HANNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

[DRAFT] Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village hall, Hannington

7pm on 23rd February 2015

Present: Chairman Councillor Taylor Councillor Kitching
Councillor Henry Councillor Taylor
Councillor May Councillor Pottinger (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence & declaration of interest

Apologies: Borough Councillor Sherlock, Borough Councillor Osselton
County Councillor Chapman.

The Clerk informed Parish Councillors he had received notification, within recently issued Guidance from NALC, that under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 “If a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority.” He advised that with only four meetings planned within a calendar year, failure to attend just ONE meeting would, under the above legislation, result in the Cllr ceasing to be a member of the Parish Council. He did not consider this was the intention of the legislation, however, there does not appear to be any discretion on this matter. It is therefore ESSENTIAL, that if a Parish Councillor is unable to attend that he/she provides a reason for non-attendance that is accepted formally by the Parish Council at that meeting.

In response to an email request from BDBC, all Parish Councillors confirmed there had been no changes to the ‘Declarations of Interest’ forms previously submitted by them to the Borough Council, and also confirmed there were no items on the Agenda to which they wished to ‘Declare an Interest’.

Eleven members of the public attended the meeting. Their main items of interest centred on the Margaret Nichol legacy (item 10.b), traffic calming (item 9.d) and potholes (item 9.b).

2. Minutes of Meeting held 2nd December 2014.

Having made an amendment to an earlier circulated version of the draft Minutes with regards ‘the Margaret Nicholl legacy’, all councillors present agreed that the Minutes were complete and accurate, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

Review of actions sheet from December meeting
The meeting agreed the ‘status’ of the items on the Action List, including those shown as being ‘Completed’ that could therefore be removed.

Neighbourhood Plan
Cllr Pottinger had previously circulated to residents the notification received from BDBC that their Borough Plan 2011-2029 had been submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. Links to the relevant webpage had been included in the circular residents so they could access the full report. Borough Cllr Sherlock, in his Update at the December meeting, said the SoS had submitted a ‘raft of questions’ to BDBC including potential discrepancies between the Borough Plan and the SE England Plan. The Chairman informed the February meeting that the BDBC Borough Plan was still not yet finalised and approved, (and per Cllr Sherlock ‘will hopefully reach final completion next Spring - 2016’). This continued delay causes a problem for Parish Councils whose own Plans have to reflect and comply with the overarching policies etc of the Borough Plan.
**Action:** agreed that the production of the Hannington Parish’s Neighbourhood Plan would be the major task for the new Parish Council in 2015.

Having reviewed all the items on the latest Action List (previously circulated by the Clerk), the Council were satisfied that all other ‘outstanding items’ were covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

4. **Correspondence**

The Clerk informed the meeting that all but one item of correspondence he had received since the last meeting of the Council in December had been either forwarded to Councillors for information or had been acted upon, as necessary, by the Council. The exception was a letter and booklet from Action Hampshire that ‘applauds the vision and commitment of village residents and parish councils who have made a lasting difference to hundreds of families through supporting their local affordable housing scheme’.

Cllr Henry had received a letter from Home Start North West Hampshire. The letter outlined the work of the charity and sought financial support. The Council, whilst welcoming the work of the charity, decided that it would not, as a matter of principle, make donations to any charity.

**Action:** the Clerk to notify the organisation accordingly.

5. **Public Observations:**

Emails circulated by the Council to residents had once again generated responses on the following:- traffic calming, Margaret Nicholl legacy, and concerns with the poor standard of the roads eg potholes. All three of these issues are dealt with elsewhere on the Agenda.

6. **County Councillors Report:** None

7. **Borough Councillors Report:**

Councillor Sherlock provided the following list of brief items of current interest.

a. The Cabinet have agreed the housing figure of 845 and further sites are being allocated and consultation should begin in the Summer.

b. The Local Plan 2011-29 will hopefully reach final completion next Spring.

