12th September. He provided a useful summary of his conclusions from the meeting. His main message was *"I am sure that the HCC expenditure cuts to-date nominally registers with all the parish councillors but not the trend to 2020 where the 'hard landing' will really see the overall impact of the accumulated funding cuts on currently 'accepted' services"*. In addition to the present HCC Cost Reduction Cycle of £98m by 2017, a further HCC cost reduction cycle of £140m by 2019 is planned. His more detailed notes are reproduced in full as Appendix I to these Minutes.

The Clerk also advised members of two considerations:-

- i. that his understanding was that BDBC had a relatively strong financial position with assets generating annual investment income. As a result, BDBC had not been as badly hit with the reductions in central government funding as had most other Borough Councils. Therefore, any 'merger' of BDBC with other Councils, to form a larger 'unitary authority', would inevitably spread and therefore dilute BDBC's financial resources.
- ii. The counter argument is that merging Councils would reduce unnecessary duplication especially in 'bureaucracy', and thereby reduce costs. However, larger Councils would be more 'distant' from its service users, and to overcome this might establish 'regions' within the unitary authority i.e. 'Board' representation drawn from each of the parish councils to provide a mid-tier organisation in place of, e.g. BDBC.

12. Public Observations: None

13. County Councillors Report: None

14. Borough Councillors Report: None

15. Planning Applications

15.a The Review of planning control sheet.

Cllrs and residents had been informed of the new Hannington Parish Tracker app [Hugo Fox] that provided updates on planning applications within the Parish. The meeting noted the success of this app, and the Clerk had ceased maintaining the planning control sheet.

NOTED.

15.b Planning Applications to be considered.

No objections had been received from Cllrs or from residents with regards recently circulated planning applications. One planning application for Yew Tree Cottage had been received from BDBC only days before the parish council meeting. The Clerk informed the meeting that in accordance with its Standing Orders, this planning application could not be discussed, and would have to be addressed via email correspondence.

ACTION: None

16. Health & Safety Policy

Cllr Hertz informed the meeting he had met with Jade Poulton, Events Officer, BDBC and Paul Beaumont, Corporate Health and Safety Advisor, BDBC on the 19th August 2016. The key regulatory points that came out of the meeting were:-

a. Draft H&S POLICY

Hannington Parish Council as an employer should have a Health & Safety Policy, particularly as it anticipates having registration soon of the asset of the Village Green which is open to public access. A draft H&S Policy has been developed and was circulated by parish clerk in advance of the meeting.

DECISION: the Council adopted the draft Health and Safety Policy.

b. Draft Risk Assessment village green.

In anticipation of this registration, a risk assessment of the Village Green had been undertaken with proposed actions to reduce the risk to the public where it is reasonable and practicable to do so. The highest scoring risk identified was that of dog excrement, particularly for children playing on the green. An enquiry has been initiated to Kuldeep Channa, Principal Lawyer, BDBC to find out if the Village Green can be included in a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), should it decide at some future date to take this course of action. The draft Village Green Risk Assessment was circulated by the clerk in advance of the meeting.

DECISION: This item was discussed in greater detail at agenda item 9.a.b. where the decision taken has been minuted.

c. Village Green / Events

Where events are held on the Village Green with the permission of the Hannington Parish Council, an '*Event Management Safety Plan*' should be requested from the event organisers. A draft template for the *Event Management Safety Plan* has been issued to the parish clerk and was circulated in advance of the meeting.

NOTED

On the 1st September, Paul Beaumont, Health and Safety Advisor to BDBC responded to H&S questions raised by Cllr Hertz relating to the regulatory responsibilities of Hannington Parish Council and those of event organisers using land owned by the HPC. The detailed response has been circulated to the Clerk.

DECISION: the Council agreed the need to issue a Licence

ACTION: Cllrs to provide the Clerk with any suggested changes to the format and content of the draft Licence

17. Village Green

17 a. Transfer of registration – update

The latest email from Linda Heron, HCC Legal Services 25 August said, *"My initial application to the Land Registry was rejected; I have prepared the additional forms required by the Land Registry and*

have re-submitted the application on 8 June (copy application attached). I have since received an acknowledgement from the Land Registry but to date yet to hear from them further and I have chased today.

