

HARRINGWORTH PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2020 via virtual Zoom conference.

Meeting commenced at 7 30pm

Present:

Cllr A White (Chairman); Cllr G Dolman; Cllr S McLean (Deputy Chairman); Cllr S Milton; Cllr K. Dove (Finance); Cllr F Walsh; H Maxfield (Clerk).

1161 Apologies for absence: Cllr L Boon.

1162 Adoption of new Standing orders.

These were presented as the first Agenda item to permit the meeting to take place via a video conference. They were agreed by all the Council.

1163 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Cllr White was elected Chairman and Cllr McLean was elected Vice-Chairman.

1164 To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from Cllrs on matters to be considered at the meeting.

Cllr Dove explained that he was employed by Bulwick Estates which have some interests in the environmental impact of Wakerley Quarry.

1165 To consider any dispensation requests and to grant such dispensations as the Chairman may consider necessary.

The Chairman granted a dispensation request for Cllr Dove to remain on-line for the discussion on Wakerley Quarry though he would not have any vote on the matter.

1166 Minutes of meeting held on 12th March 2020:

The Cllrs present confirmed the minutes of the meeting held in March and arrangements were made for their signing as a true record by the Chairman.

1167 Matters arising.

The only issues arising were covered later in the meeting as part of Highways and Planning sections of the meeting.

1168 Annual Review of Documents & Procedures.

- a) The Council's financial regulations, complaints procedures and policy for dealing with press and media were reviewed and accepted.
- b) The new draft Council Policy on policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation was also reviewed and accepted.
- c) The inventory of Council assets was accepted but the Clerk was asked to investigate as to whether there should be a "write down value" for the items listed.
- d) The Insurance arrangements were confirmed as acceptable.
- e) The Council was pleased to note that our internal auditor had agreed to continue for another year and was duly appointed for the year 2020/21.
- f) The Chairman's annual report to the Open Parish Meeting was accepted and would be available online. His report is attached.



1169 Review of annual accounts.

The accounts showed that the council was in a healthy condition financially, however some misgivings were voiced about the long-term effects of the pandemic on Local Government finances. It was agreed that the accounts should be forwarded to the internal auditor for his approval.

1170 Routine Financial matters

a) Review of Payments received

i	Precept (One of two instalments)	£3090
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b) Pre-approved contracts for noting

i	Haven power	£20.34
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c) Payments for approval

i	Leicestershire Gardens invoice no 20/028	£250
ii	Leicestershire Gardens invoice no 20/058	£175
iii	TP Jones (Payroll)	£73.20
iv	Parish Online	£60
v	SLCC membership	£65
vi	Zurich insurance	£350.18
vii	Replacement battery for defibrillator	£170
viii	One month's subscription for zoom	£14.39

All payments were approved.

d) Reconciliation review for the period starting April 01 2020 was accepted.

1171 Policing Matters (web site reports).

There were no reports of any incidents in the Village but the clerk stated some concerns that speeding on the relatively empty lanes was becoming an issue.

1172 Highway matters.

Following the Chairman's letter to the CEO of Northants County Council a reply had been received from Graeme Kane, Executive Director – Strategic Delivery and Transformation Northants County Council, concerning the hedge and verge on Laxton Road, by Spanhoe Lodge. The letter stated it was not clear whether the land had been purposefully sown, or whether any vegetation was from natural growth. Another assessment will be made and if necessary further enforcement action will be taken. The removal of the hedge is not a consideration for the Highways Authority as the hedge would have been owned by the landowner and is not required to be re-instated. Therefore, it is not subject to the enforcement notice.

In discussion a Cllr expressed surprise as it was quite clear that the verge had been drilled. In addition, they were of the view that the hedge owner may have been in receipt of a payment from the Rural Payments Agency. It was agreed that the Clerk should make further enquiries.



1173 Planning

- a) Wakerley Quarry. Serious misgivings were expressed about the extended working hours of the quarry and a draft letter written by the Chairman to that opinion was accepted and will be sent to Mr Phil Watson, Development Control Manager Northants County Council.
- b) Update concerning Daglan (42 Gretton Road). An enforcement order was issued just before Christmas which is now subject to an appeal by the landowner to the Planning Inspectorate.