c. We have heard some town councillors suggesting further building in the ‘villages and hamlets’

d. Changes to the S106 scheme will mean that developments of 5 dwellings and less will not qualify for it, though there is a seminar to explain it to Borough Councillors in March. This, I am afraid, will have a negative impact on my plans for S106 monies for Michael’s Field from any development at Freemantle Farm, North Oakley. [Relevant extract from December meeting on this issue: “At the previous meeting in September: Borough Councillor Osselton had advised Hannington Parish Council that funds derived by BDBC from approved New Build planning applications were available to the Parish Council; but have to be applied for. Discussions at the Sept meeting indicated that projects such as resurfacing and new equipment of the village playing field would appear to be appropriate ‘bids’. This information and the opportunity to claim Section 101 funds has been forwarded by the Clerk to organisers of Michaels Field].

e. There was a Q & A session between the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable held in Basingstoke. Regrettably in the event I was unable to make it but will pass on any feedback there may be.
f. Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council have taken on the employment and responsibility for retaining the 12 Community & Public Safety Officers who otherwise have fallen to the County Council cuts across all the rest of the County.

8. Planning Applications
   a. Decisions/Actions taken since meeting 2nd December
      It was agreed at the September 2014 meeting that the public (residents) should be informed of all decisions made by the Parish Council that fell between full Council meetings, with the Clerk to minute all such decisions at the next full Council Meeting. Accordingly, it is reported that:

      **Vine Ridge 15/00146/HSE**: Raising of the roof to form additional first floor living space. **PC decision**: no action to be taken.

      **Ash Tree Cottage 15/00156/HSE**: Erection of first floor side extension over existing integral garage, single storey side extension and conversion of garage to habitable space. **Construction of new chimney** (part retrospective). **PC decision**: no action to be taken.

   b. Planning Applications to be considered at the February meeting: None
   c. BDBD Local Plan 2011 - 2029
      See previous comments under paragraph 3: Neighbourhood Plan

9. Roads, Footpaths & Bridleways Officer’s report
   a. Meeting with HCC Highways Dept;
      Cllr Taylor noted that potholes and traffic calming were two of the issues of particular interest to the residents present at the meeting. HCC Highways have explained that whilst they may agree with the PC on the necessity of the Actions listed in the Minutes of our bi-annual meetings, that the undertaking of the work by HCC was dependent on the funding being made available, and this was allocated each year through the Operation Resilience bid. “**HCC agreed at the October 2014 meeting to provide HPC with the list of projects that were included in the 2014/15 OR bid, and to confirm those bids that were included in the current year’s plan [ie funding approved]. HPC asked that this information be provided each year**”. This information is yet to be provided.

      **Action: Clerk** to arrange for the Spring meeting with HCC Highways Department and in particular to remind them of their agreement with regards providing HPC with information from Operation Resilience. A copy of the current Minutes/Action List from the meeting 1st October 2014 can be obtained by contacting chrispottinger@live.co.uk.

   b. Potholes
      At the Parish Council meeting on 2nd December, the Clerk was asked to provide a Briefing Note for residents on ‘How to Report a Highways Problem’ eg a Pothole. The Note was circulated to residents 3rd December with a step-by-step guide on how to access the HCC website and log a problem/complaint.

      The Note also said that it would be useful if we, the PC, had a fuller picture of the problems being encountered by residents and the remedial action that is/isn’t taken. The Note therefore asked if residents would please forward the reference/track it number, with the briefest of description to the Clerk. As of 23rd February, only ONE notification of a complaint had been received by the Clerk. A
check of the HCC mapping system would appear to show there are only TWO potholes within the Parish are still requiring remedial work!

The Clerk advised the meeting his understanding was that a highway Authority has a legal obligation to repair pot holes that it knows exist, and can be sued for specific damages if it does not take appropriate and proper corrective action. However, the law appreciates that it is unreasonable to expect a Highways Authority to know of the existence of every pothole as and when they occur, and it therefore follows that if the Highways Authority is not informed of a pothole (and can claim they were not aware of its existence), their responsibility to repair it is materially reduced.

**Action: Clerk** to re-issue a SIMPLE Briefing Note to residents to encourage them to notify the Highways Authority of any potholes that are causing them concern.

c. 'Unsuitable for HGV' signs;

The meeting was informed that one of the 'Unsuitable for HGV' signs was still in the incorrect position. This is despite HCC letter 27 November 2014, “Thank you for the information [provided by HPC regarding owners approval to the siting of the sign on their land] We have amended our contractor instruction so the sign will be placed at the junction of Kingsclere Road with Meadham Lane.”

