

Hatley Parish Council

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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Hatley Parish Council held in Hatley Village Hall on Tuesday 16th January 2024

PRESENT: Cllr Micky Astor (Chair), Cllr Harold Nickerson, Cllr Samantha Abbasi, Clerk to the Council Kim Wilde, District Cllr Heather Williams (arriving late) and three members of the public (arriving at different times).

ACTION BY

1. WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF MEETING PROTOCOL
Welcome by the Chair. The meeting protocol was not read aloud on this occasion.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Received from Cllr Paul Kraus, County Cllr Sebastian Kindersley and Revd Hilary Young.
3. INTERESTS
 - i. Declarations of interest: None received.
 - ii. Dispensation applications for items on this agenda: None received.
4. OCTOBER 2023 MINUTES
The **Parish Council resolved to approve** the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Hatley Parish Council held on Tuesday 17th October 2023 and they were signed by the Chair.
5. PREVIOUS MINUTES
The **Parish Council resolved to approve** the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Hatley Parish Council held on Tuesday 28th November 2023 and they were signed by the Chair.
6. MATTERS ARISING
None that are not already covered in the meeting agenda.
7. OPEN MEETING FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS TO THE PARISH COUNCIL
There was one member of the public present at this time and no questions were raised.
8. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS
County Councillor Kindersley's report was received by the Councillors ahead of the meeting and no items were discussed in his absence. District Councillor Williams was not present at this time, arriving later to give her report.

9. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

- i. The Chair confirmed having received the resignation of Cllr Cooper. The Chair said he was sorry to see Cllr Cooper leave but understood that she was moving on to new commitments. The Chair gave thanks to Cllr Cooper for her contribution to the Parish Council's work.
- ii. The formal notice to the parish electors regarding the opportunity to call a by-election has been placed on the noticeboards and website as of 9th January 2024. The Clerk awaits notification from SDCDC's Monitoring Officer as to if and when the Parish Council can attempt to fill the vacancy by co-option (expected on 23rd January).
- iii. The Parish Council agreed to speak to local residents at the next Coffee Morning and the Quiz Night, both due to be held in February, with the aim of encouraging people to consider becoming a Parish Councillor. The Clerk will prepare posters for this purpose also. A deadline of early May was proposed for applications so that a decision can be taken at the Annual General Meeting.

Clerk

Cllr Abbasi /
Chair

Clerk

10. HIGHWAYS AND SPEEDING

- i. The Clerk provided an update on the proposed design for the LHI project to reduce the speed limit. A meeting took place in Hatley on 15th December with the Highways project and design team to ascertain the correct location of all current signage and to ensure all 'hot spots' for speeding were being addressed. A new design has since been shared which includes two additional (already present) sets of speed signs between St George's Tower and 28 Main Street. The revised design also incorporates an optional new 'Bend' hazard sign to be located close to the bend at Thatched Lodge.

A second member of the public arrived.

- ii. A new costing is not yet available. The revised costing will include the two sets of additional signs that were located during the meeting, with a second version to also include a new 'Bend' hazard sign. Cllr Nickerson raised the point with Highways that if the bend sign is required for road safety it should be paid for by Highways and not as part of this LHI project. Cllr Nickerson also raised the issue of the many deteriorated posts which the new speed limit signs will be attached to. These points are to be followed up when the costings are received from Highways.
- iii. The **Parish Council resolved to purchase** a replacement battery for the mobile speed monitoring sign.

All

Clerk

11. NEW .GOV.UK EMAIL ADDRESSES

The Clerk advised the new domain is now active and two inboxes (Clerk and Chair) are due to be tested. Once the testing has been completed all Councillors will be given assistance to access their new email accounts. Thanks were given to Peter Mann for setting up the new domain. The Clerk will ask Cllr Kraus to liaise with Peter Mann so he can take over the final stage of testing and providing access to all Councillors.

Clerk

12. ADOPTION OF NEW MODEL CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TERMS FOR THE CLERK

A new model employment contract has been drawn up jointly by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks. As the Clerk's terms of employment were revised at the annual review, being approved during the closed section of the Extraordinary meeting in November, it was agreed this would be a good opportunity to adopt the new contract for the Clerk. Cllr Abbasi drew the Council's attention to a couple of language issues in the contract that could be improved for future clarity. The **Parish Council resolved to adopt** the new model contract. The Clerk will address the necessary language issues and will print two new copies to be signed by the Chair and Clerk outside of the meeting. The Clerk will also include her job description as an appendix to the contract.