I note you are looking to finalise this matter in September; I will certainly keep chasing the Land Registry but unfortunately I am unable to estimate how long they are likely to take in completing the application for registration.

With regard to legal fees, I intend to submit an invoice in the agreed amount on completion of this matter. With the exception of £40 Land Registry fee for registration I am not aware of any additional costs at this time."

NOTED

17.b Maintenance of unadopted roads

The meeting noted the previous discussions at both the last Council meeting 10th May and at the Annual Parish meeting 24th May. Cllr Hertz had been advised by HCC Highways that one could anticipate a normal road surface starting to crack after 10 years and a further 10 years before 'crumbling'. HCC Highways have estimated the overall cost of maintaining and then 'remaking' the two unadopted roads over the period is £14,000 ie an average cost per annum of £700. This figure comprises patching £1,500 (£150 x 10 years), resurfacing after 10 years £2,000, and 'remake' after 20 years £10,500.

DECISION: Without prejudicing any subsequent decision, the Council agreed in principle to create a 'Sinking Fund' for the 'Provision for Repair and Maintenance of Unadopted Roads'. This Fund could be 'kick started' by the allocation of the £1,000 that was no longer planned to be incurred on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan (see agenda item 10).

ACTION: Chairman to calculate the appropriate annual contribution.

ACTION: Clerk to record £1,000 in the Final Accounts 2016/17 as a 'Provision for Repair and Maintenance of Unadopted Roads' .

17.c Parking on village green

The Council noted that the intervention offered by Pat and Pippa Sarsfield-Hall with regards notices etc when 'events' were being held either in the church or in its vicinity appeared to have substantially reduced the problem. The Clerk had been informed by Pat that his attempts to recover costs from vehicle owners who had caused damage to the green had been unsuccessful. The Council accepted that the actions necessary to prevent ad hoc 'non residents' from parking on the green, such as further posts and barriers, signage etc would be excessive and therefore unacceptable; at this time.

DECISION: no action to be taken, but situation to be monitored.

17.d Village fair 2017

The issues regarding health and safety were discussed and have been recorded elsewhere on the agenda. Discussion centred on the 'insurance' issues. The Council welcomed William Kinnear who was advising the Fair on insurance matters. He informed the meeting that their cover included the specific the risks following from road closure and the hanging of banners from bridges etc, as well as £10m public liability and volunteers.

Whilst, it was possible that the parish council's insurance cover for 'Events' might be of use, it was recognised that many of the stalls were not being held on the village green 'owned by the Council', but on surrounding land owned by residents.

DECISION:

The Council and Mr Kinnear, on behalf of the Fair Management Cttee, agreed it would be best for the Fair Management Cttee to continue, as at present, to arrange all its own insurances.

18. Roads, Footpaths & Bridleways Officer's report

18.a Update on highways matters (Cllr Hertz)

Cllr Hertz reported he had liaised with HCC Highways Dept on the following

- i. **Rubble on road:** 7th July, re-opened Track-it No. 21183437 at map ref SU5465756562 adjacent to the crossing of the bridleway and Summer Down Lane. 30 metres of road silt, stone and debris across the road. Debris is swept down Summer Down Lane by the rain and accumulates at this point. Presents a Safety issue to traffic when breaking on this bend. As at 28th July, this has been assigned to a contractor to progress – *now part of the 'on jet patching' programme*. Re input by call centre.
- ii. **Road Verge:** 7th July, re-opened Track-it No. 21189056 at map ref SU5476756633 on Summer Down Lane. The washed away road verge is on the left hand side at the edge when looking in the direction of the A339. Presents a Safety risk to unwary motorists particularly at night. As at 8th August, contractor committed Job No. 11045085. Closed 8th September 2016. NOT DONE. Re input by call centre.
- iii. **Road Surface abysmal and unsafe:** 15th July, raised Track-it No. 21237166 at the same location of Track-it No. 21183437 map ref SU5465756562 adjacent to the crossing of the bridleway and Summer Down Lane some 30 metres of road surface is grooved and pitted to the extent that it is abysmal and unsafe for traffic. Completed by Contractor 25th August Job No. 11044875. NOT DONE. Re input by call centre.

