

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF HARTLEY

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1st May 2020

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the Annual Meeting of Hartley Parish Council to be **held remotely, using “Zoom”** on **MONDAY 11th MAY 2020** commencing at **7.30 p.m.**

Yours sincerely

Helen Boden

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Proper Officer

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to contact the Clerk prior to the day of the meeting.

Please note that the proceedings of this meeting may be recorded in line with regulations set out in the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, came into force on 4th April 2020.

Regulation 5 permits the holding of remote meetings.

Members of the public wishing to attend the meeting, should contact the Clerk at the Parish Office for further instructions.

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman of the Council

To elect a Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

2. Chairman’s declaration of acceptance of office

To receive the Chairman’s declaration of acceptance of office or, if not then received, to decide when it shall be received.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

To elect a Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

4. Apologies

To receive and approve, if necessary, any apologies for absence.

5. Declarations of Interest

To receive Members' declarations of interest which have not already been entered in the Members' Register of Interests or notified to the Monitoring Officer.

Members are reminded of the duty to register with the Monitoring Officer any change to interests or new interests in Appendices A and B of the Council's adopted Code of Conduct within 28 days of becoming aware of it.

6. Dispensations

To consider any request/s received from Members to grant a dispensation in order to participate in discussion and voting, as appropriate, on matter/s to be considered at this meeting where a Member has an interest in Appendices A and/or B of the Council's Code of Conduct adopted on 10th November 2014.

7. Minutes

(WHITE)

To approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the Hartley Parish Council meeting held on 15th April 2020. (Annexed).

Adjournment

The meeting will be adjourned to receive any reports from the County Councillor and the District Councillors and to allow a public question time.

Pursuant to Standing Order 3 (e) the Chairman of the Council will invite members of the public to express an interest should they wish to make representations, answer questions or give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.

8. Appointment of committees, advisory committees and representatives on outside bodies and joint management committees

(a) To establish Committees and Advisory Committees for the ensuing municipal year and to approve their Terms of Reference and delegated powers.

A schedule showing the Committees and Advisory Committees and their Terms of Reference established during 2019/2020 is also attached as Appendix 1 for Members information. **(YELLOW)**

(b) To appoint the membership of the Committees and Advisory Committees.

A schedule indicating the membership of Committees and Advisory Committees during 2019/20 is attached as Appendix 1. **(YELLOW)**

(c) To approve appointment of representatives to outside bodies and joint management committees.

A schedule showing the appointments made during 2019/2020 is attached as Appendix 2. **(BLUE)**

9. Standing Orders (WHITE)

To review the Council's Standing Orders in light of the current COVID-19 Pandemic. (Annexed).

10. Financial Regulations (GREEN)

To confirm the Council's Financial Regulations as reviewed by the Finance Committee at a meeting held on 29th April 2020. (Annexed).

11. Complaints Procedure (CREAM)

To confirm the Council's complaints procedure as approved by the Council on 13th May 2019. (Annexed).

12. Publication Scheme, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 2018 (WHITE)

To confirm the Council's Publication Scheme and procedures for handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018. (Annexed).

At a meeting of the Council held on 10th June 2019, it was resolved that the Council's procedures for handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018 shall be as set out in Legal Topic Notes published by the National Association of Local Councils, as may be in place at the time of the request.

13. Calendar of Meetings

(a) Meetings of the Council

To approve the dates, times and place of ordinary meetings of the Council during the ensuing municipal year.

Apart from the Annual Meeting of the Council, the Parish Council is required by Schedule 12, paragraph 8 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to hold at least 3 other meetings. Standing Order 5 (d) states that ordinary meetings of the Council shall be held on such dates and times as the Council directs.

It has been the custom to hold monthly meetings on the second Monday of each month, except for the month of August when there is no meeting, and that the meetings are held at the Pavilion, Manor Field commencing at 7.30 p.m.

It is suggested that meetings for the ensuing year be held on the following dates:

8 th June 2020	13 th July 2020
14 th September 2020	12 th October 2020
9 th November 2020	14 th December 2020
11 th January 2021	8 th February 2021
8 th March 2021	12 th April 2021
10 th May 2021 (Annual Meeting of the Council)	

(b) Annual Parish Meeting

To consider the date for the Annual Parish Meeting. Annual Parish Meetings must be held annually between 1st March and 1st June (inclusive). Historically the Annual Parish Meeting has been held on a Friday evening to allow the local Member of Parliament to attend.

The Council is requested to consider the suggested date of Friday 14th May 2021 for the Annual Parish Meeting.

