

HARPENDEN RURAL PARISH COUNCIL HERTFORDSHIRE

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held via Zoom, on Wednesday 17 March 2021 starting at 7.30pm

Present: Parish Councillors P Barrett (Chairman), J Holder and C Randall and K Sheffield

Also in attendance: Andrew Reading (Parish Clerk)

1. Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ayres. It was noted that Mrs Ayres was moving to a house situated outside the Parish. However, because it was less than three miles from the Parish boundary, her position as a parish councillor was unaffected.

2. Declaration of interests

No interests were declared

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 January 2021 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

(a) Minute 6 - Provision of dog waste bin

The Clerk said that no further information had been received about the application made to replace the bin on the common with a dual-purpose litter bin/dog waste bin. This would be kept under review.

The Clerk said that to date he had taken no action on returning the £250 grant for a third dog waste bin. Councillor Randall said that, subject to agreement of the County Council, this sum could be used for the cost of removing the piles of branches on the triangle of land. The Chairman further noted that two of the wooden posts surrounding the land needed to be replaced.

The Chairman said that the dog waste bins on the Common had not been emptied. He would notify the Clerk if TBS hygiene had not undertaken the work within 24 hours.

5. Cheque Authorisations and review of expenditure

The Clerk said that there had been little change since the January report and that expenditure for the year would be about £575 lower than budget, mainly due to the decision not to purchase a third dog waste bin.

The following cheques were approved and authorised.

	Cheque	Description	£
(i)	100669	TBS Hygiene. Dog waste collection January to March 2021	156.00
(ii)	100670	HAPTC. New Councillor Zoom course	35.00
(iii)	100671	Cheque cancelled	-
(iv)	100672	Clerk salary January to March 2021	351.10
(v)	100673	HMRC Tax on salary	234.40
(vi)	100674	Clerk expenses October 2020 to March 2021	107.36
(vii)	100675	Elders Consultancy	100.00

6. Tree Assessment from Elder's Consultancy

The Chairman introduced the report from Elders Consultancy on the health and condition of trees on the triangle of common land, from which it was noted that the trees were generally in a healthy condition. The main exception was a single cherry tree adjacent to The Common, which was suspected of being infected with honey fungus. The Parish Council agreed it would need to monitor this tree for potential signs of deterioration. Small ash trees at the northern end of the triangle had poor growth characteristics.

It was agreed that this was a very helpful report which enabled the Parish Council to have a better understanding of the risks posed by the mature trees. This type of inspection would need to be undertaken at regular intervals.

7. Litter and Waste collection and disposal

The Chairman reported on the problem of litter and fly tipping in the Parish which had become worse during the pandemic. Both he and Councillor Sheffield had sought volunteers to clear litter and had participated in litter picks. Veolia had been very helpful in removing waste. The police had been informed about fly tipping in Kennel Lane and they were investigating the situation there. It was felt that it would be helpful if there were more signs about fly tipping further along Kennel Lane away from Kinsbourne Green Lane and/or temporary cameras. Councillor Sheffield said she would aim to progress this.

Councillor Sheffield said she had made contact with Sgt Ryan Hemmings newly appointed to the Rural Operations Support team, who was proving very helpful.

This unit focussed on rural and agricultural issues, wildlife crime and heritage crime. It also hosted rural awareness courses. Sgt Hemmings was looking at establishing a litter volunteer scheme similar to one operated in East Herts.

8. Planning applications and to 8 March 2021

It was noted that there were only five planning applications within the Parish that were ongoing. The Clerk said that since circulating the schedule, the application for the demolition of a commercial building and construction of two dwellings at Brickfield farm, Coles Lane, had been approved (5/2020/2021)

9. Publication and distribution of the written record of Connie Howard

The Chairman reported on the work undertaken to publish and distribute copies of the diaries of Connie Howard who had lived at Kinsbourne Green in the early part of the 20th century. Around £100 had been raised and this had been given to a great nephew of Connie Howard for donating to a charity of his choice.

10. St Albans and District Association of Local Councils

It was noted that the next meeting of the SADALC was scheduled for Monday 22 March 2021 via Zoom. The Chairman said that he planned to attend.

11. London Luton Airport expansion - update

It was noted that a decision was pending on the most recent planning application to relax noise restrictions and break current passenger limits at London Luton Airport.

12. Bank Mandate

The Clerk said that it was necessary to update the Bank Mandate with Barclays Bank to remove Patti Bell and add Kate Sheffield.

The Clerk said that he would look into the feasibility of introducing electronic banking, either with Barclays or another bank and report to the next meeting. The pandemic had accelerated the move away from cash and cheques and all the Council's suppliers would now prefer electronic payments. Also, where payments could not be made by cheque the Clerk was obliged to pay from his personal bank account and reclaim the money from expenses.

It was RESOLVED that

- (i) Patti Bell be removed from the Parish Council's bank mandate and that Kate Sheffield be added to the mandate
- (ii) The Clerk report further on options for electronic banking.

13. Training for new Council members

Councillor Sheffield reported on the new Councillor training course she had attended which had been run by HATPC on Zoom, and said it had been very helpful and informative.

14. Parish Conference - 8 September 2021

The Clerk said he would circulate details of the Parish Conference scheduled for 8 September 2021. The date and venue were still to be decided.

15. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting be held on Wednesday 19 May 2021. This meeting would be held in person or by Zoom depending on government guidance nearer the time.

16. Councillor Tony Swendell

The Chairman said that he planned to attend the passing of funeral cortege of former independent Redbourn Councillor Tony Swendell on 29 March 2021.

17. Exclusion of press and Public

It was RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded for the discussion contained in minute 17.

18. Luton Lane

The Chairman reported on some tree felling on a piece of land off Luton Lane, Redbourn, which was just outside the Parish boundary, and updated the Parish Council on recent legal developments.

There being no other business the meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Clerk to the Council

Chairman