Subsequent to the PC meeting, Cllr Hertz met with Steve Goodall (Highways) on the 29th Sept to progress the above items, and the relocation of the HGV sign on Meadham Lane.

18.b Update on Footpaths and Bridleways (Cllr Jardine-Brown)

Cllr Jardine-Brown advised that a section of a Byway at Ibworth was continually flooded last winter. She was not aware of any other problems in the parish.

ACTION: Clerk to remind villagers that they are to inform Cllrs Jardine-Brown or Clare Kinnear of any problems.

Concern was raised with regards the 'state' of the path by the side of Michael's Field.

ACTION: Cllr Hertz to contact the landowner to discuss possible resolution.

Cllr Hertz reported:

- i. *Countryside Priority Cuts* (for promoted paths) completed as at 20th September 2016. Four additional paths to be nominated for cutting.

Paths Cut by the Countryside team:		Paths Cut by the Contractor:	
7129	7110	Contractors as at 20 th Sep 16	<u>4 other (additional) paths to be picked for cutting this year i.e. not promoted paths.</u> Ref. Lisa Graves.
7102	506	7105 15 th Aug Done	
7117	7130	7101 15 th Aug Done	
7118		+4 new ones	
792			

ii. *North Oakley Kissing Gate*: This gate had an issue with not automatically closing thus potentially allowing stock to escape. The Countryside Team i.e. Emma Broadbent and Rambler volunteers re-installed the gate successfully on the 7th June '16

iii. *Freemantle Park Down, Kissing Gate* on the junction of FP94/FP96. This gate has settled, it has an issue with not automatically closing thus allowing stock to escape. The problem was rectified on the 14th September by the Ramblers volunteers and Countryside team.

iv. *Freemantle Park Down, Footpath 94 tree obstructions*: This path was to be severely cleared of tree obstructions last autumn. However, this task has been 'resurrected' and is now rescheduled to be undertaken in October/November '16 by the Countryside Team and volunteers when available. Emma Broadbent Countryside Team is the contact.

18.c Lengthsman Scheme (Cllr Hertz)

Cllr Hertz reported that Mike Pillans, HCC Highways has confirmed that all of the parishes who belong to the Lengthsman Scheme are covered by the HCC Public Liability Insurance. HCC are awaiting the revised form of words covering PLI from HCC Legal to finalise the Lengthsman contract between the Pamber and Hannington parishes. As members of the scheme, Hannington Parish Council will have access annually to £1,000 worth of labour. The immediate aim is to replace missing finger posts which are at the junction of a footpath/bridleway and the highway (HCC Countryside constraint) by using the Lengthsman facilities.

Cllr Kinnear identified the following signage that required repair/replacement:-

- i. Finger post needs replacing FP 7105 junction at English Wood,
- ii. Finger post needs replacing FP 7118 road end,
- iii. Finger post needs replacing FP 7101/7100 junction, and,
- iv. Finger post needs replacing FP 504 by junction of BW7110 and BW 7109

ACTION: Cllr Hertz to liaise with HCC re having the work completed under the Lengthsman Scheme.

19. Finance & Audit

19.a Final Accounts 2015/16: Auditor's Report

i. 'External' audit

The Clerk reported that, at the time of the Council meeting (20th September), he had not received the report from the 'external' auditors on the Final Accounts 2015/16.

He has since received their report dated 21 September. The auditors reported a single 'issue'... that for 2015/16 *'The risk assessment was reviewed during the year, however was not accepted [by the Council] during the year. This is contrary to Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015'*. See Minute reference 9a above re the decisions and actions with regards risk management.

The auditor's reported *"no other matters came to our attention"*.

The auditors took the opportunity to remind the Clerk of the need for the Council to address the issues that had been raised by the 'internal' auditors.

External audit fee

Accompanying the audit report was a fee of £100 plus £35 costs for additional correspondence (both plus VAT), totalling £162.00. This is the first ever invoice from the 'external' auditors. The Clerk has questioned the validity and appropriateness of their charges, and as at 28th Sept, is awaiting their response. [Response received from BDO 11th October is attached to their invoice.]

