

HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held In Harpsden Parish Hall on Monday 18th September 2023 at 7.45 pm

Present:	Cllr Kester George (KG)	Chairman
	Cllr Matt Phillips (MP)	Parish Councillor
	Cllr Dominic Day (DD)	Parish Councillor
	Cllr Catherine Rubinstein (CR)	Parish Councillor
	Cllr Matt Leeman (ML)	Parish Councillor

In attendance:	
	Anne Marie Scanlon (AMS) Clerk
	Cllr Leigh Rawlins (LR) SODC
	Cllr David Bartholomew (DB) OCC

4078 Apologies for absence

There were none.

4079 Declarations of pecuniary interests and/or requests for dispensations from Members regarding any item on this agenda: There were none.

4080 Approval of Minutes of last Council Meeting on 17th July 2023

The minutes were approved.

4081 Renewal of Standing Orders

Standing orders were renewed.

4082 Oxfordshire County Council Report: attached at Appendix (i) DB presented his general report before moving to items specific to Harpsden.

(i) DRAINAGE ISSUES: GILLOTTS LANE, CHALK HILL & VALLEY

DB had received reports that the recent road work done by OCC in the vicinity of Garden Cottage had moved the flooding problems to other parts of the village.

Officers had informed him of the following.

- They wanted to reinstate the bunding to properties affected by surface water on Gillotts Lane.
- The work on the ditch at the bottom of Gillotts Lane would need to be done again as a lorry had destroyed it.
- Officers intended to arrange cleaning and run a camera down the main carrier pipe from the road down towards the soakaway, as Thames Water had caused a small amount of damage to the pipe, and it was uncertain what action they took to remedy the damage.
- There was a request for the PC to look at extending its soakaway under the footway into the corner of the football field.
- OCC would be asking HPC to share costs on any work undertaken.

(ii) VILLAGE GATES

DB said he would assist on the purchase of Village Gates. If HPC decided to go ahead with the Gates OCC would need to both purchase and install the Gates with HPC reimbursing the cost of both.

ACTION. Council to visit sites and decide on where to place the gates.

(iii) Planning

A. P22/S4613/MPO WYEVALE 40 DWELLINGS

SODC had not yet decided the ‘Planning Obligation Modification’ to remove the speed limit change and gateway feature on the advice of OCC Highways.

B. P23/S2650/FUL LUCYS FARM BARNS, HARPSDEN ROAD

DB had received emails asking for his assistance in objecting to the planning application but as he was no longer a DC, he was unable to provide it.

In discussion after the report KG said he was shocked that OCC had undertaken the work on the road at Garden Cottage without informing the Council. DB said he too had only been informed after the fact. He noted that many individuals had become involved in emails between OCC, himself, and the PC. He said he would stress to the road team and engineers that any future work could only be signed off by either the PC or him – after the work and costs had been agreed.

Council noted that the work undertaken on Gillotts Lane had succeeded only in moving the flooding problem elsewhere. The Council was very concerned about drainage and flooding and would be investigating ways in which both could be addressed.

ACTION KG to contact Daniel Depp.

The PC informed DB that the football field belonged to Harpsden Trust.

ACTION CR to inform Trust about OCC’s request.

4083 South Oxfordshire District Councillors Report Attached Appendix (ii)

LR presented his report. The SODC Housing Land Statement showed that the Council lacked the 5-year supply of housing land required by the current version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In fact, the statement showed 4.2 years and developers would probably be able to reduce this figure further as they had done at so many Planning Appeals. LR said that despite that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) continued to build homes, the targets were too high and impossible to reach. The problem was that the targets were too high, and that housing supply was calculated by reference to completions, over which LPAs had virtually no control, instead of planning approvals, on which SODC had a very good record.

KG was also concerned about the effect this latest Statement would have on the Neighbourhood Plan. LR said that NPs got some protection so long as LPAs had a three-year supply, but Planning Inspectors could not ignore the 5-year limit until the government changed it in a revised NPPF.

LR said the landscape consultation regarding the AONB Extension application continued and that he had been working closely with a parishioner who had applied for planning permission and subsequently been denied. KG asked LR if the Planning Officer would agree to a meeting with him and LR said he would ask.

LR said that he had ‘Called In’ the Planning Application for Lucy’s Farm (**P23/S2650/FUL**) which meant it would be decided by a planning committee rather than an individual planning officer. However, as an amendment had been submitted to the original application, the committee would have to wait until the process was completed.

4084 To Appoint a new Internal Auditor

AMS had previously circulated the terms from Mulberry & Co. to the Council. AMS had proposed hiring the auditors for a period of three years, but Council asked that the new internal auditors be appointed initially for a period of one year.

ACTION: AMS to send letter of engagement to Mulberry & Co and to make an appointment with them for the start of the first internal audit.

4085 Planning Matters: (Appendix iii)

The complete Planning Report is attached and available on the website.

Discussion was confined to the three new applications.

P23/S2917/HH

Apple Ash, Woodlands Road, Harpsden, Henley-on-Thames RG9 4AB

Single storey extension.

Planning Officer Hannah Smith

Target Decision 24th October 2023

Consultation Ends 21st September 2023

The Council found no grounds for objection.

