

HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in Harpsden Village Hall on Monday 15th July 2024 at 7.45 pm

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

In attendance:

Cllr David Bartholomew (DB) OCC
Cllr Mike Giles (MG) SODC
Anne Marie Scanlon (AMS) Clerk

5040 Apologies for absence

Cllr Nick Young (NY) Parish Councillor
Cllr Leigh Rawlings (LR) SODC

5041 Declarations of pecuniary interests and/or requests for dispensations from Members regarding any item on this agenda: There were none.

5042 Approval of Minutes of last Council Meeting on 20th May

CR had informed the Clerk of amendments ahead of the Meeting and the corrected minutes were approved.

5043 Oxfordshire County Council Report: attached at Appendix (i)

DB presented his general report which had already been circulated.
In matters specific to Harpsden DB noted the following.

(i) Gillotts Lane Drainage Works Etc.

DB said he had asked Daniel Depp for an update and had received the following response.

“There is no more work currently planned by me for Harpsden, the last job I did was to install the new gully in the low spot by the cottage corner of Chalk Hill. I know the Schemes Team are still looking at ideas for Gillotts Lane.”

DB then contacted the Schemes Team and received this reply:

“I have only very recently spoken with Daniel Depp about this location so apologise but I am not really up to speed at this point. I would need to visit and walk through to understand the problems that the village are facing. I must then also understand if the measures already undertaken by Daniel have made sufficient improvements to resolve the problem or if further works are required at this point.”

DB asked if the PC were satisfied that all problems had been resolved.

KG said that further works were needed for drainage on Gillotts Lane. He said that the Lucy's Farm developer had appeared willing to put a soakaway on the site, which OCC had ignored. In HPC's view storm water from Gillotts Lane would cause flooding in the Village, without specific provision for it. A soakaway properly connected by pipework to the system under the village street seemed to be the simplest solution. HPC had put the proposed soakaway idea to DDep and had not received any response. DB requested that HPC send the proposal to him, and he would put it to the officers. KG asked that he remind them that HPC were in principle willing to use CIL funds to pay for the work. DB also requested that CR take a picture of the flooding in the village and put it on Fix My Street.

ACTION KG to send soakaway proposal to DB

ACTION CR to send photo of flooding to DB

ML asked DB about drainage issues regarding the Harp River which had flooded the meadow between Sheephouse Lane and the Reading Road. It was not unusual for a strip of the river to appear above ground, but it had now formed a lake, which unusually, had not drained, as it had always done before. If the normal flow down to the Thames was not restored, damage could be done to buildings, including St Margaret's Church. ML wanted to know whether the responsibility lay with Highways or OCC.

DB said that responsibility could be divided between several authorities, he asked for a photograph and said he would raise a query.

KG added that the possibility of Thames Farm being allowed to add its drainage was worrying, remote though this might be.

ACTION ML to email picture of the Harp Lake to DB

(ii) Thames Farm

DB said that OCC had met with Taylor Wimpy in March to discuss the next steps in relation to the S278 highway works. TW said they would produce a briefing by the end of April but that had not happened.

DB said that Shiplake Parish Council had raised the issue of a pedestrian crossing outside of Thames Farm. DB had previously put in a request on behalf of SPC, but it had been rejected by officers on a number of grounds. DB asked if HPC had a view on the proposal. HPC had no strong views on the crossing but agreed that the road outside Thames Farm was dangerous. DB said that the current Thames Farm Appeal was about environmental screening assessment and the developers still needed to get a surface water drainage strategy approved

(iii) Village Gates

DB said he would be pleased to assist in the process. CR asked who she should speak to regarding the proposed locations for gates. DB said if Council supplied the preferred locations, with a reasonable degree of accuracy, he would advise officers. They would offer a plan to the Council for approval. If the land was Highways their approval would be needed. DB estimated the cost would be approximately £5,000. The work would be undertaken by OCC with HPC paying.

DD advised Council that the 'Three Little Words' App could share location information with great precision. Council had no further questions for DB.

5044 South Oxfordshire District Councillors Report Attached Appendix (ii)

LR had sent his report in advance and was represented in his absence by MG.

Thames Farm

KG said that TFAG had written a letter to the new MP Freddie van Mierlo (FVM) to intervene with the Secretary of State for Planning against the development of Thames Farm. MG asked KG to forward all the correspondence to him and he would get in touch with FVM.