1174 Corona Virus

Cllr Dolman gave a brief update on the community help that he was organising in the village. The Cllrs thanked Cllr Dolman for the stalwart work that he had done co-ordinating the volunteers. His report is attached.

1175 Churchyard trees.

As it is some time since the trees were inspected with respect of their safety it was agreed that a new inspection should be organised. The Clerk was asked to investigate possible costs etc.

1176 Administration.

The dates of the years bi-monthly meetings were agreed to be on the second Thursday of the month.

These are 9th July; 10th September; 12th November; 24th January; 11th March; 13th May.

1177 AOB.

It was agreed that as an experiment the first 10 minutes of each meeting would be "open" to allow members of the public to raise any issues.

The meeting closed at 9:25 pm

Date of Next Meeting – 9th July



A D WHITE

CHAIRMAN HARRINGWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

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Addendum 1

Report to the Annual Open Parish Meeting - Chairman of Harringworth Parish Council

Since becoming Chairman of the Parish Council I have endeavoured to strengthen our Corporate Governance and to improve communication with the village, primarily through use of the Village Website and Newsletter. Before covering these developments I will outline some of the work of the Parish Council over the last 12 months.

With the resignation of Councillor Sarah Chambers at the start of the year we were required to fill the vacancy as soon as possible. After publishing due notice of the vacancy there were no applicants, nor a petition for an election from villagers for an election, and thus Mr Frank Field was co-opted to the Council.

Just before the start of the year the District Council changed their working practices and moved to purely electronic methods of communication, no longer sending the Parish hard copies of planning applications. Our initial attempts to work via electronic means proved to be a little haphazard and highlighted that our Standing Orders no longer matched this new way of working. Consequently, I drafted a new set of Standing Orders which were based on those provided by The National Association of Local Councils and are compliant with all relevant Government Regulations. These were adopted unanimously at the Parish Council meeting in November. At the same meeting a guidance document was adopted, this provides information on what counts as a material observation when dealing with planning applications. Two months later at our next meeting of the Parish Council new Financial Regulations were agreed. These documents are available in the Parish Council section of the Village website.

Over the past year we have dealt with over 22 planning applications. The majority were for tree removal and extensions to existing properties. Two planning issues remain ongoing, that of the garage next to 42 Gretton Road that has been used as a dwelling, and the removal of a hedge with associated land encroachment at Laxton. After the garage owner lost his appeal to Planning Inspectorate the District Council served an enforcement notice but the owner had a further right of appeal against this notice which he has taken up. His appeal against the Enforcement Notice is, essentially, an application for planning permission for a change of use of the building to residential. This application must now run its course. We continue to engage with the Planning Department to achieve a final resolution to the matter. With regard to the land encroachment at Laxton an enforcement order was placed on the landowner although this has not had any effect. The issue remains ongoing and I have now engaged with the Chief Executive Officer of the County Council to achieve resolution.

A recent planning issue has arisen regarding Mick George Ltd's extension to the operating hours at Wakerley Quarry. We have vigorously opposed this recent development and are in close contact with the District Council over this issue. We will continue our endeavours to try and ensure that Mick George Ltd adhere to previous agreements.

As reported by my predecessor the resignation of Mr Brian Chambers, our Clerk, took effect after last year's annual meeting. Mr Chambers had given plenty of notice enabling a successor to be found and be in place to observe last year's annual meeting. We were fortunate to have Mr Harold Maxfield willing to step into the role. A change of Clerk involves some important paperwork, the most crucial being to change the signatories on the Parish Council bank account. Unfortunately, our bank proved to be less than diligent, demanding certain forms to be filled in and then telling the Clerk later they were the wrong ones. The result was that the Council did not have access to the account for a

considerable time which resulted in a few creditors having to wait longer than we would have wished to be paid. Fortunately, the direct debits continued without interruption allowing our main creditors to be paid on time.

The most significant issue though was the inability to get a bank statement, thereby preventing the Clerk and the councillor responsible for finance from checking the accounts, also preventing our internal auditor from carrying out his duties. This was a frustrating period for all concerned but finally the matter was resolved, all outstanding debts settled, and the accounts audited. The Clerk is to be commended for persevering throughout this difficult period and finally managing to sort out the matter with the Bank. I am also grateful to our internal auditor for his forbearance during this difficult period.