Public Notice of Conclusion of Audit

The external auditors have also informed the Clerk of the need for the Council to notify the public of the 'Conclusion of the Audit' as at 19 September and that 'the accounts are now available for inspection by electors. The Clerk advises that this 'public notification' has already taken place, with an email to all residents on 10th June (see Appendix II). Following further advice from the auditors the deadline for public inspection was extended to 22nd July. The Clerk reported he had received no questions from the public.

ACTION: Clerk to, once again, inform the public of the 'Notice of Conclusion of Audit'.

ii. 'Internal' audit

The internal auditors submitted their report on 6th June. It is a requirement that the findings of the audit report is submitted to the Council, and action to address any issues is agreed. The auditors reported,

"We have concluded that, on the basis of the satisfactory conclusion of our annual programme of work, the Council has again maintained adequate and effective internal control arrangements.

We have completed and signed the 'Internal Audit Report' in the year's Annual Return, having concluded that, in all significant respects, excluding that relating to risk assessments, the control objectives set out in that Report were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council. As the Council had not formally finalised its assessment of risk within the financial year and, consequently, adopted the registers, we are duty bound to record a "NO" response in that respect."

With regards the internal auditor's detailed findings and recommendations:

a. Review of Corporate Governance

Conclusions and recommendations

Whilst we are pleased to record that no significant issues exist at present affecting our sign-off of the year's Annual Return, we consider that the Council's extant governance documentation should be further reviewed and brought fully into line with the NALC model documents, also ensuring that a consistent value is recorded and applied for formal tender action and suggest that the value be set at £1,000.

R1. The Council should undertake a further review of its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, bringing both into line with the latest NALC model documents.

R2. The revised documents should be consistent in identifying the value at which formal tender action is required.

ACTION: a review of the Standing Orders is covered elsewhere on the Agenda (9.c and 9.d). The Clerk reports that these recommendations have been actioned

b. Budgetary Control & Reserves

Conclusions

No issues arise in this area of our review this year warranting formal comment, although, as indicated last year, we suggest that members continue to closely monitor the value of funds held and ensure that they do not increase to an unrealistic level.

ACTION: Clerk has referred to the issue of perceived high year end balances in his report at agenda item 19.c "Revised Budget 2016/17." The Council decision at 17.b to create a "Provision for repair and maintenance of unadopted roads" will effectively reduce the general reserve.

c. Review of Expenditure & VAT

Conclusions and recommendations

We are pleased to report that no significant issues have been identified in this area, although, in line with best practice, we suggest that consideration be given to the acquisition of a rubber certification stamp to be affixed to each invoice. Ideally, the stamp should provide for the clerk's initials confirming receipt of goods and services and the arithmetic accuracy of the invoice; the initials of both members approving the payment; the date and cheque / unique reference number of the payment being processed.

R3. In line with best practice, a suitably designed rubber stamp should be acquired and be affixed to each invoice / payment document evidencing the effective review and approval for payment.

ACTION: since notification of this recommendation, ALL invoices have been 'certified' as to their accuracy etc by the Clerk, prior to them being submitted to Cllrs for 'authorisation' of payment.

d. Asset Registers

Conclusions

The Council has continued to comply with requirements to maintain a fixed asset register and to ensure all assets detailed on it are recorded appropriately in the year's Annual Return.

ACTION: This is addressed at agenda item 19b below.

19.b Fixed Asset Register

The Clerk circulated the Asset Register as at 31 March 2015. Members agreed the following two changes, and agreed the remaining assets remain unamended.

- i. write off all seats with the exception of the seat situated at the junction of White Lane that was installed in 2014/15.

ACTION: Clerk to reduce asset value from £2,169 to £287 being the cost of the seat net of VAT.

- ii. write off the bus shelter. The bus shelter is situated outside the parish boundary on the A34. The original bus shelter, erected by Hannington Parish Council, has now been replaced with a new one funded by the County Council.

ACTION: Clerk to remove the asset value £2,560.

As a result of the above two decisions, the adjusted Asset Value would reduce from £18,694 as at 31 March 2016 to a predicted £14,252 (bench £287, notice boards £3,728, Millennium Milestone £6,274 and Wellhead £3,963) as at 31 March 2017.

19.c Revised Budget 2016/17 incl Financial Update

The Clerk circulated an updated financial statement together with a cover report in advance of the meeting. The Council noted the three changes in the Revised Budget namely:-

- i. the increase in the Clerk's salary,
- ii. the cost of setting up and administering the website, and
- iii. the legal costs for the registration of the village green.

