

# HARTLIP PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES of the Meeting held at Hartlip Village Hall on Wednesday 8 March 2023 from 8pm until 9.35pm

### **Present:**

Chairman: Cllr Graham Addicott OBE

Cllr Paul White

Cllr Peter Boundy

Cllr John Davies

Cllr John Wright

Parish Clerk: Tracy Still

### **Also Present:**

County Cllr Mike Baldock

### **23/33 Apologies for Absence**

Absent with Apologies: Cllr Sharon Black (holiday)

Cllr Melanie Rose (work commitment)

Absent without Apology: NONE

External Absence with Apologies: Borough Cllr Alan Horton

Borough Cllr Richard Palmer

External Absence without Apologies: PCSO Kirsty Linge

### **23/34 Declarations of Interest**

The Chairman remind Councillors of their duty to declare any interests.

### **23/35 Confirmation of the Minutes**

The minutes of the monthly Parish Council Meeting of 8 February 2023 were proposed by Cllr Paul White and seconded by Cllr John Wright.

All Councillors in attendance at the February meeting were in agreement that the minutes were a true and accurate record.

The Chairman signed the minutes as required under the Local Government Act 1972 (sch. 12).

## **23/36 Matters arising from the Minutes**

23/21

Cllr Wright reported that the quotation for hedge cutting on the road side at The Recreation Ground and The Parkland for the upcoming year is still outstanding. During the last year hedges had been extensively cutback and the tree canopy growth was sparse. Councillors were in agreement that further cutting back would not be required during the upcoming year. Quotation therefore not required.

The Allotments

The Chair had been scheduled to meet with the contractors, Graham, on 8 March 2023 to discuss the removal of the hard-standing which had been inappropriately compounded onto an allotment and the provision of top soil for the area. Due to heavy snow on the ground the meeting had been postponed and rescheduled for two weeks later.

**Action: Chair**

Highways

Cllr Davies had attempted to report empty salt bins for refilling. KCC had advised him that salt bins were refilled once per year as per KCC schedule and this would be completed at the allocated time.

23/23

The Chairman had emailed PCSO Linge to request assistance with speed checks in the Parish. The email had been blocked by the recipient's email provider and HPC were unable to contact the PCSO.

The Chairman would bring the matter to the attention of Matthew Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

**Action: Chair**

23/25 i Recreation Ground

Peter Rayfield had carried out the required work replacing 5 posts and re-tightening the fence to the left of the kissing gate.

23/25 ii The Parkland

The quotation for fencing replacement and extra roadside posts is still outstanding. The Clerk was instructed to contact the contractor to request the quotation.

**Action: Clerk**

Plastic tree guards had been placed around the oak trees as an interim measure to prevent further damage from rabbits and the condition of the oak trees will be monitored to establish whether replacements are needed as per February 2023 agreement.

## **23/37 Public Questions**

No members of the public were in attendance.

## 23/38 Police and Neighbourhood Watch Matters

### Police

PCSO Linge was not present at the meeting and had provided no report.

### Neighbourhood Watch.

The NHW Co-ordinator had indicated that she wished to step down with immediate effect.

The Parish Council expressed its thanks to the Co-ordinator for all the work she had done with this scheme.

HPC agreed that a replacement should be found ideally from the HPC membership and this will be discussed further at the next Parish Council meeting.

Councillors discussed the distribution of information regarding NHW matters. Hartlip's original scheme relied on a number of residents taking on the role of a NHW Co-ordinator responsible for disseminating information to a cluster of houses in the Parish. These Coordinators received information from NHW and cascaded it down to his/her houses by note or telephone call or, latterly, email.

As time passed this communication system was largely by email and eventually one HPC Councillor took on the role of Parish Co-ordinator, emailing residents who had registered for the communications. More recently the option of receiving information either via email or the HPC NHW WhatsApp system was offered.

Relatively recently, My Community Voice has been set up, a messaging service which sends updates about local area incidents from police officers themselves and helps residents keep in touch with local policing teams. It allows individuals to reply to alerts, share information and report issues affecting them.

Details of this service will be made available to Parishioners via the Forum and HPC NHW WhatsApp group.

HPC is aware that some residents do not use email and many residents do not use What's App and that will be factored into future plans.

### Action: Chair/ NHW Co-ordinator

The Chair presented a two-page document provided by a concerned resident which related to crime incidents that had reputedly taken place in Hartlip during November and December 2022. HPC had received no correspondence from Kent Police regarding these incidents.

The Chair would approach Kent Police to verify the validity of the online information.

### Action: Chair

## 23/39 Report of Chair

The Chair had received an email from KALC requesting Parish Council comments to the 'Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Reforms to National Planning Policy' consultation. Response deadline was very short and the Chair had raised this matter.

This had immediately been sent to HPC Councillors for their information and comment. Just one Cllr in addition to the Chair had responded and so HPC was unable to respond to the consultation.

Fencing on HPC owed land at the Village Pond had been removed. This had been installed under Health and Safety instruction and so was essential.

All Councillors agreed that the fencing must be replaced a.s.a.p.