**Action: Clerk** to contact HCC Highways Department and press for the sign to be re-positioned.

d. Traffic calming

The briefing on Traffic Calming issued to residents on 23rd November resulted in six responses from residents. Three expressed concerns about the speed of traffic and made the following suggestions:-

- “What about elongated speed humps similar to those on Pack Lane.
- My view is we need a speed limit. Has the parish Council considered 20’s Plenty signs?
- Flashing speed signs when you approach the sign it says ‘Your Speed 30mph’ with a smiley or unhappy face.”

However, there were also three responses that took an entirely different view:

- “I do not believe there is any need for additional measures. Both personal experience and the research that was conducted previously suggests that there is in general no issue with excessive speeds through the village.
- We see no reason for this [further traffic calming] as all vehicles seem to adhere to an unofficial speed limit of around 25 – 30mph.
- One of Hannington’s glories, almost uniquely in the Borough, is that it is free from the plethora of signs and traffic calming measures that have now been installed in so many ancient villages, much to their detriment.”

The Chairman reminded the meeting that most of the proposals required approval of the Highways Authority, which they have refused. ‘20’s Plenty’ signs are placed outside schools.

**Decision:** that no further action would be taken at this time.

e. Countryside Access

**Cyclists and horse riders using footpaths.**

Footpaths Report from Cllr Kitching, contents of which are to form the basis of an email from Cllr Kitching to James Emmett (HCC Highways) and Chris Hewitt (Middleton Estate):

1. Most of the "Footpath only" signs requested from HCC Access have been put up and are partially successful in deterring bikers and riders from churning up the footpaths. Kingsclere Estates will shortly put up the remaining signs.
2. Further "Footpath only" signs are being requested from HCC for erection on the junction of 7100 and 7102, and at the junction of 502 and 7101.
3. A new FP fingerpost has been requested for the N end of 7118, N of Freemantle Farm.

4. The double stile on 7104, N of North Oakley, has been repaired satisfactorily. NFA on its replacement by kissing gates.

**Action:** Cllr Kitching to write to HCC Highways and to Middleton Estate

**Action:** Cllr May to erect the signs that he has been provided with.

**Stiles: Health and Safety concerns.**

See item e.4 in preceding paragraph. **Action completed.**

10. **Finance & Audit**

   a. **NALC questionnaire, “should Parish Councils have to have a referendum to increase their precepts?”**

      On behalf of the HPC, the Clerk had sent in a “NO” response, together with a detailed explanatory note for that decision. A copy of the reply can be obtained by contacting chrispottinger@live.co.uk

   b. **Margaret Nicholl legacy.**

      Cllr Pottinger had circulated a report to Cllrs summarising the responses received from residents. The report included a comment on ‘the status of the results of the questionnaire’ together with a table showing the votes cast (attached as Appendix A to the Minutes). Discussion at the meeting centred on two proposals. Sheridan Swallow spoke in support of establishing a Welfare Fund, explaining how it might work.

      **Action:** Clerk to liaise with Sheridan Swallow to obtain more details of the proposal.

      Cllr Pottinger said that of the 32 responses received and logged, all but two had placed support for Michael’s Field as first choice (and sometimes the only choice). However, two of those who supported the Michael’s Field expressed concerns. Cllr Pottinger was asked to read out the relevant extracts to the meeting:-

      - “… I can’t count the number of times the pavilion has been refurbed and usually ends in a state of disrepair in a few years because its size limits it to be only usable as a sports pavilion. There’s not much point to a refurbed pavilion that does not have a refurbed purpose. Which leads to; is there a plan for the playing field?

      - We both feel it is very important that the Michael’s Field Committee are seen to be making some effort to raise funds towards the suggested refurbishment, as well as relying on the legacy and a possible donation from (e.g.) BDBC. Other organisations in the village all work very hard to raise funds to keep things ticking over, and I cannot recall a single fund-raising effort made by the Michael’s Field Committee in the past few years.”

      Cllr Kitching had written to Parish Councillors, in advance of the meeting, expressing his concerns and suggesting caveats that would need to be addressed before any funds were released. He asked to read out his letter, and that it be Minuted in full (see Appendix B). To summarise, the caveats were:-

      - “MFMC have a credible plan that the investment will benefit Hannington people…

      - All the other funding for the project is in place.”
Cllr Taylor had spoken to (do you want me to mention Robert’s name?) in advance of the Council meeting outlining the concerns that had been expressed. Unfortunately, no representative of the MFMC was able to attend the meeting and speak in support of their proposal.