Clerk

District Cllr Williams arrived at the meeting during this time and was invited to provide her report to the Parish Council, which included:

- The expected data release that is due in relation to the 4 day working week at SCDC and in response to the Government having issued a Best Value Notice to SCDC. The trial is due to end as of 31st March 2024 but it remains unclear as to what will change, if anything, on that date, as it is possible the 4 day week will continue until the Government's decision has been announced. It is also possible that a public consultation will be called, which will further slow down the process of reverting to a 5 day working week for staff. The District Cllr's concerns include the lack of a business case and costings ahead of the changes that were made, as well as a lack of transparency or a consultation to date. Cllr Williams also has concerns about staff training, performance levels and isolation for some staff members who are remote working on fewer working days.
- SCDC's accounts for 2022 are being prepared for an external audit. Finances look fine but may be impacted by the issuance of the Best Value Notice, if the Government decides to withhold grants.
- The Local Plan has been delayed due to issues relating to insufficient water supplies for the larger developments.

A third member of the public arrived during District Cllr Williams' report.

13. INCOME RECEIVED 01.10.23 TO 31.12.23

The Clerk shared details of receipts which in addition to hall hire monies included funds raised by the Hatley Village Association.

14. RECONCILIATION OF THE CASHBOOK WITH THE BANK STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD 01.10.23 TO 31.12.23

The December bank statement and cashbook were shared with the Parish Councillors ahead of the meeting, with the difference explained by seven uncleared cheques. The **Parish Council resolved to approve** the reconciliation of the finances.

15. PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL

The **Parish Council resolved to approve** the following payments:

- i. *K Wilde* – Overtime payment November 2023

- ii. *H M Revenue and Customs* – PAYE for November overtime payment
- iii. *K Wilde* – Reimbursement for HostPresto! for the '.gov.uk' domain registration fee – £120.00
- iv. *K Wilde* – Reimbursements for office expenses – £118.22
- v. *K Wilde* – Travel expenses – £22.14
- vi. *M R L Astor* – Village Hall water rates 28.06.23 to 06.12.23 – £43.60
- vii. *K Wilde* – January and February 2024 salary payments
- viii. *H M Revenue and Customs* – PAYE for January and February 2024 salary payments
- ix. O2 – Mobile phone contract October and November 2023 – £40.80 (D/D)
- x. O2 – Mobile phone contract December 2023 – £20.40 (D/D)
- xi. *E.on Next* – Village Hall electricity 01.10.23 to 31.12.23 – £107.37 (D/D)

16. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2024-25

A second draft for the precept calculation was shared by the Clerk, which proposed a 10.42% increase in the precept for 2024-25. This requirement was explained by various new costs as well as the usual inflationary increases for services used by the Parish Council. It was also noted there will be a further cost increase for the completion of the LHI speed limit reduction project, as two additional posts now need to be accounted for, plus a possible brand new sign. The LHI project costs will be spread across a number of years, however as the bank reserves are quite low and with hall income expected to remain unchanged, the only other income source is via the precept. It was also noted the budget for 2022-23 had failed to include future spending on the LHI project and therefore this has contributed to the higher precept requirement for the coming year. The **Parish Council resolved to approve** the second draft of the budget and precept for 2024-25, being £8,000. One member of the public enquired about hall income levels, which were explained, and about the frequency of inspections for the defibrillator, being weekly and recorded.

Clerk

17. HATLEY VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

- i. The Clerk reported, in the absence of the HVA's co-Chairs that the January Pop-Up Pub event has been cancelled because post-Christmas attendance was not expected to be high. The Quiz Night will be going ahead as planned on Saturday 24th February 2024.
- ii. A summary of the HVA's income, expenditure and holdings of cash and stock were shared ahead of the meeting. The Clerk will share details of the HVA's banked funds to enable the HVA to plan future fundraising and spending.
- iii. All non-float cash has been banked with a small sum of loose change held by the Clerk in a Petty Cash account.
- iv. Cllr Abbasi volunteered to oversee the HVA's cashbook and stock, which will be actioned at least twice a year in conjunction with a member of the HVA. The Clerk reminded the Parish Council of the HVA's Terms which stipulates that a Parish Councillor should also be part of the HVA committee. It was agreed this was a big ask for a Parish Councillor, having

Clerk

Cllr Abbasi

so much Council business to action through the year. Therefore the Terms will be revised accordingly to state that a Parish Councillor need only give support in a financial capacity, with no requirement to attend the various HVA meetings. The Chair thanked Cllr Abbasi for stepping forward to take on this role.