The Clerk would contact Peter Rayfield to carry out the work required.

**Action: Clerk**

The Clerk distributed the 'Nomination Packs for Town and Parish Council Elections – Thursday 4 May 2023' for completion by candidates who wished to stand for election. Councillors were reminded of the deadline of 4 April 2023 for submission of forms to SBC.

### **23/40 HPC Amenities: Councillor Reports**

- i. Recreation Ground  
Nothing to report.

- ii. The Parkland  
Nothing to report.

- iii. The Allotments  
The Chair had contacted HPC's Solicitor to request an update on the current status of the purchase of the Allotments. An interim invoice had been received and settled by the RFO.

### **23/41 Other HPC Responsibilities: Councillor Reports**

- i. Hartlip Village Hall  
The Clerk read a report submitted by HVHMC Chair on behalf of HVHMC:

#### **Status of HVH**

Established councillors will understand the status of HVH and Cllr Paul Williams provided further explanations during his time on HPC.

A fundamental matter is that in 1968/9 the then HVHMC proposed registration of HVH as a Charity. This was fully supported by HPC and, at a public meeting, by residents of the Parish.

In May 1969 (54 years ago) the necessary process was completed and HVH became a registered charity.

This was very significant as, from then on, in addition to respecting the purposes laid down in the Trust Deed, HVHMC was committed to obliging Charity Law and any other relevant laws.

Amongst the duties laid down is:

*'make sure that the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purpose – nothing else'.*

Recently the Charity Commission has contacted all charities to remind them of their duties under Charity Law and has emphasised that charities must not *'find themselves drifting into activities that the charity is not set up to do'*.

The work of the Charity Commission is carried out more robustly now than in days past. The current HVHMC has and does seek all necessary advice on its decision making and policy making including from the Charity Commission, legal experts, insurers, health/safety/fire experts and so can be confident that it is doing as expected.

### **Boundary Matters**

Established councillors will recall that a number of boundary matters have needed to be dealt with by HVHMC in recent years and will recall what they are.

Detailed evidence gathering and expert legal advice has enabled HVHMC to resolve these matters and thus protect the Charity which is its duty.

Another boundary matter which was anticipated by the Chair has now reared its head. Fortunately this had already been discussed with the lawyer and evidence lodged with him.

The recently nominated HPC Representative will be updated on this confidential matter.

### **Activities Trialling**

The problematic state of HVH and its finances which were inherited has demanded an enormous amount of time and expertise to start to remedy. More is still needed and the Development Plan will be reviewed in due course.

The vast improvements so far are paying off with more potential hirers keen to view the hall.

HVHMC is currently trialling three new hirers providing services valuable to local residents. All may/may not embed.

Reports from hirers and attendees are very positive regarding the facilities.

#### **ii. Highways**

HPC would be participating in the Keep Britain Tidy campaign 'The Great British Spring Clean 2023'. A date of 29 April 2023 was proposed and agreed.

Cllr Davies will contact Cllr Black to discuss volunteers using the car park of the Rose and Crown pub.

Cllr Wright confirmed that rubbish bags could be left at the entrance of his driveway for collection by the contractor.

Details would be finalised at the April Parish Council meeting.

**Action: Cllr Davies**

#### **iii. Footpaths**

Footpath ZR68 still required clearing. This matter has gone on for many months and must be addressed.

A water leak from the main sewage pipe, north of footpath ZR77, had been reported to Southern Water.

#### **iv. The War Memorial**

Toby Daley has continued to investigate funding options for the required repairs and renovations.

An initial survey would be necessary prior to works being carried out.

HPC will be expected to contribute to both the survey and the works.

This contribution is likely to be at a rate of at least 25% and quite possibly more.

## **23/42 Coronation of King Charles III**

Councillors discussed proposals for celebrations to mark the event of the Coronation of His Majesty the King.

A Bank Holiday has been declared for Monday 8 May 2023 thus providing a weekend for events.

The Coronation will take place on Saturday 6 May 2023 with a concert on the evening of Sunday 7 May 2023.

Other events may be held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> &/or Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> &/or Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May.

The King has been clear that his personal wish is for a more low-key event than in the past with emphasis on family get-togethers and the current cost-of-living situation borne in mind.

Street Parties and Street Meets are two of the main community events being promoted with suggestions of family get-togethers or friendship group get-togethers also.

Councillors discussed whether a lasting commemorative feature of some kind, to mark the Coronation of King Charles III, should be considered for installation in the Parish. No such item was suggested.

Hartlip Parish Council is mindful that any Parish Council organised event/s should be for Hartlip residents only and must be available for all parish residents to attend if they so wish and so a venue with numbers limit is not an appropriate choice.

The use of the Recreation Ground was considered given the large space available and a suggestion had been made relating to the use of the Village Hall. The Hall has a limit of 95 set down by the Fire Service and that cannot be exceeded under any circumstances.

HPC had been advised that St Michael's Church has decided to hold, and has advertised already, a Flower Festival over the weekend and the Friends of Hartlip Church are intending to hold the first of their summer teas on Sunday 7 May.

