Hatley Parish Council

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Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Hatley Parish Council
held on Hatley St George Playing Field on Tuesday 18th November 2025

PRESENT: Cllr Micky Astor (Chair), Cllr Samantha Abbasi (Vice Chair), Cllr Harold Nickerson, Cllr Charmian Flowerday (leaving early), Cllr Peter Hayward (arriving late), Clerk to the Council Kim Wilde, and one member of the public.

ACTION BY

1. WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF MEETING PROTOCOL
Welcome by Chair. The meeting protocol was not read on this occasion.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
None received.

3. INTERESTS
   i. Declarations of interest: The Clerk reminded the meeting that the Chair is also the Landlord of the Play Area but is permitted to discuss and resolve upon all matters relating to the improvement of the Play Area as there is no financial interest relating to this project.
   ii. Dispensation applications for items on this agenda: None received.

4. OPEN MEETING FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS TO THE PARISH COUNCIL
No questions were received

5. PLAY AREA
The Parish Councillors and Clerk briefly inspected the play tower and touched upon some of the ideas that have been raised in the past weeks relating to the removal and replacement of the play tower. On return to their seats the following points were carefully considered:
   i. The possibility of recycling / reusing / selling any parts of the play tower, to minimise project costs and to offer continued enjoyment of this popular play equipment.
   The Chair outlined the options that have been raised by the Clerk following a closer inspection of all parts of the play tower in preparation for its removal. The Chair reminded all that as of the last meeting the proposal had been for the Parish Council to proceed with an attempt to raise £15k for the supply and installation of a new metal play tower that has a slide, fireman's pole and some climbing areas. The Chair acknowledged Cllr Flowerday's experience of grant funding and her view that funds could be raised/matched with relative ease. The Chair explained that this meeting would allow the Councillors to consider whether such a high level of expenditure was actually required because the metal parts of the current play tower remain in good condition and might be reused. The Chair suggested the slide could be saved for further use if an embankment was built to support the slide when the timber frame is removed. The Chair explained that if the idea of the embankment slide was approved

he could provide assistance from Hatley Park Estate with regard to labour, machinery, materials, and soil, which would help save significant expenditure for the Parish Council. It was also suggested that such a project might receive the help of others in the community who have shown an interest in the removal of the timber play tower and reuse of the slide. The Chair shared details of the Clerk's suggestion of carefully removing the top section of the tower 'fortress' so that it might be reused at ground level for the enjoyment of younger children, noting it would need to be slightly mounted to keep the timber parts off the ground. The Chair shared an idea of placing a pipe through a section of the slide embankment to allow children to climb through, and the possibility of cutting some rough steps into the side of the embankment. It was agreed that all ideas are to be reviewed by a play area safety inspector before any work is undertaken, to ensure any risks are considered and managed accordingly.

Cllr Hayward joined the meeting - the Chair gave a brief summary of what had been discussed so far for his benefit.

One final suggestion from the Clerk was that some of the better sections of timber on the play tower might be recycled to create some 'trim trail' play equipment. The Chair suggested that some new timber might also be required, as would metal legs to help prevent the timber from deteriorating in the ground. It was agreed this idea could be developed at a slower pace and over a longer period, using local skills and supplies where possible, with the focus now on the embankment slide.
Cllr Flowerday gave her apology for needing to leave the meeting and was invited to share her preference, which was to move forward with the new play tower as previously discussed at a cost of £15k, to be achieved with a grant application. She was happy for the above mentioned 'DIY' option as a plan B, should they be unsuccessful in grant applications. The Clerk asked what Cllr Flowerday would want to see happen to the current metal slide if the new tower was purchased. Cllr Flowerday suggested an embankment slide could still be built in addition to the new play tower that has a slide. The Chair thanked Cllr Flowerday and she left the meeting.
The Chair invited views from the remaining Councillors. All four Councillors supported the idea that plan A should be a DIY approach to the play area, which allows the reuse and recycling of as much of the current tower as possible, as outlined in the suggestions made above by the Chair and Clerk. Cllr Abbasi stressed the importance of not comparing the Hatley play area to other villages as the location and use is quite different due to being a smaller community without a school close by. Cllr Hayward expressed his preference to avoid huge expense on the play area, which Cllr Nickerson pointed out as being twice the size of the precept, based on the quotation received, and he also shared his concerns about further costs relating to the Clerk's paid hours for the completion of grant applications on bigger projects. The Clerk shared a history of what has been considered over the ten year period of discussing improvements

to the play area and reminded all that is possible to approach this on a piecemeal basis, as had been the case with the purchase of the two metal swing frames and roundabout. The Clerk reminded all that funds have been raised annually via the precept over many years which can only be spent on this project, so some new equipment may also be possible in due course. Finally, the Chair expressed his delight that this project might now be achieved with local resources and labour and with community support.

ii. Based on the above decision to recycle and reuse as much of the current play tower as possible, with costs being unknown at this time and a conversation with a safety inspector being required, there was no further discussion on the purchase of new equipment, though the Clerk did share some print outs of images and costings for smaller new play equipment that could be added in time, such as a see saw and rockers for younger children. A 'Working Party' for the play area was formed, consisting of the Chair, Cllr Flowerday and Cllr Nickerson, to keep the project moving outside of scheduled public meetings. Clerk

iii. The Clerk reminded all that there is safety matting located around the play tower, some of which may be quite deeply buried, and this should be lifted with care before any digger work takes place. The Clerk will liaise with a play area safety inspector and will also seek a price for a heavy duty plastic pipe that could be used through the embankment. The timing of the project will be dependent on the weather and availability of materials required for the embankment to be built. It was agreed it should be actioned as soon as possible but the wet soft ground will become damaged by heavy vehicle access and therefore this might mean the work being delayed until the spring. The Chair took this opportunity to note a new solution to deal with the wearing down of grass and soil in the area in front of the football goalpost. It was agreed that an additional ground socket for the post would allow the goalpost to be shifted from side to side each year, by using two of the three sockets each time. The Clerk was asked to order an additional socket at a cost of £66.00. Clerk

iv. The current lease expires in two years. The Landlord is happy to consider an earlier renewal of the lease and the possibility of slightly extending the leased area to allow for the embankment slide, but the urgency has lessened as there is now no immediate requirement for any grant applications.

6. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING
7.00pm on Tuesday 20th January 2026.

7. MEETING CLOSURE
The meeting was closed at 7.17pm.