

HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting held at Harpsden Wood Lodge
on
Monday 18th June 2012

Present: Mr Kester George (KG) Chairman
Mrs Odette Moss (OM)
Mr Malcolm Plews (MP)
Mrs Karen Tross Youle (KTY)
Mr Darryl Grant (DG)

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Tipple (ST) Clerk

2279 Welcomes and apologies: KG welcomed Councillors to the meeting. There were no apologies.

2280 Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 21st May 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

2281 Matters arising: OM reported that she had not compiled the parishioners' questionnaire referred to in the minutes as reference 2271, as it had been agreed that this should not be rushed.

2282 Co-option of Darryl Grant: It was unanimously agreed that Darryl Grant should be co-opted to the Parish Council. ST gave him the necessary paperwork to sign and gave him the website link to a publication called 'The Good Councillor's Guide'.

2283 2283.1 Annual Governance Statement

The Council was satisfied that the effectiveness of its system of internal control was in accordance with proper practices and unanimously approved the Annual Governance Statement.

2283.2 Approval of Annual Return

ST circulated a copy of Section 1 of the Annual Return, noting that the precept had remained the same, that the increase in 'Other Expenditure' was due partly to an increase in the internal audit fee and the insurance premium, but mostly to the increase in the annual rent of the village hall from £45 to £320 to pay for the Council's share of the new storage and display facilities. The Annual Return was unanimously approved.

2284 New Code of Conduct

ST had previously circulated to Councillors the revised Code of Conduct adopted by South Oxfordshire District Council, who had recommended that the same code be adopted as the Code of Conduct for members and co-opted members of Harpsden Parish Council with effect from 1st July 2012. KG drew Councillors' attention to item 17 in particular, namely the disclosure of Councillors' interests in any matter being considered at a meeting of the Council. It was unanimously agreed to adopt the new Code of Conduct and ST would complete the necessary paperwork and forward to SODC.

2285 AOB

2285.1: KG had received an invitation from Errol Facy to join a committee of the Henley Society to participate in their discussions on Henley's Neighbourhood Plan. He explained that the Henley Society had no formal status but as Henley Town Council did have regard to it, it would be worthwhile having a representative from Harpsden Parish Council on this new committee. ST agreed she would act as an observer and KG would let Errol Facy know.

2285.2: KG reported that Catherine Darnton, head teacher of Gillotts, had rejected a meeting with Rob Simister and himself. She would only consider selling part of the school's playing fields if the sale included either major repairs to the school or its total rebuilding, and moreover she would want a representative of Henley Town Council and other representatives from SODC present at the meeting as well. Rob Simister had requested a smaller, more informal meeting but had not yet received a reply.

2285.3: Having agreed that Harpsden Parish Council would not participate in Henley's Neighbourhood Plan, OM proposed that Harpsden should adopt its own Neighbourhood Plan. She explained that it did not have to cost a great deal of money, that there was no time limit on a Neighbourhood Plan, that it could cover many local issues other than planning and that there might be Harpsden residents who could offer expertise in compiling it.

Councillors put forward several ideas for potential development sites and projects in Henley including:

- i. Building a primary school alongside Gillotts to alleviate the pressure on primary school places in Henley.
- ii. Moving the allotments to Lucy's Farm or the brownfield site at Highlands Farm, freeing up the area near Tesco for housing similar to that on the Noble Road development.
- iii. Siting Jewsons and/or Gibbs and Dandy at Highlands Farm, although DG was of the opinion that they were happy at their current Reading Road site.
- iv. Moving Townlands Hospital to Highlands Farm.
- v. Turning the Swiss Farm campsite area into housing.
- vi. Moving the merged Stuart Turner/Walden's business to Highlands Farm and using its central Henley site for housing.
- vii. Moving Wilkins Removals to Highlands Farm again freeing up its central Henley site for housing.
- viii. Max Gottschalk seemed keen to buy the Wyvale Garden Centre site and might be interested in putting the allotments there, again freeing up that site for housing in Henley.

