

HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Harpsden Village Hall

on

Wednesday 22nd April 2015

Present:	CLlr Kester George (KG)	Chairman
	CLlr Robin Dorkings (RD)	
	CLlr Dieter Hinke (DH)	Henley Town Councillor
	CLlr Malcolm Leonard (ML)	SODC Councillor
	CLlr David Bartholomew (DB)	County Councillor

Residents: About 21 with four apologies

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Tipple (ST) Harpsden Parish Clerk

- 1. Welcomes:** KG welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillors Malcolm Plews and Tony Wright had sent their apologies.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the APM held on April 30th 2014 were signed as a correct record.
- 3. i. Financial Report:** The financial report for the last year was available for everyone to examine. KG explained that the Parish Council tried to keep the precept as small as possible and that most of the budget went into the Clerk's salary. ST drew attention to the £500 grant from OCC to help finance an external box for the defibrillator recently installed at the village hall. The John Hodges Trust for Harpsden Hall had contributed the remaining £100 and had paid £90 for its installation. The report was proposed by RD and seconded by KG.
ii. Chairman's Report: KG gave his annual report, in which he explained that the year had once again been dominated by the Council's participation in the joint Henley/Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan (NP), and he was grateful to CLlr Dieter Hinke (DH), the Chairman of the Governance Committee, for agreeing to bring residents up to date on its progress. He also made reference to the impending decision on Mrs Engbers appeal against SODC's decision to refuse permission for 110 house at Thames Farm, and to the recent Parish boundary changes whereby the Council had agreed to forgo the built-up land between Station Road and the river, including Northfield and Bolney Avenues, in return for the remainder of Woodlands Road on the western side of the A4155. The Council had also lost Gillotts School grounds but had recognised that this made good administrative sense. KG also referred to the Golf Club's embryonic plans to move their Clubhouse to the top of Chalk Hill where they already had a small car park. It was hoped that this move would be financed by building houses on the site of their current building opposite the Cricket Field. A full text of KG's report is attached to these minutes.
- 4. Open Forum around the Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP) led by CLlr Dieter Hinke (DH)**
DH explained that of the original Harpsden sites put forward in the Core Strategy, only one – Highlands Farm - had received an allocation in the NP process. He stressed how important it was for residents of both Harpsden and Henley to vote at the NP referendum in September. If the referendum failed, then landowners of all the sites that had not received an allocation, including several impacting Harpsden, could apply for planning permission for

development on their land. The NP process had been established to offer protection for the community from such uncontrolled development. He appreciated that one of the main areas of concern for Harpsden residents was to mitigate the effect of the inevitable increase in traffic up and down Gillotts Lane, the valley road and Sheephouse Lane. Henley Town Council had allocated £50,000 to commission a travel survey by Peter Brett Associates based in Reading, on the potential impact on Henley and Harpsden's roads of traffic generated by the 450 new homes, and would be organising a public forum to enable residents of both parishes to input their local knowledge, before starting to collect data for the survey in June. DH went on to explain that the main reason the NP had had to be redrafted was because land at the Henley College, the Henley Youth Club and 118 Greys Road had been offered for redevelopment at the very end of the previous consultation and had had to be given due consideration. The revised NP included land at Gillotts School, which had now been given permission by the Secretary of State to be sold. A straw poll of those present indicated a vast majority were against this development. DH explained that the school intended the amount of playing field area to remain the same by reconfiguring the existing playing fields and introducing an all-weather surface. He thought it would make it clearer if Gillotts School produced a model of its proposed redevelopment for residents to view at the Town Hall. He reminded residents that one of the key tenets of SODC's adopted Core Strategy was to support Gillotts School. When questioned about the Wyevale site, DH explained that it had been agreed that a good quality small business development offering employment opportunity would be appropriate there. It had not been allocated housing as SODC's Core Strategy specified that land for homes needed to be found 'at Henley', and Wyevale was not contiguous with Henley. When questioned about Thames Farm, Cllrs David Bartholomew and Kester George explained that Shiplake and Harpsden Parish Councils had combined forces to present a robust defence against the appeal to build 110 homes on the land, but that as all the legal arguments for and against had now been made, there was little point in speculating on the outcome, due on 27th May 2015. In summing up, DH thanked those residents who had responded to the consultation and reiterated how important it was to vote in the NP referendum. On behalf of all those present, KG thanked DH for explaining the current situation so clearly.

5. Open Forum for Other Issues

- i. Golf Club:** There were various concerns over the Golf Club's proposal to move its Clubhouse to the top of Chalk Hill, particularly over where regular and overflow parking would be located given its position in the middle of an AONB, and how Chalk Hill, an already over-used rat-run from Reading to Henley, would cope with the increase in traffic, not to mention the danger to the many cycling clubs who were using it. A straw poll of those present indicated an overwhelming majority were against the move.
- ii. Gillotts Lane:** Odette Moss read out a letter on behalf of the Gillotts Lane Residents' Association in which concern was expressed about erosion to land on both sides of the road and about inadequate repairs to potholes. The residents were not in favour of introducing chicanes as traffic calming measures as they feared they might impede emergency vehicles when using the lane. It was agreed that the Gillotts Lane residents would be consulted by Peter Brett Associates during their traffic survey.
- iii. Reginald Mardon:** Two residents of Woodlands Road wanted to raise money to tidy up the row of Canadian maples planted in memory of Reginald Mardon, a Canadian Private killed in the First World War. KG was supportive of their wishes and would bring this up at the next Parish Council meeting.

6. Retirement of Cllr Malcolm Leonard

KG wished to thank Cllr Malcolm Leonard for his services to the Parish Council as District Councillor over the last twelve years, and in particular for robustly defending the parish boundary change which would have resulted in the loss of Highlands Farm to Henley. He wished him well in his retirement.

KG closed the meeting at 8.30pm.