

HARPENDEN RURAL PARISH COUNCIL HERTFORDSHIRE

Minutes of a meeting of a meeting of the Parish Council held via Zoom, on Monday 19 October 2020 starting at 7.30pm

Present: Parish Councillors Barrett (Chairman), Mrs Ayres, Holder and Randall

Also in attendance: Andrew Reading (Parish Clerk)

1. Councillor Mrs Patti Bell

The Chairman reported that Councillor Mrs Bell had tendered her resignation from the Parish Council for family reasons, and with immediate effect. The Chairman said that Mrs Bell had been a member of the Parish Council since 2007 and that he would be writing to her on behalf of the Parish Council expressing thanks for her contribution since that time.

The Clerk said that he would notify the District Council of the casual vacancy which would start the process of finding a replacement.

2. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared

3. Minutes

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

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

5. Cheque Authorisations and review of expenditure

The Parish Council noted that expenditure to date during the financial year totalled £2,605 against projected income of £5,663. The following cheques were approved and authorised.

	Cheque	Description	£
(i)	100656	Townsend Nursery grass cut July 2020	56.40
(ii)	100657	TBS Hygiene. Dog waste collection July to sept 2020	156.00
(iii)	100658	Clerk salary July to September 2020	359.23

(iv)	100659	Clerk tax on salary	240.00
(v)	100660	Clerk expenses April to September 2020	146.16
(vi)	100661	Townsend Nursery grass cuts August and Sept 2020	112.80
(vii)	100662	HAPTC - training course	30.00

6. Provision of dog waste bin, Kinsbourne Green Common

The Clerk said that the District Council was replacing all of its dog bins with bins that could be used to deposit ordinary waste as well as dog waste, as long as the latter was bagged. One of these bins had recently been sited opposite the Post Office in Kinsbourne Green. The District Council had confirmed that the waste bin on the triangle of Common Land could now be used to deposit dog waste. However, residents were currently unaware of that flexibility as there was no information on the side of the bin. The Clerk said that the District Council would look at signposting the litter bin on the Common to make the position clear.

The Parish Council agreed that if this action was taken by the District Council, then it probably wouldn't be necessary to go to the expense of installing another dog waste bin opposite Derwent Road. Councillor Mrs Ayres said that she would notify the landowner of the situation. It was likely that the locality budget grant of £250 for provision of a third bin would have to be returned.

7. Inspection of trees - Kinsbourne Green Common triangle

The Clerk said that as a consequence of the Council's insurers asking that trees it was responsible for being inspected on an annual basis, he had spoken to the Clerk of Redbourn Parish Council who had suggested contacting Dave Stevens, Tree and Garden Services, to inspect the trees on the triangle of Common land. Following a subsequent telephone call, Mr Stevens had agreed to look at the trees and make a report at no charge. This report was currently awaited.

8. Triangle of Common Land - Parish Council responsibilities

The Clerk said he had added this to the agenda following receipt of an email from former Councillor Mrs Bell, who had wanted to know more about the Parish Council's responsibilities and the related cost and responsibility of maintaining trees that were now nearly 50 years old on the triangle of common land

The Parish Council was advised that the reasons why the Parish Council took on this responsibility in the distant past were unclear as the Clerk had been unable to locate the Parish Council minutes prior to 1979. However, the Parish Council had entered into a tenancy agreement in 1973 with the owner of Kinsbourne Green Common to rent the triangle of common land for an annual peppercorn rent of fifty pence. The Parish Council had then cleared the land and planted the trees. It was unclear whether this tenancy agreement, which was in itself a supplementary agreement, had ever been superceded. The peppercorn rent had been £1 since at least 1979.

It was suggested by one Parish Councillor that the landowner might be approached for a financial contribution towards upkeep given rising maintenance costs. However, following discussion, it was agreed that this issue should be discussed further at a face to face meeting, preferably with more background information being available.

9. St Albans District Plan

The Clerk said that in a letter to St Albans District Council dated 1 September 2020, the Planning Inspectors had given the District Council two options. The first was to withdraw the District Plan. If this didn't happen then the second option was that the inspectors would write a report recommending the Plan not be adopted because of a failure to co-operate with other local authorities.

10. London Luton Airport - expansion

The Clerk advised that the Airport Operators planned to launch a pre-application consultation on how they could recover from the Covid 19 downturn in a sustainable way by growing from 18mppa, which was the current maximum permitted, to 19mppa. This was a separate exercise from the proposal to move to 32mppa. The consultation would run until 11 November 2020.

11. Planning applications and decisions to October 2020

The Parish Council considered a list of planning applications and decisions to October 2020. Councillor Randall referred to one applicant who felt that he had been unfairly singled out by the Parish Council when planning applications were considered. The Chairman said that in his view this wasn't the case and that while the Parish Council only made representations in a limited number of cases, the applications were ultimately determined by the District Council as the Planning Authority on planning grounds.

12. Meeting of St Albans District Association of Local Councils

It was noted that the next meeting of the Association was scheduled for Monday 9 November 2020. This meeting would be held by Zoom.

13. Restructuring of Local Government in Hertfordshire

The Clerk said that it now appeared that widespread plans to reorganise local government into unitary authorities were not being supported by the government and that only two or three areas would be affected. Hertfordshire was one of the majority of areas where the existing structure would be retained.

14. White Paper -Planning for the future

The Clerk said that he had recently circulated the National Association of Local Councils, response to this government White Paper. The Chairman said it was important that the Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan was not undermined by any relaxation of planning controls.

15. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting be held on Monday 18th January 2021 at 7.30pm. This would be a face-to-face meeting, or by Zoom if restrictions had not been lifted by then.

There being no other business the meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Clerk to the Council

Chairman