It would therefore be a potential problem to hold a Street Party requiring a road closure outside the Church where the road is widest as has been done before.

When the last Street Parties were held in Hartlip, e.g. for the Platinum Jubilee, some residents preferred to hold "Street Meets" whereby groups of residents and their friends met in cul-de-sacs or front gardens or drives.

After extensive discussions the Parish Council agreed to recommend Street Meets as the most appropriate form of celebration on this occasion, meaning that every resident of the Parish can participate if they so wish.

HPC had been approached by a representative of St Michael's Church with a request of funding for the sum of £200 towards the planned Flower Festival to mark the coronation. The Church's representative had expressed the hope that SBC would be devolving some funds to Parish Councils to assist with the delivery of celebratory functions relating to the event. County Cllr Baldock confirmed that SBC is facing difficult

financial times and no funds will be made available to Parish Councils. HPC would therefore be unable to consider the request.

Councillors were reminded that Parish Councils are prohibited in law under section 8 of the Local Government Act of 1894, which is still in operation, from giving financial assistance to religious or political organisations.

As such Hartlip Parish Council cannot make a contribution from its funds. Councillor Baldock confirmed that such a payment would be against the law.

The Church's representative would be contacted to advise of HPC's position and inability to make a contribution.

**Action: Chair/Clerk**

### **23/43 County and Borough Councillor's Reports**

Borough Cllr Richard Palmer had been unable to attend the meeting. He reported that a response is still awaited from the police regarding the matter of the number of huge vehicles passing through Lower Hartlip.

County Cllr Mike Baldock reported that the SBC budget had been agreed, with significant cuts in highways spending, grant funding and staffing costs.

Cllr Baldock reported that many children in Kent-parishes have failed to be allocated a place at a suitably located secondary school and he continues to assist these families with their appeals.

### **23/44 Clerk and Finance Report**

The Chairman had received the draft documents prior to the meeting for checking and correction as per normal practice.

The Bank Reconciliation and Finance Report for February were presented to the Parish Council.

These were approved by the Parish Council and signed and dated by the Chairman.

February BACS payments were presented for signing.

Wellers Law Group	Interim Account/Allotment Purchase	£ 654.40
Peter Rayfield	Grounds Maintenance/Recreation Ground	£ 185.00
T Still	Clerk Salary February 2023	£ 229.14
T Still	Clerk Expenses February 2023	<u>£ 14.05</u>
		<u>£1082.59</u>

#### Bank Payments 2022/23

The Clerk explained to Councillors that a number of bank payments had unintentionally been omitted from Parish Council meeting minutes and monthly Bank Reconciliations.

Councillors were provided with a breakdown of all payments made by HPC for the period 01.04.22 to 31.01.23, with an explanation of where these payments had been omitted from documentation.

A copy of the breakdown of payments and explanation document would be attached to the March meeting minutes and to the 'HPC Bank Reconciliation as at 28.02.23' document.

The HPC external auditor would be informed at the audit due to be held on 12.04.23.

## **23/45 Planning Matters**

### **Applications received since the February 2023 meeting.**

Application Ref: 23/500600/TCA

Conservation Notification to remove/fell one Rowan Tree at Hartlip House, The Street, Hartlip.

**(No objections subject to any comments by the Tree Officer)**

Application Ref: 23/500489/TCA

Conservation Notification to prune one yew tree and removal of some lower branches of a walnut tree at Hartlip House, The Street, Hartlip.

**(No objections subject to any comments by the Tree Officer)**

Application Ref: 23/500995/FULL

Erection of a single storey front extension, first floor front and rear extension with internal alterations and changes to fenestration at The White House, The Street, Hartlip.

**(Under consideration)**

### **Enforcement**

The Chair had written to Stacey Adams to advise that HPC had attempted to make contact with SBC Planning Department on numerous occasions but had been unsuccessful.

A number of long-standing enforcement matters are still outstanding.

### **Local Green Spaces**

HPC Chair advised County Cllr Mike Baldock that he had written to SBC regarding the currently suspended Future Swale Local Plan preparation and the position regarding Local Green Spaces as he had been advised to do at the January 2023 HPC meeting. HPC had submitted its response in November 2021 to the call from SBC for sites for Local Green Spaces and the Chair's recent letter made clear that HPC wished all aspects of its submission of 2021 to hold and be carried forward when work on this matter recommences.

The Chair had also requested an update on Swale's current position in this matter.

*A response is still awaited.*

**Action: Chair**

#### **i Review of Conservation Area.**

The Chair would be meeting with relevant parties on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023 to view and review the Hartlip Conservation Area.

Councillors were asked to forward any ideas to the Chair.



### **23/46 Correspondence**

Recreation Ground: a quotation of £1763.54 excluding VAT for grounds maintenance had been received from the contractor.  
Cllr White proposed acceptance and Cllr Wright seconded the proposal.

### **23/47 Information Items**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

The next meeting of Hartlip Parish Council will be held at Hartlip Village Hall on  
Wednesday 12 April 2023 at 8pm.

Signed .....

Date .....