

**THE PARISH COUNCIL OF HARTLEY**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**HELD REMOTELY USING “ZOOM”**

**ON MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2020 AT 7.30 P.M.**

**Present :** Cllr Larry Abraham  
Cllr Sheila Bennett  
Cllr Penny Cole  
Cllr Lesley Driscoll  
Cllr David Graeme  
Cllr Mally Malham  
Cllr Matt Mohr  
Cllr Anne Oxtoby – (*Chairman*)  
Cllr Ian Ross  
Cllr Vince Sewell

**In attendance:** Mrs Helen Boden- (*Clerk*)  
Cllr David Brazier – Kent County Councillor  
2 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed Members and members of the public to the Parish Council's first virtual meeting and it was agreed that Members would submit their votes verbally.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Chris Alford due to family commitments and Cllr Perry Cole due to work commitments.

RESOLVED: That,  
the absences of Cllr Alford due to family commitments and Cllr Perry Cole due to work commitments, be accepted and approved.

**2. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Dispensations**

There were no requests from Members for a dispensation.

**4. Minutes**

RESOLVED: That,  
the minutes of the meeting of Hartley Parish Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

*The meeting was adjourned at 7.34 p.m. to receive reports from the County Councillor and District Councillors and to take questions from members of the public.*

*The meeting resumed at 7.41p.m.*

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

There were no expressions of interest.

## **5. Burial Grounds & Gardens of Remembrance Committee**

Cllr Penny Cole proposed and Cllr Oxtoby seconded, an amendment to the recommendation contained in the minutes of the Burial Grounds & Gardens of Remembrance Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020, (page 2, minute item 5 (b), Manor Field Burial Ground), so that it reads;

*“(1) Gardens of England be appointed as the approved grave digger for Manor Field Burial Ground and, (2) a letter be sent to the existing grave diggers for Hartley Burial Ground, to advise them that their services will not be required at the new Manor Field Burial Ground and thanking them for their services over the years.*

RESOLVED: That.

the minutes of the meeting of the Burial Grounds & Gardens of Remembrance Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and the recommendations contained therein, as amended, be received and, where necessary, approved and adopted.

The Clerk reported that the software relating to the new Manor Field Burial Ground had recently been installed on to the Parish Council’s computers.

The Clerk reported that although the necessary burial registers had not yet been obtained, advice had been sought from the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management (ICCM), who had confirmed that an electronic register (such as the one offered by Pear Technology) would also be acceptable.

Cllr Cole reported that the new Burial Ground at Manor Field was now ready for use.

Members agreed that in view of the fact that Hartley Burial Ground is nearly at full capacity, the new Manor Field Burial Ground should be opened for use with immediate effect.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) Manor Field Burial Ground be opened for use with immediate effect;
- (2) the registering of burials using the Pear Technology software, be approved and,
- (3) arrangements be made for the necessary burial registers to be purchased as soon as possible.

## **6. Planning Committee**

RESOLVED: That,

the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020, be received and, where necessary approved and adopted.

## 7. Gorse Wood Clearance

At the meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020, it was noted that reports of fly tipping in Gorse Wood, continued to be received.

Items dumped included mattresses, a trampoline and enclosure and bags of clothes.

The Clerk reported that she had contacted West Kent Housing Association to enquire as to whether they would be willing/able to assist with a clean up operation, as the fly tipping appeared to be spread throughout the whole wood, rather than isolated to just one area.

The Community Safety Officer at West Kent Housing Association advised that if the Council decides what sort of clean up day they would like to hold, she would look into ways that West Kent Housing could assist.

Staff at West Kent Housing have volunteer days that they can use and the Community Safety Officer could possibly involve another agency in assisting to remove the rubbish that is cleared.

It was noted that Sevenoaks District Council had recently cleared an area of the woods at the request of the Parish Council, at a cost.

It was resolved that “ *the Clerk be requested to contact Sevenoaks District Council to request that they attend a site meeting with the Clerk and Members of the Council to enable them to provide a quotation for the complete clearance of the wood*”

A site meeting was arranged and Members agreed that to delay the clearance of the wood, would be detrimental to the safety of members of the public walking in the woods and could also attract vermin.

In consultation with the Chairman of the Council, in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.5, it was agreed that the quotation received from Sevenoaks District Council, for the sum of £850.00 + VAT, to remove the fly tipping and general litter in Gorse Wood, should be accepted and that in view of the fact that there was no budget provision for this, the total cost should be met from the Parish Council's General Reserves.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the above report be noted;
- (2) acceptance of the quotation received from Sevenoaks District Council, for the sum of £850.00 + VAT, to remove the fly tipping and general litter in Gorse Wood, be noted and approved and,
- (3) the total cost of the work be met from the Parish Council's General Reserves.

