

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 16 March 2020 starting at 7.30pm

Present: Parish Councillors Mrs Ayres (Vice-Chairman), Holder and Randall.
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrett and Mrs Bell

Also in attendance: Andrew Reading (Parish Clerk)

1. Covid-19

The Clerk said that the Chairman was unwell and in view of the Coronavirus epidemic, had decided to stay at home and self-isolate. The meeting was quorate and it was agreed that it would be best to deal with the business as speedily as possible.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2020 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

Budget 2020/21

It was noted that the updated budget for 2020/21 showed a small loss for the year due to the dog waste collection costs having increased for a second time within a very short period. The Clerk said that TBS Hygiene had also wanted to move from quarterly to monthly payments, which would be difficult for a Parish Council that met quarterly and used cheques. Following discussion they had agreed to retain quarterly payments, but with their invoices being submitted part way through a quarter rather than at the end of the quarter. While the Parish Council had some reserves, the precept would need to increase in 2021 to meet growing costs.

It was AGREED that the Clerk prepare a schedule for the next meeting showing how dog waste collection costs had increased in recent years and whether other options were available.

5. Cheque Authorisations and review of expenditure

It was noted that Parish Council expenditure to date during the financial year totalled £5253 against budgeted income of £5,000 and a projected expenditure of £5334. The two areas of overspend were in relation to tree work and dog waste collection. With the installation of a third waste bin, it would be necessary to increase the precept in 2021 to cover the collection costs.

The following cheques were approved and authorised.

	Cheque	Description	£
(i)	100643	TBS Hygiene Dog Waste Collection Jan to March	132.00
(ii)	100644	Clerk net salary January to March 2020	457.37
(iii)	100645	HMRC tax on salary	114.40
(iv)	100646	Clerk expenses June 2019 to March 2020	219.70
(v)	100648	Meeting room hire 16 March 2020	10.00
(vi)	100647	Anti virus software renewal -reimbursement of Clerk. Cheque post dated 1 April 2020	18.00

6. Appointment of Internal Auditor

It was RESOLVED that Alex Sage be appointed to undertake the 2019/20 audit of accounts.

7. Planning applications and decisions to 9 March 2020

The Parish Council considered applications as per the circulated Schedule. The Clerk provided two updates to the list in that application 5/2020/0129 had been refused on 13 March 2020 and application 5/2019/2802 had been withdrawn.

8. Meeting of St Albans and District Association of Local Councils - Tuesday 5 May 2020

The Clerk said that the next meeting of SADALC was scheduled for 5 May at Redbourn. However, in the light of very recent guidance on coronavirus from central government, it was likely that the meeting would be cancelled.

9. St Albans District Council Local Plan

It was agreed that an update on the current position be circulated

10. Planning application for Incinerator Plant at East Hyde

It now appeared that the planning application for the Incinerator Plant was on hold and that the landowners were looking at alternate uses for the site.

11. London Luton Airport expansion Update

It was noted that the meeting scheduled to be held in Kimpton Memorial Hall on Wednesday 18 March to consider engagement with the planning application to expand the airport had been cancelled in the light of government advice on coronavirus.

12. Health, wellbeing and Environment conference - 20 March 2020

It was noted that the conference had been cancelled in the light of government advice on coronavirus.

13. Kinsbourne Green Common Spring Clean - 1 March 2020

The Vice Chairman reported that this had gone well helped by the fact that the weather had been kind. The organiser, Kate Sheffield, had hoped to attend the meeting but had decided stay at home due to her husband being unwell.

14. Garden Waste and tree debris on the Common

The Parish Council discussed the unsightly piles of woodland waste at the top of the triangle of land, some of which appeared to have been left by local residents. It might be possible to erect a sign as a way of discouraging this practice. In the meantime the Clerk was asked to check whether Townsend Nurseries remove the grass cuttings when they under took their grass cuts during the summer months.

15. Automatic re-enrolment

The Clerk said that he had notified the Pensions Regulator that there were no employees who were required to be auto-enrolled under the Pensions Act 2008.

16. Date of next meeting

The Clerk said that under current regulations, the next meeting of the Parish Council, (the Annual Meeting), was due to be held in May and that the date proposed was Monday 18th May. This meeting approved the Annual Governance and Accountability Statement together with the Annual Accounts. However, with requirements being introduced by government to limit free movement in order to combat the coronavirus epidemic, and people aged 70 and over being required to self-isolate for three months, it would be very difficult if not impossible for many Parish Councils to meet this requirement. It was likely that further guidance from government on this issue would be issued in the coming days and weeks.

It was RESOLVED that the date of the next meeting be agreed provisionally for Monday 18 May 2020.

There being no other business the meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Clerk to the Council

Chairman