Other issues surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan and other planning concerns were discussed including the following:

- a. KG mentioned that he had met representatives from Bix and Rotherfield Greys Parish Councils, who had also decided against joining Henley's Neighbourhood Plan.
- b. As half of the land at Tesco's astroturf and sports facility site was actually in Harpsden, the addition of houses here would increase the total number of dwellings in Harpsden, which might result in it losing its 'small village' status.
- c. Pat Hiscock seemed keen to sell Lucy's Farm to a developer, as he had already turned down a request from residents to buy a small strip of land alongside Gillotts Hill to alleviate their residents' parking problems.
- d. There would be very strong opposition to there being access to a housing development at Lucy's Farm through Rotherfield Road: access from Blandy Road would be far more likely.
- e. Developing Thames Farm with more housing would link Shiplake and Harpsden and both villages would then run the risk of losing their individuality.

In conclusion, KG asked Councillors' opinions on whether or not Harpsden should undertake its own Neighbourhood Plan. OM suggested that a Neighbourhood Plan might offer the village protection from development and would also serve to keep Henley and Harpsden separate. KTY could not envisage a Neighbourhood Plan until it was known how many and what type of houses were planned for Harpsden. She referred to the recent development in Nettlebed which she considered to be attractive and would not look out of place in Harpsden. MP assumed that the majority of Harpsden residents would resist all proposals for additional housing with the exception perhaps of the brownfield site at Highlands Farm. He went on to reiterate that the Core Strategy specifically stated that small villages were exempt from development. DG suggested that Highlands Farm would be the perfect site for small industrial units to be located, as the government was keen to promote small businesses. He went on to cite the success of Ella's Kitchen, the baby food manufacturer, which had started from a small industrial unit in Rotherfield Greys and had become an international company.

It was agreed that Harpsden would not draw up its own Neighbourhood Plan yet, but would consider the issue again once Henley's Neighbourhood Plan had become more established. It was further agreed that if parishioners questioned Councillors, they should be reassured that according to the Core Strategy, Harpsden was exempt from development as it enjoyed the status of being a small village. KTY would state this at Thursday's meeting of Barry Wood's Unite! committee. It was also agreed that Harpsden could offer the brownfield site at Highlands Farm to accommodate Henley's infrastructure and/or businesses in order to free up housing development opportunities in Henley. KG agreed to write a letter to the Henley Standard in defence of Harpsden Parish Council's decision to abstain from Henley's Neighbourhood Plan, stating that the Council was still in dialogue with Henley Town Council and now the Henley Society, and would help Henley in any way it could without ruining its character.

2285.4 Planning Applications

OM circulated the three planning applications she had recently received for consideration.

Ref: P12/S0989/EX Beechwood Cottage, Harpsden Woods, Harpsden RG9 4AF. Extension of time for implementation for planning permission P08/E1213, to which members had no objection.

Ref: P12/S0968/FUL Perseverance Farm, Mays Green, Harpsden RG9 4AP. Proposed alterations to existing barn and part change of use to form a plant room for approved swimming pool and a garden room incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house. KG agreed to consider and circulate.

Ref: P12/S0897/HH Walton House, Northfield Avenue, Lower Shiplake, RG9 3PD. As this was MP's house until he moved very recently, he agreed to consider and circulate.

2285.5 DG extended thanks on behalf of his wife, Kirsty, to Harpsden Parish Council for its donation in recognition of the Diamond Jubilee of £500 to the Harpsden Fete. She had spent £340 on advertising and £140 had been given to Pat Hiscock for the use of his field. The fete had been a great success and had raised about £4,000 which would be divided between local entities such as the Church, the Pre-School, the Royal British Legion and the Chiltern Centre for the Disabled in Henley.

2285.6 It was agreed that it would be more useful for ST to give planning applications to KG in the first instance. He would offer his opinion and then circulate to the other Councillors.

2286 **The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 16th July 2012 at 7.45pm in the Committee Room of Harpsden Village Hall.**

Approved:.....

Kester George, Chairman

Date: