

HARESCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2019 IN HARESCOMBE VILLAGE HALL AT 8.00PM

Present: Cllrs Andrew Buckmaster (Chairman), Mike Hyett, Linda Pike, Kath Pritchard and Caroline Ractliffe

In attendance: Steph Pike (Clerk), Cllr David Mossman (Stroud District Council)

1. Election of Chair

Cllr Pritchard proposed that Cllr Buckmaster be re-elected as Chair. Cllr Ractliffe seconded.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

Cllr Pike proposed that Cllr Ractliffe be re-elected as Vice Chair. Cllr Pritchard seconded.

3. To sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Member Declaration forms

The re-elected Chair and Vice Chair signed the forms.

4. Public Question Time – limited to 15 minutes

None.

5. To Receive Apologies for Absence

None.

6. To Approve Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 March 2019

The minutes were unanimously approved by the Cllrs and signed by the Chair.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes not covered on the Agenda

Cllr Pike advised that she had met with the resident who had requested another grit bin and understands why the additional grit bin may be required in the winter in that particular location on the left hand side about half way up Pound of Candles.

Cllr Hyett advised that the Council has to make requests for additional grit bins/for grit bins to be moved via Highways and that it is not possible to move grit bins wherever we want. The Council does have to supply them but Highways 'fit' them.

Action: Clerk to ask Daniel Tiffney (copying in Cllr Rippington) for additional grit bin and advise that Harescombe PC are willing to buy new one but ask if Highways can fit it. Cllr Pike to advise on exact position of grit bin.

Cllr Pike advised that she is still working towards putting a web page together for the village trust and also looking into whether BACS payments can be made from the PC bank account.

8. Member's declaration to items on the agenda

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Cllr Pike declared an interest as a relation to the Clerk and so did not wish to partake in the approval of the Clerk's pay.

With reference to item 17 Cllr Pike advised she is Treasurer to the Harescombe PCC but is not a PCC member.

9. Update from Clerk in relation to the internal audit being postponed and the approval of appointing GAPTC as a replacement internal auditor

The Clerk advised the Cllrs that the internal auditor, Peter Newman, had to cancel the audit due to health reasons. The majority of the documentation for the internal audit has already been prepared.

The Clerk had been in touch with GAPTC to organise a new auditor and GAPTC have assigned one. The Clerk advised that the costs for the audit were higher than Peter Newman's and were set in bands relating to the income of the PC. As Harescombe PC's income was just over the threshold for a pricing band, Clerk had asked GAPTC whether they could go into the lower band to which they had agreed on the phone.

Action: Clerk to confirm auditor costs in writing and continue to prepare for audit.

10. Declaring the Council as an exempt authority by resolution that it meets the criteria for 2018/19 and signing the exemption certificate

Cllr Pike proposed the resolution that declaring the Council as an exempt authority and Cllr Buckmaster seconded.

11. Approval of the Annual Governance Statement

Approved and signed.

12. Approval of the Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2019

- a. Consider the Accounting Statements;
- b. Approval of the Accounting Statements by resolution; and
- c. Sign and date the Accounting Statements by the RFO and Chair.

Cllr Pike proposed the resolution and Cllr Buckmaster seconded. The accounting statements were approved and signed.

13. Stroud District Council road Safety Group – discuss latest update and letter from Iain Dunbar

The Cllrs discussed whether Harescombe PC should make a contribution to the VAS system.

Cllr Buckmaster expressed concerns as to whether paying £250 for the system will actually benefit the Parish in any way but considered it may help needs in getting speed limit reduced from 60 – 20mph in the village.

The Cllrs agreed that they are definitely interested in making a donation.

Action: The Cllrs agreed that they would defer the decision until next meeting once Iain Dunbar has given a presentation at that meeting.

14. Planning Applications to be discussed by the Cllrs (to include any other applications submitted prior to the date of the meeting that are not listed below)

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Reference number	Address	Description	Decision
S.19/0849/HHOLD	Hayes Farm Bungalow, Harescombe, Gloucester, Gloucestershire	Erection of a rear elevation, oak framed single storey garden room	

The Cllrs discussed that the application technically related to Haresfield and none of the Cllrs had any comments on the application.

15. Report on roads, ditches and footpaths in the village

Cllr Pritchard reported a number of potholes around Gruntas Lane.