Clerk

18. VILLAGE HALL

- i. The Clerk gave a summary of recent hall hire and future bookings, which are quite low for this time of year.
- ii. The Clerk has attempted to contact a neighbouring Parish Council / Hall Committee to learn more about the pros and cons of letting a community building to a pre-school. There has been no response as yet, so in the meantime a meeting has been arranged with County Council to determine whether Hatley Village Hall would be a suitable premises and location for a preschool setting. Details of the meeting time and date were shared with the Councillors, should they wish to join.
- iii. The possibility of providing an electric car charging point at the Village Hall was discussed. Cllr Williams provided the details of another parish that has recently undertaken such a project, with the help of a grant. The Chair agreed to make contact with the suggested contact to gather more information.
- iv. Updates and action points:

Clerk

Chair

- a. The Clerk is struggling to obtain quotes from some of the known Wi-Fi providers in the area and therefore has contacted an online company to help source quotes, which are due any day. Once the options are known the Clerk will proceed with the best package offered.
- b. The sliding door on the disabled toilet is still sticking. The Chair applied a lubricant which has solved this for the time being, but it will need to be monitored by all hall volunteers. The door locks also remain to be problematic with a child getting locked into one of the unisex toilets at the New Year's Eve party. The keep would benefit from adjustment and this will also need to be monitored.
- c. The Parish Council had previously resolved to replace the bar drinks chiller, however some repair work by Cllr Kraus seems to have improved the door closure and therefore no purchase is required at this time.

Clerk

All

19. PLAY AREA

- i. The monthly inspection was undertaken by Cllr Cooper in December with nothing new reported.
- ii. The Clerk had intended to share quotations received for the supply of a replacement play tower. However as the LHI project remains under review for agreement by the Parish Council the Clerk suggested the Play Tower project remains on hold, to allow her to better manage the work load. The Councillors agreed.

20. PLANNING

There were no planning applications or issues to consider.

21. PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATOR
- i. The record book update has been received by the Clerk.
 - ii. There were no other matters to consider.
22. CLIMATE ACTION
- The Clerk shared brief details of the 'Action on Energy' grant that is available for households who are looking to replace their oil or LPG boiler. Various other links for information were distributed at the meeting. It was also noted that various Repair Cafes are scheduled in the district, with one due to be held in Gamlingay on 7th April. One member of the public pointed out that there is a booking system for these workshops.
23. COMMUNITY LITTER PICK
- The date and time of the next community litter pick event was agreed as 10.30am on Sunday 24th March. The Clerk will make arrangements regarding equipment nearer the time. Clerk
24. BEATING THE BOUNDS COMMUNITY EVENT
- The event organiser confirmed the date event time and date as 10.30am on Saturday 11th May. There will be an exhibition at the Village Hall, to include the works of Ishbel Beatty and a range of information on local wildlife. There will possibly be three walks of varying lengths to suit all abilities, the longest being approximately 10 miles and the shortest being approximately 3 miles (to be confirmed). There will be experts sharing information about the local flora and fauna at various points along the route.
25. MEMORIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES
- The Clerk has received the information researched by Cllr Cooper. The **Parish Council resolved** to purchase the two circular plaques that were initially suggested, which do not allow for personalisation. It was agreed that the Village Hall may be the best location for the installation of the plaques, as the trees that were suggested previously are still quite young. Clerk
26. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED
- The Clerk shared details of a call for volunteers by County Council for new members to the education admissions appeals panels. Posters have been requested to help share their request. Clerk
- The Grafham Water Centre is seeking additional funding for their successful 'Adventures Away from Home Fund'. Details were shared. The Parish Council agreed that it cannot provide financial support at this time.
27. CHURCHES
- i. Nicola Jenkins shared a report on St Denis' Church with the Parish Council ahead of the meeting. The report will be available on the Hatley website. Cllr Nickerson gave thanks for the work involved but asked if the reports can be shared at least one day ahead of the meeting day in future, to ensure they can be read in good time. The Chair also gave thanks to all who continue to be involved with helping to maintain the grounds and wildlife.

- ii. The Clerk shared details on behalf of Revd Hilary Young, confirming the appointment of a new inspector for the quinquennial report that is due, which was welcomed, as she is known for her great work at St Denis' Church.

28. TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting is due to be held at **7.00pm on Tuesday 19th March 2024** in Hatley Village Hall.

29. TIME OF MEETING CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 8.43pm.