A member of the public suggested that a fundamental problem with maintaining and developing Michael’s Field was the small size of the building, therefore limiting its potential use, income generation and fund raising potential. The MF site has space for a larger sports and social facility and has sufficient space for car parking. One solution would be to merge the functions of the Michaels Field pavilion with that of the Village Hall. Sale of the Village Hall, a prime housing site, would surely generate sufficient funds to develop a much better village facility on Michaels Field.

**DECISION:** MFMC be given the opportunity to create a detailed proposal for the development of Michaels Field including a Business Plan for the raising of the necessary funds, and that the proposal for a Welfare Fund should remain as an Option.

c. **Financial update for 2014/15** – All Councillors had received, ahead of the meeting, a financial statement together with an explanatory cover note based on receipts and payments as at 27 November. At the meeting Pat Sarsfield-Hall confirmed that the erection of further “hound’s teeth” on the village green was nearly complete, at a cost of £250 plus VAT (actual invoice is £248 plus 48 VAT: see paragraph 10 e below). Taking this cost into account, in summary, the position is as follows:

- cash at bank as at 27 November is £8,757.64 plus a further £5,000 for the legacy;
- predicted cash balance as at 31 March 2015 is £5,640, plus the potential of £5,000 for the legacy if none is applied by that date;
- all precept and grant monies from BDBC, plus the full refund of VAT from HMRC have been received;
- no invoices had been received, and hence no payments made, since the last meeting in September. Provision for payments for repair to the Well Head, Hound’s Teeth, donation to churchyard, village green mowing, subscriptions and village hall hire have been made in arriving at the year end cash balance of £5,640. This is £400 more than originally budgeted, and is due to the savings arising from the resignation of the Clerk in the year, partially offset by the costs of two sets of Hound’s Teeth that were approved in-year.

**Decision:** Council received and approved the Financial Statement.

d. **Cost of Wellhead Repairs**

On stripping off the tiles on the roof of the wellhead, the contractor uncovered substantial rain damage to the frame of the tower, making it unstable and potentially dangerous. Cllrs who had visited the site in advance of the work confirmed that this problem would not have been visible from the initial inspection. Subsequent visits confirmed that the structure was in need of repair. The Council accepted, by way of emails on 7 January, for the work to be carried out by the contractor with a potential increase in the cost of a further £650 to £700, making a total cost in the region of £1,750 (excl VAT).

**Decision:** Council approved the final invoice for £2075.88 dated 29th January 2015 (being £1,729.90 plus £345.98 VAT); cheque number 313 dated 23rd February.

e. **Payments made since December meeting**

- £35.00, being annual subscription to Information Commissioner’s Office for registration as data controller (cheque number 312 dated 20th January)
In addition to the above two payments (312 and 313), the Council approved the following at the meeting:-

- 58.33, being Clerk’s expenses Sept 2014 to 23rd Feb 2015, printer cartridges, printer paper and stamps (cheque number 314);
- £288.00 incl £48 VAT, being payment to Hannington Farm for purchase and erection of seven corner post/hound’s teeth on the village green (cheque number 315)

f. **HMRC Tax Liability**

The Parish Council was notified by HMRC in June 2014 they had estimated the PC’s liabilities at £206.18. This information was passed to the Clerk in January 2015. The Clerk contacted HMRC and was informed the charge was estimated and had been applied because the employer (HPC) had not completed its monthly RTI statements on-line; a recent change in legislation. The Clerk was informed the estimated liability would increase by approx. £44 per month until the situation was resolved. By the end of January, the Clerk had managed to obtain the necessary Government Gateway card with the necessary User ID. At the time of the Council meeting he is still waiting for HMRC to send him the Password so that the HPC Account can be opened, activated, and entries made. The Clerk anticipates that entering the correct information will remove any potential liability.

**Action:** Clerk to resolve issue with HMRC before 31 March 2015 and the Closing Accounts 2014/15.

g. **Financial Update for 2014/15 including predicted Outturn**

The Clerk had circulated a Financial Statement to Councillors in advance of the meeting. The statement predicted cash balance as at 31 March 2015 £4,875 (after allowing for the actual cost of the hound’s teeth compared with the figure estimated). In addition, HPC was holding £5,000 in relation to the Margaret Nicholl legacy.