14. Finance Committee (BLUE)

To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 29th April 2020 and to consider any recommendations contained therein. (Annexed).

15. Planning Committee (YELLOW)

To adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 22nd April 2020 (Annexed) & 6th May 2020 (To follow) and to consider any recommendations contained therein.

16. Risk Management Review (GREEN)

To confirm the Risk Management Policy Statement and Risk Management Strategy and Risk Register, as reviewed by the Finance Committee at its meeting held on 26th February 2020. (Annexed).

Background documents

Risk Management Policy Statement approved by the Council on 9th March 2020. (Annexed)

Risk Management Strategy approved by the Council on 9th March 2020. (Annexed).

Risk Register approved by the Council on 9th March 2020. (Annexed).

17. Financial Risk Assessment (PINK)

To confirm the Financial Risk Assessment as reviewed by the Finance Committee at its meeting held on 26th February 2020. (Annexed).

Background document

Financial Risk Assessment approved by the Council on 9th March 2020. (Annexed).

18. Statement of Internal Control (GREEN)

To confirm the Statement of Internal Control recommended by the Finance Committee at its meeting held on 26th February 2020.

Background document

Statement of Internal Control for y/e 31st March 2020. (Annexed).

19. Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit (CREAM)

Assertion 2 of the Annual Governance Statement contained in Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, requires Members of Hartley Parish Council to confirm that they have “*maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness*”.

This Assertion covers the Council’s responsibility to ensure that its affairs are managed in accordance with proper standards of financial conduct and arrangements exist to prevent and detect fraud and corruption. The Council is

required to confirm that it has tested those arrangements, at least once in the year, to make sure that they are working in an adequate and effective way.

When completing Assertion 2, 6 and 7 in the Annual Governance Statement, local councils should consider the outcome of any review of internal audit. Guidance on how the review could be conducted is set out in the Governance & Accountability for Local Council's – A Practitioners' Guide (England) March 2019, pages 33 to 37 inclusive.

A review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit was undertaken on 26th February 2020 by Cllrs Abraham, Bennett and Sewell. (Annexed).

At the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 26th February 2020, Members considered and approved the review of the effectiveness of internal audit, undertaken on 26th February 2019, by Cllrs Abraham, Bennett and Sewell.

Background document

Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit undertaken on 26th February 2020. (Annexed)

Governance & Accountability for Local Council's – A Practitioners' Guide (England) March 2019, pages 33 to 37 inclusive. (Annexed)

20. Internal Auditor's Report 2019-20 (GREEN)

To consider the Internal Auditor's Report for the year ending 31st March 2020. (Annexed).

21. Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 (WHITE)

The Council is required to complete and approve Page 4, Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, entitled Annual Governance Statement, which sets out a number of assurances relating to the preparation of the statement of accounts and the Council's internal controls. A copy of Section 1 of the Statement of Assurance is circulated for Members' attention. (Annexed).

Background document

Pages 8 –15 of the Governance & Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England, A Practitioners Guide March 2019. (Annexed) (CREAM)

22. Accounts for the Financial Year Ended 31st March 2020 – Accounting Statements (WHITE)

(1) To consider an Addendum – Coronavirus Emergency Regulation changes, to the Annual Governance and Accountability return (AGAR) 2019-20. (Annexed).

(2) To consider the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2020 and to confirm the dates selected for the period of exercise of public rights.

Owing to the increasing impact of COVID – 19, MHCLG has made amended Regulations which **extend the statutory audit deadlines for 2019-20**, only for all Category 2 smaller authorities (town and parish councils, parish meetings, internal drainage boards and other authorities).

The Council has received notice from the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn, that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year

ending 31st March 2020, should be returned by **31st July 2020**, with the following documentation;

- (1) a fully completed and signed Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). **Section 1 must be approved before Section 2 either at separate meetings or as separate agenda items in the correct order;**
- (2) the completed form confirming the dates planned for the provision for the exercise of public rights;
- (3) a bank reconciliation showing how the cash balance in Box 8 is arrived at;
- (4) a full explanation, with figures, of any significant variances between the current and prior accounting statements;
- (5) a reconciliation for the difference between Boxes 7 and 8 of Section 1 of the AGAR.

The Council has not been selected within the 5% sample for intermediate level review procedures.

Page 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return relates to the internal audit report to be completed by the Council's Internal Auditor. The Council's Internal Auditor undertook an internal audit of the Council's accounts on 8th April 2020.