The net effect of these three changes and other minor adjustments is to increase the cash balance as at 31 March 2017 by £755; from the originally budgeted £5,410 to £6,165.

The Clerk's report included a section on 'COMMENT on the level of cash balances' referring to the concerns raised previously re an apparently 'high' level of cash balances. The Council noted the comments from the auditors and the advice from the Clerk. The decision earlier in the meeting to create a 'Provision for the repair and maintenance of Unadopted roads' using the £1,000 released by the decision not to proceed in the current year with the design of a Neighbourhood Plan. This would NOT affect the cash balance at the yearend but would reduce the 'General Reserve' from the £6,165 reported above to £5,165.

DECISION: The Council would, as in previous years, take into account the level of predicted year end cash balance when deciding on the level of Precept for 2017/18.

19.d Invoices for approval

The Clerk reported to Council the FOUR payments that had been authorised by Cllrs since the last meeting 10th May:-Clerk's salary for first quarter £758 inclusive of HMRC tax; being made of two cheques 341 and 342 dated 1st June 2016,

- a. HALC book 'Affordable Rural Housing' £3.00 cheque number 343 dated 10th June 2016,
- b. Payment to Auditing Solutions for internal audit fees £234.00 cheque number 344 dated 6th June. ,
- c. Payment for hire of village hall on 10th and 24th May £25.00 cheque number 345 dated 3rd August 2016. This covers the Parish Council meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Clerk also advised Council of the following payments that would be due in the immediate future; Clerk's salary for the second quarter, HALC training course attended by Cllr Hertz 'Local Council Finance and the car allowance for attendance at the course, maintenance of village green, and the two subscriptions for Data Protection Registration and membership of CPRE.

ACTION: Clerk to process cheques for payment as and when appropriate invoices etc are received.

20. Clerk's Contract

20.a Remuneration 2016/17 and 2017/18

The Parish Council recently decided to align the Clerk's pay to the National Pay Scales, resulting in the then current pay scale of £11.55 per hour x 5 hours per week; salary of £3,003 per annum.

In May, the Clerk was informed of the 'NALC 2016-2018 National Salary Award' which took effect from 1st April 2016. The new pay scales are:-

wef 1st April '16: SCP 25 £11.660 per hour; £3,031.60 per annum, an increase of 1%

wef 1st April '17: SCP 25 £11.777 per hour; £3,062.02 per annum, a further increase of 1%

DECISION: Council agreed by email to the application of the new rates, to be applied to the first quarter's payment.

20.b Compliance with Pensions Regulations

The Clerk circulated a report in advance of the meeting. He had received notification from the Pensions Regulator that their records showed Hannington Parish Council operated a Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) scheme but does not employ any staff. They required that *"if you are currently employing staff, you will need to inform us as soon as possible. This is so that we can confirm when automatic enrolment will start to apply to you as you will have duties to fulfil under the Pensions Act 2008"*. The Clerk provided the Regulator with the necessary information.

Further clarification was sought as to the legal responsibilities of the Council.

CONCLUSION:

The current Clerk is NOT 'eligible' for AUTOMATIC enrolment due to BOTH

- his age (exceeds state pension age)
and
- his earnings are below the earnings trigger for automatic enrolment.

However, as the Clerk is under 74 and his pay is below the earnings trigger for automatic enrolment, he COULD opt in to a pension scheme... which the employer (HPC) is obliged to offer!

Whilst the current Clerk has confirmed to the Chairman, his 'employer', that he does NOT wish to opt in to a Parish Council pension scheme, the Parish Council must consider its obligations under the Pensions Act 2008 **for any future Clerk**.

DECISION: Noted

20.c Notice of Resignation of Clerk

On 1st August, the Clerk informed the Chairman in writing of his decision to retire.

ACTION: Clerk to forward the latest versions of the contract of employment, job description and person specification to the Chairman.

ACTION: Chairman to take immediate steps to recruit a new Clerk.