Action: Cllr Pritchard to report the potholes to Stroud District Council.

Cllr Pike advised she had spoken again to Brian Stanley about the hedge trimmings in the ditches which the Cllrs had not been able to find. Brian advised that there were definitely hedge trimming present in the ditch.

Cllr Buckmaster reported that the ditch on Gruntas Lane is still not draining. The issue is the ditch near the layby and the ditch is full of silt. Cllr Buckmaster advised that Richard Wren needs to dig it out and Bill Stewart further up where the ditch is under fence.

Action: Cllr Buckmaster is going to speak to Bill Stewart about who is responsible for digging out which bit of the ditch and then Bill can liaise with Richard Wren about digging out the appropriate section.

16. Discuss potential donation to Cotswold Wardens

The Cllrs agreed to make a donation to the Cotswold Wardens towards the running costs of their vehicle.

Cllr Pike raised issue of the limit for charity donations under s137 LGA 1972. A large donation is not in usual ambit of powers which is roughly £7.86 x no. of residents in village, approximately £1,500 (being a conservative estimate).

Cllr Pritchard suggested the Council could donate £250 now and give further donations in the future (e.g. annually) if it was able to commit funds in the future.

Cllr Pritchard proposed and Cllr Pike Linda seconded.

Action: Clerk to tell Neil Christopher and find out how best to make donation.

17. Discuss request to increase contribution towards PC grass cutting and also one off amount to St Swithun's church gates

Cllr Pike advised that she had received this request from Brian Stanley.

1. St Swithun's church has no funds of its own to replace the gates for the car park. Cllr Pike pointed out that if the Council makes a donation to St Swithun's that she believed this might come within the limit under s137 LGA 1972.

The Cllrs felt it was not appropriate to contribute money to St Swithun's. They agreed that whilst the Council can afford to support its own church in Harescombe, it is not in

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a position to support a church in Brookthorpe. The Cllrs felt that St Swithun's is not the responsibility of Harescombe Parish Council.

2. The Cllrs discussed whether the Council should increase the annual donation for the grass cutting in the village and the church from £500. The combined grass cutting costs for Harescombe church yard, village hall and St Swithun's church yard has gone up to over £3,000 per annum in recent years, with more than half these costs attributable to Harescombe.

When considering whether to increase the donation, the Cllrs discussed the sustainability of the church relating to its finances. The church is sustainable at present due to historic legacies which have been invested. The income from shares enable the church to pay annual contribution to Bishop. However if a major expenditure is required (such as roof repairs) this could potentially cause an issue.

Cllr Buckmaster felt uncomfortable about making further donations to the church, particularly if not all villagers attend.

The Cllrs discussed highlighted that the church is central to village life and attracts lots of visitors and is essential for many social events. No one from the Parish has objected to £500 contribution in the past.

The Cllrs therefore unanimously agreed to increase the contribution to the church grass cutting to £700 per year.

18. Clerk to give an update on new notice board

The Clerk advised that she had ordered the notice board and was currently liaising with Shelley Signs over the final details, including the ball finales and the colours.

19. Finance

a. Presentation of finance report year to date and approval of bank reconciliation

Cllr Pike signed the latest reconciliation and the latest cashbook was presented to the Cllrs.

b. To authorise payments and sign cheques for Council affairs

- i. **Clerk salary and expenses from March 2019 – May 2019** - approved
- ii. **PATA invoice - £30.50** - approved
- iii. **PAYE payment to HMRC (retrospective approval) - £45** - approved
- iv. **Village hall invoice – £160** - approved
- v. **Annual insurance premium (retrospective approval) - £160.65** - approved
- vi. **ICLA course (retrospective approval) - £99 + VAT** – approved
- vii. **Dee Prout – Pass Wide and Slow event banner (retrospective approval) - £35** - approved
- viii. **Notice board from Shelley signs - £1,015** - approved

20. Councillors information exchange & correspondence

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Cllr Hyett advised that Brookthorpe PC were also having issues with Daniel Tiffney at Highways and his lack of responses.

21. Agenda items for the July 2019 meeting

- Iain Dunbar attending (Chair of the Stroud District Road Safety Group)
- Review of employment contract for clerk and employment policies (grievance and disciplinary).

Meeting closed: 21:50

Next meeting: 17 July 2019

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17/07/19.