P23/S2852/LDP

Tree Tops House Gillotts Lane Henley-on-Thames RG9 1PT

Timber Garden Room

Planning Officer Hannah Smith

Target Decision 18th October 2023

The Council found no grounds for objection, but KG had alerted the resident most likely to be affected.

P23/S2650/FUL

Lucys Farm Barns Harpsden Road Harpsden RG9 4HN

Demolition of existing farmyard buildings and erection of 2x semi-detached barn-style dwellings and 1x detached dwelling with associated off-street parking and amenity space provision. Alterations to existing vehicular access arrangements.

Planning Officer Caitlin Phillpotts

Target Decision 29th September 2023
Consultation Ends 31st August 2023
The Council confirmed their previous objection.

4086 Financial Matters

4086.i. Bank Balances and Reconciliations (attached at Appendix iv a & iv b)

Community Account:	£100
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Business Saver Account:	£90,171.81
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Total of both accounts a/o 4th September 2023	£90,271.81
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AMS had previously circulated by email the bank reconciliations for the 2 months to 4th 2023 for the Community and Business Saver Accounts (attached appendix 4b and 4c). The bank reconciliations noted the following income.

CCLA Interest £4,890.45 (3 months)

Expenditure for the two-month period was as follows.

Clerk's Salary for three months (rec done 4 th September)	£1335.75
Netwise Extra Storage	£100.26
Annual Membership CPRE	£36.00
Staff Training re Website	£25.00
Election Fee Payment to SODC	£200.00

Both bank reconciliations were accepted and approved by Councillors and signed by the Chairman. The Clerk retains the permission of the Council to transfer all funds in excess of £100 from the Community Account to the Business Saver Account. AMS informed the Council that since the bank reconciliations had been done the Council had received the second part of the annual Precept of £5,500.

4086.ii Approval of Payments (attached iv c)

AMS had previously circulated the schedule of payments for September. There were no payments scheduled.

4086.iii Review of Budget vs Actual Spend (appendix iv d)

AMS had circulated the Budget vs Actual Spend prior to the meeting and it was accepted by the Council.

AMS reminded the Council that an invoice from the previous meeting was still unpaid as per their request. ML, as Cllr for Financial Oversight, said he would follow up with the person who issued the invoice.

ACTION: AMS to forward invoice and contact details to ML.

4087. iv Review of CIL Income and Expense (attached appendix iv e)

AMS had forwarded the paperwork and cheque for £100,000 (from CIL money) to Cambridge & Counties Bank.

Prior to the meeting AMS had circulated the CIL reconciliation.

HPC had received £745,143.93 in total.

HPC had spent £139,717.38 of CIL money.

Of the remaining balance of £551,426.55 HPC had invested £500,000 - £400,000 in CCLA and the remaining £100,000 in Cambridge & Communities Bank.

Therefore £51,426.55 remained in Barclays Bank. Of that amount £14,751.49 is accrued interest on CIL investments. This amount could and would be treated independently from CIL, so it was deducted it from the remaining CIL funds which left a cash balance of £36,675.06. This amount would increase to £71,712.88 when another CIL payment (from Wyevale development) was paid in October 2023.

The Council had previously charged the purchase of the parish computer from the CIL fund and the decision was taken to charge it against accrued CIL interest instead.

AMS told the Council that the External Auditors had asked that the CIL 5-year Budget be revised to account for all of the CIL funds (included those invested). AMS asked the Council to look at the 5-Year Budget as it stood and to suggest areas where the money might be spent.

The new 5-year Budget would be presented for approval at the next Parish Council meeting in November.

Part of the CIL money spent to date had been on making repairs to the surface of Sheephause Lane. The Council noted that despite the sign saying ‘Single Track Road’ that many large vehicles and HGVs had been using the road and damaging the repairs that had been made. DD expressed concern about the small bridge at the mid-point in Sheephause Lane as the structure was not designed to bear heavy weights.

ACTION: DD to contact Mark Bostock (OCC) to get a weight limit placed on the bridge and to discuss other areas in the village that need attention.

ACTION: AMS to move the charge for the parish computer from CIL and charge it against interest.

ACTION: AMS to circulate the 5-year CIL Budget to all Councillors and to collate information about proposed CIL projects to produce a new 5-Year Budget.

4087. v Review of Statement of Internal Control

AMS had circulated the Statement of Internal Control prior to the meeting, and it was accepted by the Council following an amendment regarding the contract with the new Internal Auditors.

4088 Gillotts Lane Drainage Issues

Since the previous meeting OCC had undertaken work on Gillotts Lane to offset flooding. Despite an on-going dialogue between the Parish Council, DB and OCC Engineers, neither had been informed what work would be done.

DB said that he would remind the engineers that any such should only be undertaken at either his request or that of the PC. AMS requested that she, as Clerk and RFO, should be included

cc'd in emails regarding any work or possible work. For reasons both practical and financial the Clerk needed to have a record of all correspondence and decisions.

Since work had been done on Gillotts Lane to protect Garden Cottage, flooding had damaged other properties lower down the Lane. Given the problem caused by persistent flooding here and elsewhere in Harpsden, the PC decided to include a provision in the new CIL budget for both preventative and remedial measures to improve drainage.

4089 Dates of next meetings:

20th November

Approved:

Date: 20th November 2023

Kester George, Chairman