21. Dates for meetings 2016/17 and 2017/18

21.a Parish Council meetings

Tuesday 13th December 2016

Tuesday 21st February 2017

For the Council year 2017/18, starting on 1st April, the first meeting of the Parish Council is usually held on the second Tuesday in May. This provides sufficient time for the Clerk to produce the Final Accounts of the previous year for the approval of the Council This would suggest a date of Tuesday 9th May 2017.

The second meeting in the year is generally held in September, four months later.

21.b Annual Parish Meeting 2017

Under the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 Schedule (Sch.) 12 section 14 (1), the Annual Parish Meeting MUST be held between 1st March and 1st June.

From experience gained in the current year, it would appear to be most beneficial for the Annual Parish Meeting to be held before an appropriate Council meeting, rather than after. That being the case, the meeting could be held some time in early/middle April 2017.

DECISION: Council to consider at its meeting in December 2016 the dates of the meetings to be held in 2017/18.

'The Future of Local Government in Hampshire' - Workshops for Hampshire's Parish and Town Councils.

Jan Hertz attended the workshop on the 12th September. The event was led by John Coughlan, Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team.

The workshop outcomes and presentation materials will be published once all 5 workshop events are completed sometime in October. The first workshop discussed the type of structures that could be put in place in the event that HCC became, e.g. a Unitary Authority i.e. BDBC would no longer exist. The second workshop was aimed at discussing what options Parish and Town Councils had for taking on community endeavours,

- Monitoring current services (what we do today)
- Joint delivery / service agreements (e.g. Lengthsmen scheme)
- Agency agreements
- Devolved service delivery
- Full service / asset transfer

Cllr Hertz's take on the workshop event:

From listening to the very wide variety of views at the workshop, I am sure that the HCC expenditure cuts to-date nominally registers with all the parish councillors but not the trend to 2020 where the *'hard landing'* will really see the overall impact of the accumulated funding cuts on currently 'accepted' services. In addition to the present HCC Cost Reduction Cycle of £98m by 2017, a further HCC cost reduction cycle of £140m by 2019 is planned.

For whatever reason, e.g. lack of knowledge, I detect a general ambivalence by parish council compatriots to accept, consider and think strategically about the obvious downward financial trends (shifting priorities) and the longer term impact on the local community. I think Steven Lugg's (Chief Exec, HALC) oblique reference to *'shifting deck chairs'* in his presentation without stating *'while the Titanic sinks'* is somehow appropriate.

I believe that HCC have an unbelievably enormous uphill task to successfully engage with many of those parish councils that are historically predisposed to *'kicking the tin down the road'* and culturally not skilled in picking up on new initiatives – but do an absolutely great job in *'monitoring the services'* i.e. the expected insular passive rather than active engagement.

Dear residents,

The deadline for publishing Parish Council financial information for their 2015-16 Accounts is 1 July 2016.

Parish Council's are required to publish the following information (online) every year:

- All items of expenditure above £100
- End of year accounts
- Annual governance statement
- Internal audit report
- List of Councillor's responsibilities
- The details of public land and building assets

Hannington PC is complying with this requirement as follows:-

a) All items of expenditure above £100

There were eleven such payments in the year. Attached is a copy of the expenditure side of the Cash Book. It lists ALL payments made by HPC in the year. This document was sent to the Internal Auditors as part of the supporting papers.

b) End of Year Accounts

This was circulated to residents 1st April, but is copied again as an attachment.

c) Annual Governance Statement

This is a standard, two page document that has to be completed and signed by the Clerk and the Chairman. A copy of the two page document is attached. It was signed by the Chairman at the Parish Council meeting 14th May. The original, signed copy is with the Internal Auditors.

d) Internal audit report

This document was circulated to residents on Thursday 9th June.

e) List of Councillor's responsibilities

The Parish Council has NOT delegated any responsibilities to individual Cllrs. However, some Cllrs have 'lead' responsibility on certain topics eg Cllr Janusz Hetz (Broadband, Stiles to Gates initiative) Cllrs Clare Kinnear and Karin Jardine-Brown (footpaths).

f) The details of public land and building assets

The Parish Council does not currently own any land, but is in the process of transferring registration of the Village Green from Kingsclere Parish Council. Attached is a copy of the Fixed Asset Register. A copy of this document was sent to the internal auditors as part of the supporting papers.

If you have questions on the content of any of the documents, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Chris Pottinger,

Clerk, Hannington Parish Council