

HARPENDEN RURAL PARISH COUNCIL HERTFORDSHIRE

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in the Bell Room, St Mary's Church, Kinsbourne Green, on Monday 13 January 2020 starting at 7.30pm

Present: Parish Councillors Barrett (Chairman) Mrs Ayres (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Bell and Randall.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Holder

Also in attendance: Andrew Reading (Parish Clerk)

1. Chairman

The Chairman thanked the Parish Council members for their good wishes regarding his recent period of illness and ongoing recovery.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Randall declared an interest in planning application 5/2019/1535.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2019 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

(i) Cheque authorisations and review of expenditure

The Clerk said that he had booked Councillor Randall on a new member induction course on 14th May 2020. Councillor Mrs Bell said that she would now be free to attend the same course and the Clerk said that he would contact HAPTC to see if there were any spaces available. If necessary, it should be possible to cancel a booking at fairly short notice without incurring a penalty.

(ii) Tree work on triangle of Common Land

The Clerk said that the work had been successfully carried out as planned. There had been no comments, adverse or otherwise, from local residents, who had been kept informed.

(iii) Bank Mandate

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Ayres had arranged for Councillor Randall to be added to the Parish Council's bank mandate

5. Cheque Authorisations and review of expenditure

The Clerk said that Parish Council expenditure to date during the financial year totalled £4,313 against budgeted income of £5,253. In response to a request made at the last meeting the Clerk said that he had added two separate columns to the financial update, one showing actual expenditure to date and the second showing projected expenditure to the year end. The latter showed projected year end expenditure to be slightly under budget. Significant overspend on tree work had been offset by savings on grass cutting with the training and contingency allocations not having been spent.

The following cheques were approved and authorised.

	Cheque	Description	£
(i)	100636	Townsend Nursery - grass cut October 2019	56.40
(ii)	100637	Clerk net salary October to December 2019	457.37
(iii)	100638	HMRC tax on salary	114.40
(iv)	100639	TBS hygiene dog waste collection October to December 2019	93.60
(v)	100640	Townsend Nursery grass cut November 2019	56.40
(vi)	100641	SADALC subscription 2019/20	10.00
(vii)	100642	St Nicholas PCC room hire	17.50

6. Budget 2020/21 and Parish precept

The Parish Council considered the draft budget for 2020/21 as prepared by the Parish Clerk. This set out expected expenditure and income for the forthcoming year. The Clerk said the budget was similar to the previous year apart from there being no allowance for tree work but instead a sum for the purchase and installation of a third dog waste bin, together with year one collection costs.

The Clerk said that since preparing the budget he had been advised by TBS hygiene that their weekly collection costs were going to rise to £5 per week per bin plus VAT from 1 February 2020 despite the fact that an increase from £3 to £4 per bin had only recently been notified. Following discussion, it was agreed that a third bin should be provided (Minute 9 refers); that the increased collection costs should be taken into account when setting the precept, and that the draft budget should be amended accordingly. It would be worth checking whether TBS Hygiene would provide a special rate for collection from three bins in close proximity to one another.

It was noted that possibilities for grant funding existed and the Chairman said that he would contact Neighbourhood Watch about installing a couple of electronic speed restriction warning signs on The Common.

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council precept for 2019/20 be set at £5,100 and that the District Council be notified accordingly.

7. Financial Regulations Update

The Clerk said that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had published updated Model Financial Regulations for Parish Councils in July 2019 and that he had updated Harpenden Rural's regulations in the track changed version circulated with the meeting papers. Much of NALC's model did not apply to a small Parish Councils like Harpenden Rural, and so a shortened, more relevant version, based on the NALC model, had been adopted for a number of years.

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council's updated Financial Regulations, as attached to these minutes, be adopted

8. Updated Risk policy 2019

The Clerk said that following on from the Parish Council's risk policy, agreed in January 2019, he had now updated and expanded this to cover current activities. Risks were mainly low level apart from website maintenance/updating designated a medium risk. The Parish Council was obliged to consider risk on an annual basis under the requirements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Parish Councillors asked a number of questions on the document which were answered by the Clerk. In particular the Clerk drew attention to the inclusion of a risk requirement that trees on the triangle of common land would be inspected every three years with any necessary work being undertaken. Also, the Clerk had increased his required contractual notice period from one to two months.

It was agreed that this was a comprehensive document which provided a structured approach to managing the Council's risk.

It was RESOLVED that the updated Risk Assessment Policy be adopted.

9. Dog Waste Bins

The Clerk said that TBS Hygiene graded dog waste bins on a scale of 1 to 4 depending on how full they were. Under this system, the bin near Annables Lane was graded a 'two' and the bin at the top end of the triangle of common land was graded a 'four+', which meant that at times it was inadequate for the amount of dog waste deposited there.

The Parish Council discussed a possible location for another waste bin and concluded that a site slightly further north of the triangle of Common Land and opposite Derwent Road would be a suitable as this would take some pressure off the existing bin. It should be the same size and colour as the existing two. The landowner would need to be consulted in advance of this going ahead.

10. Planning applications and decisions to 3 January 2020

The Parish Council considered planning applications and decisions to 3 January 2020. In particular several planning applications received in respect of Canley, The Common were noted. It was also noted that application 5/2019/1535 for a change of use of land to the rear of Maison Rose and change of use to incorporate land within the residential curtilage, had not yet been determined.

11. Planning application for Incinerator Plant at East Hyde

There had been no further developments since the last meeting.

12. London Luton Airport Update

It was noted that the consultation exercise initiated by the airport had concluded in December 2019. The next step was the submission of a formal planning application.

13. St Albans and District Association of Local Councils (SADALC)

Councillor Mrs Ayres said that there was nothing of significance to report back on from the meeting of SADALC held on 17 October 2019.

The Chairman reported the sad news that John Bell, the Chairman of the SADALC, had passed away suddenly on New Years Eve. As a consequence, the meeting of the Association scheduled for 14 January 2020 had been cancelled.

14. Gravel path behind properties in Luton Road

The Chairman reported that work had been undertaken recently to repair the gravel path behind properties in Luton road and adjacent to the triangle of common land. It was unclear how the cost had been met.

15. Posts in The Common

It was noted that while the posts installed by the Parish Council in The Common opposite the triangle of common land had achieved the purpose of preventing cars parking on the verge, the grass seeding behind the posts had not been successful. The Chairman said that he had some spare grass seed and would have another attempt at grassing this piece of land.

16. Date of next meeting

It was RESOLVED that the next meeting be held on Monday 16 March 2020.

There being no other business the meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Clerk to the Council

Chairman

