

Harbottle Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 1st July 2024 at The Star Inn

Present: Cllrs. S. Bolam (Vice Chairman), S. Kenny (Chairman), J. Ormston, A. Stripp, S. Wardlaw

1. Apologies for Absence: None
2. Declarations of Interest: None declared
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th May were approved.

4. Matters Arising:

The commemoration of the 80th anniversary of D Day was favourably commented on, especially the poppies displayed throughout Harbottle.

5. Finance

- (i) The Annual Statement of Accounts for 2023-4 was signed, along with revised minutes to record purchases made. This should enable the audit to be completed.
- (ii) The balance of £3,144.33 in the General Fund and £2,053.57 in the ESF were noted
- (iii) Invoices for D Day commemorations agreed and paid:
Chorlton fireworks: £135.00
Star Inn (pizzas): £131.40
- (iv) It was agreed to purchase a gift voucher from The Star for £50 to give to Elaine Young in acknowledgement of the audit work she has done.

6. Harbottle School

Ellen Creighton from the Parent/Teachers Association of Harbottle School attended the meeting to inform and discuss with the Council the current situation concerning the School. The Chairman had previously written to the Chief Executive of the Cheviot Learning Trust asking for an explanation for the changes to take place at the School.

Ellen informed members that the PTA had had a meeting with the Cheviot Learning Trust Chief Executives and representatives from the Diocese Education Board. The changes made are the result of the fall in numbers of pupils at the school, currently 12 with only 10 projected for the next school year. Down from 31 five years' ago. The School Head has been made

redundant and the Teaching Assistant moved to another School. The School Secretary's hours are to be reduced and as a result, Susan Rogerson has resigned after 27 years of service.

The Head of Rothbury Middle School, Liam Murtagh, will take on an Executive Head role, with an Assistant (teaching) Head, Mhairi Line, transferred from the Middle School, running the School day to day, but initially on only a twelve month contract. She will be assisted by the current part time teacher, Mrs. Henry, for one and a half days a week.

The PTA are concerned for the future of the School and that the changed situation is a precursor to closing the School. The Learning Trust seemed unaware of the role the School played in the wider community. The Diocese had emphasised their commitment to keeping the School at Harbottle as the only Church of England First School in the valley.

The Council agreed to write to the Chief Executives of the Cheviot Learning Trust seeking a guarantee for the future of the School. Concern was also expressed at the loss of the local knowledge of families and children in the valley, with the resignation of Susan Rogerson and the need to find a locally based replacement if possible.

7. Fibre Broadband

The Council had been informed by Go Fibre that they proposed laying a new ducted fibre broadband cable in Harbottle. Unfortunately no-one from the company had been able to attend this meeting. It was agreed to seek a meeting with Go Fibre to discuss the proposals at the earliest opportunity.

8. Holystone Bus Shelter

The roof repairs have still not been completed and it was agreed to ask Steve Kidd if he was still able to undertake these, if not, another builder to be approached.

9. Litter Bin Harbottle

Complaints have been received that the litter bin, previously in the bus shelter, has been moved without permission onto the Village Hall site, as a result of which, certain litter is not now going into the bin. The County Council empty the bin by agreement with the Parish Council. It was agreed to move the bin back adjacent to the highway.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 19th August 2024 at 7.0 p.m.