Prior to the issue of the Regulation changes, the Audit Commission had suggested **15th June 2020**, as the date on or after which interested parties and local electors for the area to which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year ending 31st March 2020 relates, may exercise their rights under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, Sections 26 and 27, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234).

The notice of appointment of date for the exercise of electors' rights shall be displayed on the Council's notice board outside Hartley Library. It is a requirement of the Regulations, that this notice is published not less than one day before the start of the inspection period.

Background documents

Annual Governance & Accountability Return Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

RBS Software Solutions: Income and expenditure account, balance sheet, trial balance, creditors and debtors, Council detail report, year-end reconciliation of current accounts and business saver account

Explanation of significant variances

Annual Governance and Accountability Return, Section 2 – working details

Annual Governance and Accountability Return, Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20

Yellow form confirming dates of the period for the provision of public rights

23. Supporting Statement

(GREEN)

To consider the supporting statement to the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2020. (Annexed).

24. Signatories

To approve the signatories to the Council's bank accounts.

Currently there are five signatories to the Council's bank accounts and each cheque/internet banking payment requires the signature of two of the five signatories.

The current signatories are Councillors Abraham, Bennett, Graeme, Oxtoby and Ross. The Clerk and the Assistant Clerk have limited and restricted access to the Council's bank accounts to obtain account information, make fund transfers between Barclays bank accounts held in the Council's name and to set up internet banking payments for Unity Bank.

25. Routine Maintenance Contract

To consider the appointment of a Contractor to undertake duties set out in the Routine Maintenance Contract for the period 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021, including regular patrols of the Council's open spaces and execution of minor repair/maintenance works. (To follow).

26. Covid -19 Pandemic

To consider any action that may be required due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

27. Insurance

To consider arrangements for the Council's insurance, falling due for renewal on 1st June 2020.

28. Payments

(BLUE)

(a) To approve the payment of the following accounts for May 2020. (Annexed).

(b) To receive and note a Council detail report setting out actual income and expenditure against budgeted estimates as at. (If available).

(c) To verify the bank reconciliations for the Council's three bank accounts. Bank statements and reconciliations will be available at the meeting.

List of circulated documents

1. Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15th April 2020. **(WHITE)**
2. Appendix 1 - List of Committees and Advisory Committee and their Terms of Reference established during 2019/20. **(YELLOW)**
3. Appendix 1 - Committee and Advisory Committee Membership 2019/20. **(YELLOW)**
4. Appendix 2 - Appointments to outside bodies and joint management committees 2019/20. **(BLUE)**
5. Standing Orders as approved by the Council on 13th May 2019. **(PINK)**

6. Financial Regulations as reviewed by the Finance Committee at a meeting held on 29th April 2020. **(GREEN)**
7. Complaints procedure approved by the Council on 13th May 2019. **(CREAM)**
8. Council's Publication Scheme and procedures for handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018. **(WHITE)**

9. Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 29th April 2020. **(BLUE)**
10. Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 22nd April 2020. **(YELLOW)**
11. Risk Management Policy Statement approved by the Council on 9th March 2020. **(GREEN)**
12. Risk Management Strategy approved by the Council on 9th March 2020. **(GREEN)**
13. Risk Register approved by the Council on 9th March 2020. **(GREEN)**
14. Financial Risk Assessment approved by the Council on 9th March 2020. **(PINK)**
15. Statement of Internal Control for y/e 31/03/19. **(GREEN)**
16. Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit undertaken on 26th February 2020. **(CREAM)**
17. *Governance & Accountability for Local Council's – A Practitioners' Guide (England) March 2019, pages 33 to 37 inclusive.* **(CREAM)**
18. Internal Auditor's Report 2019/20. **(GREEN)**
19. Annual Governance & Accountability Return Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2019/20. **(WHITE)**
20. Pages 8 –15 of the Governance & Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England, A Practitioners Guide March 2019. **(CREAM)**
21. RBS Software Solutions: Income & Expenditure, Balance Sheet, Trial Balance, Creditors & Debtors, Council Detail Report, year end reconciliation of current accounts and business saver account. **(WHITE)**
22. Explanation of Significant Variances. **(WHITE)**
23. Annual Governance and Accountability Return Section 2 - Accounting Statements. **(WHITE)**
24. Annual Governance and Accountability Return Section 2 working details. **(WHITE)**
25. Yellow form confirming dates of the period for the provision of public rights. **(YELLOW)**
26. Supporting Statement for the y/e 31st March 2020. **(WHITE)**
27. Schedule of payments for May 2020. **(BLUE)**

