

## HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held In Harpsden Parish Hall on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.45 pm

Present: Cllr Kester George (KG) Chairman  
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

#### **4090 Apologies for absence**

Cllr Matt Phillips (MP) Parish Councillor  
Cllr David Bartholomew (DB) OCC

#### **4091 Declarations of pecuniary interests and/or requests for dispensations from Members regarding any item on this agenda:** There were none.

#### **4092 Approval of Minutes of last Council Meeting on 18th September 2023**

The minutes were approved.

#### **4093 Review of Council Procedures and Best Practices**

The Clerk said that all hiring, and expenditure needed to be discussed and approved at meetings and for the minutes to reflect that.

#### **4094 Oxfordshire County Council Report:** attached at Appendix (i)

DB was unable to attend the meeting as it had been postponed from its scheduled date and had sent his report in writing.

#### **4095 South Oxfordshire District Councillors Report** Attached Appendix (ii)

LR had also sent his report in advance. He informed the Council of the sudden death of Patrick Arran Head of Legal and Democratic at SODC. The Council expressed their condolences to Mr Arran's family and colleagues.

LR said that Reading Borough Council had a new transport plan that they were putting out for consultation. He said that Harpsden Parish Council and residents might wish to comment as a third bridge was again proposed.

#### **4096 To Discuss and Approve a Drainage Plan for the Village**

KG said LH has been continuing work on gullies and wanted to take over the clearance of Woodland's Rd on the opposite side to the Golf Club. KG proposed that LH be hired to continue working on clearing the roads and drains. After the roads and drains had been cleared the Council could be able to judge how often future maintenance would need to take place.

As drainage was part of the Five-Year CIL Budget there was sufficient funds to cover hiring LH for a provisional three-month period. The Council agreed to hire LH for seven hours a week at £25 per hour and to also pay £10 per hour to LH's apprentice. LH would also be responsible for disposing of all detritus removed from roads and drains. LH would submit monthly invoices to the Clerk and would be responsible for paying his apprentice.

KG said that because of the emergency work undertaken by OCC on Gillotts Lane that the properties of two residents, Ivor Hunt, and Robin Dawkins, were getting flooded on a regular basis. DD said that had OCC consulted HPC prior to doing the works that this problem could have been prevented.

KG raised the possibility of whether it would be possible to get some residents to have soakaways on their property and if HPC would be able to offer some financial compensation to those that could. He said he would contact SODC for guidance on the limits to spending CIL money.

The Council noted that flooding and blocked drains were not just an inconvenience for some residents but could be dangerous after heavy rain, most notably for the barns adjacent to the Church.

The proposed Village Gates would also contribute to road safety but were difficult to place. DD and ML had visited a few sites around the village since the last meeting and suggested those which they thought best suited for gates. The Council could not agree, and sites would be viewed again before the next meeting.

ACTION: KG to provide a contract to LH and send a copy to the Clerk for the records.  
ACTION: KG to contact Silke More-O'Ferrall at OCC to check CIL expenditure rules.

**4097 Planning Matters:** (Appendix iii)

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

Discussion was confined to.

**P23/S3504/S73 (P20/S4151/FUL)**

**The Gardeners Cottage Harpsden RG9 4AP**

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on application P20/S4151/FUL - changes to front porch, changes to windows and fenestration and increase height of chimney. (Erection of replacement dwelling).

**Planning Officer** Victoria Clarke

**Target Decision** 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**Consultation Period** 15<sup>th</sup> November – 15<sup>th</sup> December

*The Council had no objection.*

**4098 Financial Matters**

**4098.i. Bank Balances and Reconciliations** (attached at Appendix iv a & iv b)

Community Account:	£100
Business Saver Account:	£93,218.9

**Total of both accounts' a/o 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 £ 93,371.90**

AMS had previously circulated by email the bank reconciliations for the 2 months to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 for the Community and Business Saver Accounts (attached appendix 4b and 4c). The bank reconciliations noted the following income.

Second Part of Precept for 2023 £5,500

Expenditure for the two-month period was as follows.

Clerk's Salary for 1 month £445.17

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.

**4098.ii Approval of Payments** (attached iv c)

AMS had previously circulated the schedule of payments for November. The following payments were approved.

Chiltern Society	£30
Information Commissioner Annual Fee	£40
Mulberry Internal Audit Phase 1	£253.50
Luke Hooker Drainage Works	£2,293.60
JM Clark Equipment for Drainage Works	£924.00

The final two payments to be deducted from CIL money.

**4098.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.

**4098. iv Approval of 5 Year CIL Budget** (attached appendix iv e)

Since the previous meeting the draft of the 5 Year Budget had been circulated to all Councillors and the final version had been decided in discussion via email and phone call. The Council voted to accept the final draft of the 5 Year CIL Budget.

**4098. v Approval of Annual Budget for 2024**

AMS had circulated the draft budget prior to the meeting. Council increased the Clerk's annual salary by 5% from £5,342 to £5,609.1 (£467 per month) to take effect in January 2024. The final budget was approved by the Council and the Precept for 2024 would remain at £11,000.

**4099 Review of External Auditor Report**

The External Audit has not been completed. The Interim Report was received and published on the website.

**5000 Review of Internal Auditor Report**

AMS had previously circulated the new Internal Auditors phase one report. She noted that Mulberry had made welcome observations and had provided solutions for some previous sticking points. The Council accepted the report.

**5001 Presentation and Approval of Risk Assessment**

AMS had previously circulated the Risk Assessment to the Council. She reiterated the changes which had been made and the Council approved the final document.

**5002 Dates of next meetings:**

The following dates, having been previously circulated by the Clerk, were approved for Parish Council Meetings in 2024.

- 15<sup>th</sup> January
- 18<sup>th</sup> March
- APM April TBD
- 20<sup>th</sup> May
- 15<sup>th</sup> July
- 16<sup>th</sup> September
- 18<sup>th</sup> November

**Approved: .....**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Kester George, Chairman**

