

**HARPENDEN RURAL PARISH COUNCIL
HERTFORDSHIRE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council, held at St Mary's Church Hall on
Monday 5 July 2021, starting at 7.30pm

Present: Parish Councillors:
Barrett (Chairman), Ayres, Holder, Randall and Sheffield.
Also in attendance: Andrew Reading (Parish Clerk)

1. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

2. Minutes of the meetings held on 17 March and 5 May 2021

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 March and 5 May 2021 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

a) Meeting held on 17 March 2021

Parish Conference September 2021

The Clerk said that he had no further information to report on the date and content of the proposed conference.

Luton Lane

The Chairman updated the Parish Council on developments on land in Luton Lane, its general legal status and ownership to the best of his knowledge.

b) Meeting held on 5 July 2021

Fly tipping

This was on the agenda for further discussion. It was noted that a copy of the poster, discussed at the last meeting, was on the Noticeboard and the Parish Council's website.

Clerk's Contract

The Clerk said that in accordance with the decisions agreed at the last meeting, he had prepared an update to his contract for signature by the Chairman.

Website Update

The Clerk said that he had not yet had an opportunity to address this matter.

4. Cheque authorisations and review of expenditure v budget

The Clerk said that expenditure was tracking budget. Barclays had written to say that they would be increasing their monthly fee by £2 a month from September. The Zoom Pro software contract had been cancelled.

The following Cheques were approved and authorised:

	Cheque	Description	£
(i)	100676	Open Spaces Society Subscription	45.00
(ii)	100677	HAPTC subscription	294.38
(iii)	100678	Clerk expenses including internal audit fee	103.85
(iv)	100679	TBS Hygiene dog waste collection April to June 2021	156.00
(v)	100680	Zurich Municipal Insurance renewal	336.43
(vi)	100681	Clerk salary March to June 2021	499.90
(vii)	100682	HMRC Tax on salary	124.80
(viii)	100683	St Nicholas PCC Room hire 5 July 2021	10.00

5. Triangle of Common Land - History of Parish Council's involvement

The Clerk said that following a request made at a previous meeting, he had prepared a short paper setting out the history of the Parish Council's involvement with the triangle of Common land it rented. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to obtain a complete picture as the Parish Council minutes prior to 1979 were missing. Three tenancy agreements had been signed by the Parish Council between 1965 and 1973 but it was unclear whether the latter, which was supplemental to the earlier agreements, had ever been superseded. The earlier 1966 agreement indicated that the Parish Council had, in addition to the triangle of land, an additional responsibility for a strip of land around part of the Common which required hedges to be trimmed and ditches to be cleared out.

The Parish Council discussed this in detail and noted that the Chairman currently undertook work in a voluntary capacity to keep the hedges and trees trimmed that were on the edge of the Common. It was felt that other, more formal options should be explored, even if this meant increasing the precept. The Chairman said he would consider this and report to a future meeting.

6. Disposal of debris on triangle of land

The Chairman said that Townsend nursery had quoted £200 to remove the piles of debris on the Common and replace two posts. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the County Council about re-allocating the £250 locality grant for this purpose.

It was noted that Townsend Nursery did not take away grass clippings, the accepted practice respecting contracted work carried out for green sites.

7. Fly tipping - update

Councillor Sheffield updated the Parish Council on progress she had made on the fly tipping issue and how to combat it.

On the question of cameras, while there were two different types, solar powered cameras looked to be the most suitable given the lack of lampposts that could provide power. However, at £2000 each, cameras were costly to buy although rental was an option. In addition, there were monitoring costs and costs for moving/installing cameras. Furthermore, the technology was new and more evidence on their effectiveness was needed. This was now being sought.

Herts police were trialling wildlife cameras and further information on their potential was awaited.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Sheffield for the work she had undertaken. It was agreed there should be a further discussion once more information had been obtained.

8. Planning applications and decisions to 25 June 2021

The Parish Council considered applications and decisions to 25 June 2021.

The Clerk said these were now in a different format as it was now possible to search on the District Council's website for planning applications and decisions within individual Parishes and then just cut and paste the results.

9. Planning application 5/2021/1319 proposed business park Junction 10/10A, M1

The Chairman said that he had received agreement from Councillors to his circulated email suggesting raising early objections to these proposals. The Town Council and the Harpenden Society were contacted similarly but, since no response was received, he decided to withdraw this matter at this time but monitor events pending submission of a formal planning application, which was agreed.

10. District Council Local Plan 2020 - 2038 - Update

The Clerk said that the District Council's call for sites had concluded in March 2021. However, as yet there was no further information on the District Council's website so it was currently not possible to identify the proposed sites as submitted. However, the details of one or two had appeared in the local press. The Chairman explained his understanding of the legal position, from advice given, where proposed sites coincided with those previously legally ratified under the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan, February 2019.

11. Luton Airport expansion - Update

The Clerk said that the most recent development was a press statement that had appeared on the Luton Airport website on 19 May 2021, advising that there would be a further public consultation.

12. Queen Elizabeth's green canopy

The Clerk said that to celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee in 2022, a nationwide planting of trees had been proposed. There was an opportunity for the Parish Council to become involved and Councillor Sheffield said that she was willing to take this forward on behalf of the Parish Council. This was unanimously agreed and the Clerk said that he would liaise with her direct.

13. Banking Arrangements

The Clerk said that he had spoken to two Parish Clerks about their internet banking arrangements. The first Clerk made all payments alone but prepared a schedule of payments for signature by two Parish Councillors. The second Clerk used a two-stage arrangement whereby he raised payments and a Parish Councillor released the payments.

The Parish Council felt that the second option provided more security and was therefore preferable. The Clerk said that on this basis he would prepare a paper for the next meeting with a recommendation. This might involve updating the Council's Financial Regulations and a change of bank.

14. Representation of residents in outlying areas of the Parish.

The Chairman said that he had, as part of getting to know different parts of the Parish, spoken to individuals in Harpendenbury, but particularly the author, Christine Aitken, a local historian and writer who had lived there since the mid 1960's.

15. SADALC 5 July 2021 and HAPTC 6 July 2021

The Chairman said that a meeting of the St Albans and District Association of Local Councils was being held that evening, for which he had sent apologies for absence. The HAPTC AGM was on 6 July 2021, which he was also unable to attend.

16. Date of next meeting

The Clerk suggested that the next meeting be held in October 2021.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a proposed meeting date be circulated in the autumn. The timing of meetings was also discussed and it was agreed that going forward meetings should start at 6.00pm.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his diligent efforts in dealing with COVID rules pertaining to meetings of the Parish Council, its business and successful outcome.

There being no other business the meeting ended at 8.55 pm

Clerk to the Council

Chairman