

# HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Harpsden Village Hall

on

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013

Present: Mr Kester George (KG) Chairman  
Mrs Odette Moss (OM)  
Mr Malcolm Plews (MP)  
Mr Robin Dorkings (RD)

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Tipple (ST) Clerk

**2382 Welcomes and apologies:** There were apologies from David Bartholomew, Rob Simister and Richard Wilson.

**2383 Declarations of interests:** KG, OM and RD in respect of their houses in Harpsden.

**2384 Minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> June 2013:** The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

**2385 Matters arising:** OM wondered if the proposed Henley Challenge Triathlon in September would necessitate the closure of Gillotts Lane. The Special Event Order had been confusing and further clarification was needed. **Action: ST** [subsequent to the meeting OM had received information from a Oxfordshire Highways that Gillotts Lane would not be closed on that day; traffic would be able to turn right at the top of the lane, but not left.]

**2386 Progress on Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP):**

A useful meeting had taken place between the JNP Governance Committee, representatives from Harpsden Parish Council (HPC), Lucy Murfett from SODC, and the planning consultants, Nexus. Nexus had been made aware of the database of 60 willing volunteers in the JNP area although no conclusion was reached as to how the working groups would be made up or indeed how they would be coordinated. This would be the main area for discussion at the next meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July. Nexus outlined their proposed methods of communicating with residents, which would be a combination of banners, business cards left in popular locations, a leaflet drop by Royal Mail and the website. KG had accompanied Nexus to the proposed sites after the meeting and noted the consultants' concern at the poor access to the Highlands Farm and Gillotts sites. At the meeting Lucy Murfett had clarified that developments of approximately 10 or more houses would need to be included in the JNP and would form part of the allocation of up to 450 houses.

**2387 Oxfordshire County Councillor's Report:**

The full text of the report submitted by David Bartholomew (DB) is attached at Appendix 1. In the light of HPC's grave concerns over the pressure on infrastructure caused by the additional 450 houses in the JNP area, DB wanted to draw the Council's attention to a motion passed at a meeting of the full OCC on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July:

*"This Council recognises the importance of housing development being planned in a sustainable way with the infrastructure required in place at an early stage.*

*The County Council Developer Funding Team have had success in gaining infrastructure for some larger developments in various parts of the county in the past. However, there are many smaller developments in parts of Oxfordshire where numbers of houses are built without apparent input and without any objections from the highways officers, in spite of the extra traffic being created on existing roads. There is also*

*concern that not enough priority is being given to ensure there are enough school places within existing schools when these developments are agreed. In some cases, new schools will be needed to cope with the demand. This is especially a problem when there are repeated applications in an area, that over a couple of years add up to many hundreds of houses, which would have triggered road and education infrastructure if in a single application.*

*As the County Council will be responsible for maintaining our roads and ensuring there are enough school places for our children, it is important that this is dealt with as a matter of urgency. This Council therefore urges the Cabinet to take heed of these problems and to work with officers to find urgent solutions to this issue, including closer working with district planning officers and improved liaison with local members."*

**2388 South Oxfordshire District Councillor's Report:** There was nothing to report.

**2389 Highways and Footpaths:** There was nothing to report.

**2390 Clerk's Salary Review:** KG explained that when HPC had recruited Sarah in January 2012 she had accepted a salary of £2,000 in the belief that the job would require the same level of input as that required of her predecessor. It had soon become apparent that the Council had underestimated the amount of work generated by the prospect of a Neighbourhood Plan even though it had hoped to avoid one, and had raised her salary to £3,300 in March 2013. That settlement had in turn been overtaken by the advent of the JNP with Henley, which required her to spend significantly more hours at meetings and on email. KG considered her job to be at least one and a half times as demanding as the one for which HPC had been paying her and proposed that HPC raised her salary by 50% with effect from 1 June 2013 to a total of £4,650 for the duration of the JNP, after which it should be reviewed since this level could not be sustained without increasing the precept. The proposal was seconded by MP and was unanimously carried.

**2391 Planning Matters**

**2391.i SODC Decisions**

**P13/S1082/FUL Beechwood Cottage, Harpsden Woods, Harpsden RG9 4AF**

Erection of replacement dwelling and detached garage together with installation of swimming pool and utility/pump room

PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED

**2391.ii Outstanding Applications and Appeals:**

**P13/S1502/HH Thames Poultry Farm, Harpsden Woods, Harpsden RG9 4AD**

Proposed single storey extension, relocation of front door, erection of new entrance porch, first floor balcony with veranda below on the North East elevation and construction of new dormers

*Harpsden Parish Council had no objection to this rather large extension but asked for a condition that the applicant would leave the access road, which was privately maintained and doubled as a bridle road, in as good a state as he found it and that he would repair any damage done to it during the building operations. Incidentally HPC knew the house in question as Thames Poultry Farm to distinguish it from the Thames Farm below it on the A4155.*

**P13/S1640/HH Redhatch, Harpsden Woods, Harpsden, RG9 4AF**

Construction of new garaging/studio

*Harpsden Parish Council had no objection to this application provided that the trees around the proposed garage block were subject to a Tree Preservation Order and that the new building remained part of a single property.*