The statement also compared predicted Outturn with the original Budget 2014/15, highlighting the variances totalling an overall increase of £365 in spend. The key variations are reduction in Clerk’s salary due to resignation mid-year, offset by increases in well head costs and approval of additional hound’s teeth in-year. The variation of £365 includes and increase of £186 in related VAT which is recoverable in 2015/16.

h. **Draft Budget 2015/16 including Request to BDBC for Precept and Grants**

The Clerk confirmed the requests for Precept (£3,400) and Grant (£1,100), as agreed at the December meeting, had been forwarded to BDBC, and that he had no reason to believe the amounts sought would not be provided.

These amounts had already been built into the Budget 2015/16, approved at the December meeting of the Parish Council. The only change to the Budget 2015/16 was the minimal effect of the increased levels of expenditure on the hound’s teeth, explained previously. The projected cash balance as at 31 March 2016 therefore remains in the region of £4,730.

**DECISION:** Council noted the latest predicted Outturn 2014/15 and Budget 2015/16.

11. **May Election 2015**
The Clerk advised the Meeting that he had circulated three Briefings to residents, on the role of the Parish Council, the role of a Parish Councillor and the invitation for prospective Parish Councillors to attend a meeting at the Town Hall.

The Clerk advised that ‘provided those elected constitute at least a quorum (in our case a minimum of THREE), the Council may co-opt any person or persons to fill the vacancy(ies).’ Cllr Chris Pottinger confirmed he would NOT stand for re-election in May as he felt there was a ‘conflict of interest’ in being Clerk and being a Councillor on the same Parish Council.

12. Annual Meeting of newly elected Parish Council

“In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.” (HPC Standing Order 2.a).

Action: Clerk to arrange actual date.
HPC meeting 23rd February 2015

Comments from Cllr Kitching re: M.Nicholl legacy

Cllr Mike Kitching
13/02/2015

To: Simon Taylor, Chris Pottinger, Judy Henry, Tim May

Dear All,

Chris has indicated to us that most responses favour Michael's Field as the recipient of the MN legacy. As we have asked for parishioners' views, we must of course take them into account. But as Chris has also pointed out, it is HPC's decision, and no one else's, both as to the decision itself and the timing of that decision.

With regard to MF, it seems common ground that the legacy be NOT applied to support annual expenses, but as a capital improvement.

At the last meeting, the major refurbishment of the pavilion was proposed and that the £5K legacy should be used as part of a capital sum of £25K. I can certainly see that MF Management Committee can more easily attract other external investors if £5K is available from within.

It is of course MFMC's job, not ours, to plan the future use of MF, but before we (the HPC) grant the MN legacy to MF, I believe we should have a duty to be satisfied that the MF plan for the future is likely to succeed and that it is in the interests of the parishioners of Hannington. (Jeff Smithers has put much the same point to us eloquently by email).

There have been two substantial investments in MF in the last (about) 15 years:
a) Children's playground equipment. A big success - much used by Hannington children.
b) All weather cricket pitch and practice net. A very limited success. Yes, it has enabled in recent years a few "social" cricket matches. (The practice net has been abandoned). But it has NOT regenerated a regular cricket team from anywhere, let alone Hannington.

If it is proposed that the MN legacy be applied to a "new" pavilion, I for one want to be satisfied that the investment will attract at best a regenerated regular football or cricket team in Hannington, or at second best a regular team from outside that will encourage Hannington people, if they wish, to participate. If neither happens, we will have invested in an expensive to maintain white elephant.

I doubt very much that this is a chicken and egg situation whereby if we have a new pavilion, teams are bound to follow. I think we should have evidence of this first.

I will listen to the discussions carefully, but I suspect that the most we could support is that the MN legacy be earmarked for MF, but the funds will be released only when:
a) MFMC have a credible plan that the investment will benefit Hannington people - for instance and as an alternative an all weather tennis court,
b) all the other funding for the project is in place.

It is a commentary upon the times - and nothing else - that today MF is used frequently by Hannington children, but only very occasionally by Hannington people to pay sports. What is the evidence that this will change with a "new" pavilion?

Mike.