ACTION KG to forward all correspondence sent to FvM for MG for follow up.

MG said that the new Labour Government had said they would be making changes regarding planning and house building and that might impact the area.

MG said the AONB/National Landscape consultation would take place in the coming autumn and winter.

KG hoped the local application would be successful.

MG informed the Council that a Capital Grant Scheme had gone live, and local councils could apply for grants to ‘improve life’ for residents.

5045 Golf Club

Matthew Davies (MD) and Richard Dodds (RD), two of the new directors from Henley Golf Club (HGC) came to the meeting to introduce themselves and inform the Council of their plans for HGC.

They expressed a wish to have more continuous communications with the Council as HGC was a large part of the parish and they felt they wanted to be “better members of the community”.

MD said that the proposal to move the Club House to the top of Chalk Hill had been shelved for the foreseeable future. The directors would be concentrating on improving the current Club House. They planned on staying in the footprint that it currently occupied. They also wished to improve the outside facilities both at the Cricket Club and at the top of Chalk Hill.

MD said that CR had previously raised with him that it would be a nice gesture if villagers were able to use the Club House. He said that the Club’s licence was based on membership, but villagers could join as ‘social members’ for a fee of £165 per annum. DD asked if villagers would qualify for a discount but both MD and RD said that wasn’t on the cards at present.

KG said the Council and many parishioners were concerned about the loss of trees in Lucy’s Copse. MD said that Ash Dieback Disease was the reason the trees were felled. CR said that some of the trees cut down had been healthy. MD said the HGC’s consultant had said they were infected. KG said that the general feeling was that the contractors had not been careful in their work and had left the site looking like an eyesore.

MD said HGC were concerned about maintaining biodiversity on the golf course but because so many trees in the woods were dying they were not concentrating on those areas. He said they had been advised against planting replacement trees in Lucy’s Copse because the deer would eat them.

DD said he had previously liaised with Greener Henley (GH) who were trying to plant as many trees in the area as they could. He asked if HGC could offer GH a patch of land that they would protect, GH would give them a choice of what trees to plant.

MD asked DD to refer GH to him to pursue the idea.

KG said HPC had a a profound interest in the future of the Golf Club as they wished to defend the AONB at the top of the hill. He said HPC were prepared provide as much help as they could to keep the Club House in its present location.

DD said the floodlight over the car park was on all night every night. MD said there had been a burglary. DD suggested a timer or sensor light, as both Council and residents wanted to reduce light pollution whenever possible.

ACTION DD to put GH in touch with MD

5046 Planning Matters: (Appendix iii)

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

The Council reserved comment for the following

APPEAL

P23/S1769/O

Hallemead House Woodlands Road near Harpsden RG9 4AB

Outline planning application for the demolition of Hallemead House and its replacement with a self-build plot; the creation of two additional self-build plots; and demolition of part of the existing stables to be replaced with a new dwelling including details of access with all other matters reserved (contaminated land questionnaire received 6th July 2023 and ecological information received 2nd October 2023 and drainage information received 2nd November 2023).

Appeal lodged on 28 June 2024

HPC strongly supported the appeal and KG would write a letter to that effect.

KG proposed to write to Freddie VanM to make clear what worries HPC – the safety of the drinking water, the difficulties of draining the site.

5047 Financial Matters

The AGAR which had been signed agreed by the Council and signed by the Chair at the previous meeting had been submitted on an incorrect form. The External Auditors were happy with the minute references from the previous meeting to stand but had asked the Clerk to get the correct forms signed which the Clerk and Chair did.

5047.i. Bank Balances and Reconciliations (attached at Appendix iv a & iv b)

Community Account:	£1,861.54
Business Saver Account:	£142,799.13
<u>Total of both accounts' a/o 1st July 2024</u>	<u>£144,660.67</u>

AMS had previously circulated by email the bank reconciliations for the 2 months to 1st July 2024 for the Community and Business Saver Accounts (attached appendix 4b and 4c).

The bank reconciliations noted the following income.

CCLA Interest (May)	£1715.01
CCLA Interest (June)	£1770.54
Interest Barclays (June)	£453.44

Expenditure for the two-month period was as follows.