Our grass cutting contract continues with Leicestershire Gardens who unfortunately suffered some mechanical issues last summer which resulted in a longer gap than usual between 2 of the cuts. That apart, the contract works well and I am pleased to report that for this summer's grass cutting there has been no price increase.

The state of the village roads and drains have continued to deteriorate over the past 12 months. On the 16th January both I and the Clerk had a site meeting with the Area Manager – Corby, Wellingborough & East Northants Districts, Northamptonshire Highways. We discussed blocked road drains and the significant number of potholes. He explained that due to the dire financial position of the County Council only first-aid repairs were being carried out on individual potholes, though more substantive repairs where larger sections of the road were damaged might be possible. He also advised that unless significant risk of flooding to properties existed the drains would not be cleared until sometime in May. I am pleased to record that the drain clearance took place on the 7th May. However, I regret that until our County is split into 2 Unitary Authorities this situation will probably not improve. Nonetheless, villagers should continue to report new blocked drains and potholes via "Street Doctor".

The Local Government elections, including Parish Council elections were due to take place on the 7th May. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus pandemic resulted in the Government delaying these elections for one year. Thus, our Parish Election will also be delayed and all councillors will continue in post for a further 12 months. More importantly perhaps is the impact this might have on the formation of our new Unitary Authority. The Coronavirus has also resulted in new Legislation allowing Councils to hold their meetings electronically, and the first of these electronic style meetings takes place at our Annual Parish Council meeting this year. In order to facilitate this change our Standing Orders have been amended to reflect this new way of working. With the Parish Open Meeting deferred, I decided to include this report in the council annual meeting to facilitates its publication.

As the Coronavirus situation developed The Parish Council took the lead with organising a support network for those that were self-isolating. This became even more important once the Government lockdown was directed. I am grateful to Councillor Ges Dolman for volunteering to take on the coordinating role and he, together with his co-opted assistant Mrs Nicola Wright, have put together a robust support network for our at-risk population. I must also record my thanks to all the volunteers who have stepped up to this important task.

The finances of the Parish are in good order and allowed us to freeze the precept at last year's rate.

I started my report mentioning Corporate Governance and Communication and I will finish on that note. We have updated our Standing Orders and Financial regulations as well as producing a guide for Councillors to refer to when considering planning applications. Mr Ges Dolman has taken on responsibility for publishing news updates from the Parish Council and in this regard we are most grateful to Mrs Philippa Gasson for her sterling

work on the Village Newsletter and Mr Richard Nixon for his work on developing the new Village website.

Finally, I must record my thanks to my fellow councillors who have carried me through my early days with forbearance and understanding. My thanks to you all.

Andrew White

Chairman Harringworth Parish Council 7th May 2020

Addendum 2

Report from Councillor Dolman on the Parish Councils response to The Corona Virus Pandemic

On being given responsibility for actions to combat Covid 19 in the village, my initial action was to identify the group of residents that were most vulnerable to this disease & to do what could be done to protect them (this meant protecting all over 70 years old , the sick or those choosing to self isolate).

With this in mind every one in these categories were allocated a volunteer whose task was to ensure that as much help as possible within government guidelines could be given, shopping for essential items, prescription collections & any welcoming advice were selected as most important.

This is being achieved.

To help , a volunteers "Whats App" has been set up that has reduced duplication of road trips to shops & the surgery (I have always been aware of costs incurred in time & petrol to our volunteers) The surgery is now being brought on board with one weekly collection from them for all regular prescriptions.

The village has also contributed generously to other good causes including amongst other activities with the making of scrubs for distribution by the surgery to various needy institutions , donating treats of chocolates , biscuits, hand creams & other items that are making life for our nurses at Peterborough Hospital a little more bearable.

Individuals are also giving time to local charities in many forms helping where they can.

A Lending library has also been established in the church porch with games, books & jigsaws all available to all ages helping to reduce boredom & despair.

Finally it has be noted that the reaction to this pandemic by the community has been magnificent making the unknown future look a little less daunting.