**P13/S1733/HH St Quivox, Bolney Road, Lower Shiplake, RG9 3NT**

Remodelling of dwelling including single storey and two storey extension

*Harpsden Parish Council had no objection to this application: indeed they commended it as an obvious improvement on the existing building*

**P13/S1804/A Gillotts School, Henley on Thames, RG9 1PS**

One non illuminated monolith style free-standing sign, installed adjacent to roadside  
*HPC had no objection to this application although Henley on Thames Town Council had recommended its refusal on the grounds that the design and proposed materials were unsympathetic with the location, being on the edge of an AONB. The Henley Society had no objection.*

**P13/S2024/LDP Harpsden Wood Cottage, Harpsden Woods, RG9 4AF**

Certificate of lawful development for proposed two storey front extension and single storey rear extension

*It was for SODC to decide whether the proposed development could be carried out as permitted development under allowances of the Town and Country Planning Order 1995 and on that basis could proceed without the need for a planning application to be considered. HPC considered the extension to be discreet and inoffensive.*

**P13/S2087/HH Flowercroft Cottage, Kings Farm Lane, Harpsden, RG9 4JF**

Proposed two storey rear extension and alterations.

*HPC would defer its decision until KG had spoken to Mr and Mrs Swete of Upper House Farm, who would be most directly affected by the development.*

**2392 Financial Matters**

**2392.i Bank Balances and Reconciliations**

Community Account: £165 – PAYE cheque not yet presented

Business Saver Account: £4,705.890

ST had previously circulated by email the bank reconciliations for the two months to 21<sup>st</sup> June 2013 for the Community and Business Saver Accounts and both were now approved by Councillors and signed by the Chairman. They are attached to the minutes at Appendix 2, 3 and 4.

**2392.ii Approval of Payments**

ST tabled the following payments for approval:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Power</u>
Internal auditor	£70.00	
NP suggestion boxes and labels	£334.80	s137
Chiltern Society Membership	£25.00	s137

It was proposed by MP, seconded by OM, and carried unanimously, that the sum of £334.80 be paid for suggestion boxes and labels for the JNP process, under the Local Government Act 1972, s137. It was further proposed by MP, seconded by OM, and carried unanimously, that the sum of £25 be paid to renew HPC's membership of the Chiltern Society, under the Local Government Act 1972, s137. Payment to the internal auditor was also approved. The payments are attached at Appendix 5.

**2392.iii Budget vs Actual Expenditure:** This was circulated by ST and approved by Council and is attached to the minutes at Appendix 6

**2392.iv Review of Effectiveness of the Internal Audit.** ST ran through the recommendations of the internal auditor and it was agreed as follows: OM would replace ST as a signatory on the bank account to avoid KG signing his own expenses cheque; whilst minute items were already consecutively numbered through the year, ST would ensure that page numbers were also consecutively numbered; she would reclaim VAT by the next meeting; when deciding on a s137 payment, the decision would be minuted as a formal resolution; the original purchase values of the bench and the frame would be stated in the asset register; agendas would include the name and contact details of the Clerk in case parishioners needed to ask for information about the meeting; the Council would not, however, revisit the way it managed its accounts to minimise the risk of an overdraft, as ST felt confident the mistake would not recur. The Council reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit and found it to

be very effective. JNP Associates had been very thorough, very helpful and had completed it with the minimum of fuss. ST recommended using JNP Associates for HPC's next internal audit.

**2393 Approval and adoption of Complaints Procedure:** ST had previously circulated a standard Complaints Procedure which she had adapted for HPC. MP proposed approving it, RD seconded it and it was carried unanimously and adopted. A copy is attached at Appendix 7.

**2394 Approval and adoption of Freedom of Information Publication Scheme:** ST had previously circulated a model Freedom of Information Publication Scheme prepared by the Information Commissioner. MP proposed approving it, RD seconded it and it was carried unanimously and adopted. A copy is attached at Appendix 8.

**2395 AOB**

**2395.i** HPC was expecting a formal written request from Claire Engbers of Thames Farm via SODC, for copies of all correspondence between HPC and SODC in respect of all the planning applications she had submitted. ST reminded Councillors that all correspondence was available on the SODC website.

**2395.ii** MP wondered if KG had continued the dialogue with Tudor Taylor, Chairman of Shiplake Parish Council, regarding its possible bid for boundary changes. Shiplake PC had not been convinced of HPC's resistance to development at Thames Farm and so had decided to bid for a parish boundary change to incorporate Thames Farm within the Shiplake Parish boundary.

**2395.iii.** The next meeting of the JNP Governance Committee would be on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July at 9am. This would be immediately followed by a join Henley/Harpsden meeting which Nexus would also attend.

**2395.iv.** ST had met with Martin Goodier and had been taught how to populate and amend the website. They hoped to have the website finished by the launch of the JNP, which was scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September.

**2396 Dates of next meetings:**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013 7.45pm

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013 7.45pm

**Approved:..... Date: .....**

**Kester George, Chairman**