Clerk's Salary for 1 month	£467.00
SODC Election Fee (from 2023)	£200.00
Luke Hooker Drainage	£455.00 (CIL)
Zurich Annual Insurance	£293.47
HPCC Donation	£500.00
Woodland Trust Donation	£500.00
Eye & Dunstan PC (AONB)	£700.00
Internal Audit	£214.50

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.

5047.ii Approval of Payments (attached iv c)

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

Luke Hooker Drainage	£280.00	CIL
Chair Exps	£95.68	
Total	£375.68	

5047.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.

5047.iv Review of CIL reconciliation (attached iv c)

AMS had circulated the CIL reconciliation prior to the meeting, and it was accepted by the Council. AMS said she would produce a new report on CIL interest calculated from the first receipt of CIL in 2018.

5047. v To approve payment of Chair's Annual Expenses

The Chair's expenses for the year 2023-24 were approved.

5047. vi To approve payment of Clerk's Annual Expenses

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

5048 Proposed CIL Projects:

(i) **Bridleway Repair.**

CR suggested using CIL money to repair the bridleway from Woodlands Road down to the A4155. As it was private land Council thought that repairs were the responsibility of the

residents. Council agreed to fill in potholes and gravel the surface in a one-off gesture for which they would accept no future liability.

ML asked if the residents were prepared to help meet the cost. CR said it would depend on what that cost was. DD said that the first step would be to get the permission of the landowner(s). HPC would then ask three vendors for quotes for the work.

DD said any subsequent road repairs would be a one off and HPC would accept no long-term liability. CR said she would liaise with residents to ascertain what they wanted.

ACTION. CR to speak to residents.

ACTION. When agreement was reached regarding repairs, DD should get quotes from three vendors. When the quotes were received, and costs were known residents could be asked to provide a portion of the money.

(ii) Legacy

ML proposed that a sum of CIL should be invested as a legacy for the councillors and residents of the future. He thought it prudent to have a sum of money invested for emergencies and unforeseen events. His suggestion was a passive global equity fund which could be liquified instantly should that need to happen. Council agreed in principle.

AMS said she would count all the interest payments since 2018 when HPC first received CIL money so that sum could be treated separately. AMS also said that HPC would be receiving more CIL money. With that in mind ML said that the sum of money the Council wished to invest this way could be decided at the next meeting in September.

(iii) Tree Planting

ML said he was keen to use some CIL money to plant trees. CR suggested starting with the Cemetery which had lost some Red Chestnut Trees.

ACTION KG/CR to contact Rev Robert

(iv) Road Repairs

DD suggested using CIL funds to resurface the road from Church to Rook Hill

Council agreed that the road was in a very poor state of repair, but OCC did not seem keen on fixing it. DD requested that everyone report it on Fix My Street to attempt to get a response from OCC as a first step.

(v) Boundary Markers

KG's suggestion was for road signs to mark entry to Harpsden on all the roads entering the parish. (see 5049 (ii) below.)

5049 Parish Matters:

(i) Drainage

After the discussion with DB, KG said he would contact Jamie Smith to see if construction had started and if there was still room for a soakaway.

Noticeboards

KG said there was a plan to elaborate the ditches at the foot of Woodlands Road which ML would take up with Woodlands Trust. LH was ready to start the work.

KG said that LH recommended that HPC get the County’s Contractors to empty the drains again in mid-August. Council agreed.

ACTION KG to tell LH to proceed.

(ii) Purchase of Village Gates, Boundary Markers and Noticeboard

GATES

KG that we should mark the road boundaries of Harpsden – Rook Hill, Sheephouse land, Woodlands Road, Mays Green and the Valley Road bottom of Devil’s Hill using either boundary markers (such as the one already on Rook Hill) and/or signs saying ‘Harpsden’. DD said that Council would need to establish who owned the curb before placing signs. DD we need to know who owns the curb.

DB had spoken about Village Gates earlier in the meeting and CR said that the plans were to have two gates, to be used as speed calming measures rather than marking the borders of the village.

ACTION CR would show KG the proposed sites for the Village Gates. When agreed she would send the proposed locations to DB.

A new noticeboard with two sides had been agreed with the Trust. One side would be for Parish Council and the other for the Village.

ACTION CR would ask LH if he was able to remove the old noticeboards and place the new one.

5050 Dates of next meetings:

16th September

18th November

Approved:

Date: 16th September 2024

Kester George, Chairman