## 8. Pavilion Closure

Members noted that in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic and following advice from the Government, on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, Manor Field Pavilion was closed to the public until at least 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Members considered advice received from the Parish Council's insurers, dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and from Brodex Trident, the contractor responsible for undertaking legionella testing at the Pavilion, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

Members noted that the aspect of the policy that will become relevant would be the “unoccupied condition”, which comes in to force once the building is “unoccupied” for in excess of 45 consecutive days.

Confirmation has been sought from the Insurers, as to whether this can be extended in the current climate, but until the 45 days is exceeded, full cover will remain in place.

It is recommended that, to comply in times of unoccupancy, a representative from the council attends the building once a week, if practical and occupies it for an hour or so and checks on the condition of the interior and exterior, with each visit recorded in writing.

Members noted that advice had been sought from Brodex Trident, regarding action that should be taken with regard to legionella, whilst the building is closed.

Members noted that the advice received was that the current regime of testing/chlorination should be ceased for the duration of the closure, but that a full system chlorination and legionella sample should be arranged prior to the building being re-opened. It will also be necessary for any missed actions during the closure period, such as TMV servicing, tank inspections and shower head descales to be carried out at this time.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the advice received from the Parish Council's insurers, dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and Brodex Trident, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, be noted;
- (2) arrangements be made for the Pavilion to be attended once a week by either the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, or member of the Council, to “occupy” the building and to check the condition of the interior and exterior, with each visit to be recorded in writing,
- (3) arrangements be made for the recommendations from Brodex Trident for a full system chlorination and legionella sample, as well as any missed actions during the closure period, such as TMV servicing, tank inspections and shower head descales to be carried out prior to the building being re-opened and,
- (4) Government advice continue to be followed beyond 30<sup>th</sup> April.

## **9. Playground Closure**

Members noted that in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and following advice from the Government, the Parish Council's playgrounds have been closed to the public until at least 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Members considered advice received from the Parish Council's insurers, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, advising that the terms of the insurance state that play equipment should be checked at least once every 4 weeks by a competent person, (competent as deemed by the Council, rather than any specific experience or qualifications), recorded, with any defects acted on and rectified.

In light of the current ongoing situation and Government instructions to close playgrounds, the insurers have agreed to relax these requirements.

In instances where playgrounds are in a fenced area, which has been locked and a sign attached, stating that the playground is closed, these would be considered out of use and therefore would not require inspection by a competent person.

It is suggested though, that the facilities are checked on a regular basis, to ensure that the locks are still in place and that there is no evidence that the playground has been used.

In situations in which the playgrounds **cannot** be made secure, (i.e. could still be accessed), which is the case with the parish council's playgrounds, then the inspection requirement of once every 4 weeks, is extended to 8 weeks, as checks should still be carried out to help ensure the safety of any children that might access the equipment.

The Clerk reported that closure signs had been placed on the fences of all three of the council's playgrounds and the gates secured shut with hazard tape.

Members noted that both the gates and the notices are being checked on a regular basis to ensure that they remain in situ.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the advice received from the Parish Council's insurers, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, be noted;
- (2) arrangements be made for the playgrounds to be inspected before the expiry of the 8 week period;
- (3) current arrangements be continued for the gates and closure notices to be checked on a regular basis and,
- (4) Government advice continue to be followed beyond 30<sup>th</sup> April.

## 10. Parish Office

The Chairman reported that in line with Government advice, the Parish Office was no longer open to the public.

In consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council and the Clerk and Assistant Clerk, it had been agreed that the Assistant Clerk would continue to work in the office on her usual days of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, complying with social distancing requirements and the Clerk would work from home, going in to the office as and when required, by prior arrangement with the Assistant Clerk to ensure that there was no overlap.

Members noted, that to facilitate this, it had been necessary to purchase a lap top, which had been obtained from Wrotham Computer Care Ltd, at a reduced cost of £208.33 + VAT, due to it being a refurbished model.

Set up costs of £74.10 + VAT had also been incurred.

To enable the Clerk to access the Parish Office computers, it had also been necessary to purchase an annual "Logmein" subscription at a cost of £294.47 + VAT.

Members noted that expenditure for the above had been authorised by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.5, which states that:

*“In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk’s judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £2,000. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter”.*

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the above report be noted and the current working arrangements for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk, detailed above, be continued and reviewed on a regular basis, in line with government advice and,
- (2) the Clerk’s actions in making arrangements for the purchase and setting up of a laptop and annual subscription to “Logmein”, for the total sum of £576.90 + VAT, be confirmed and,
- (3) the total cost of the above be met from the Parish Council’s general reserves.

The Chairman reported that under Financial Regulation 4.5, as stated above, the Clerk was able to authorise revenue expenditure, on behalf of the council, in cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services.

The Chairman considered that for the duration of the current COVID-19 situation it would be prudent for the Council to delegate authority to the Clerk, to authorise expenditure on behalf of the council, in relation to matters arising from the pandemic, which in the Clerk’s judgement it is necessary to carry out.

RESOLVED: That,

in relation to matters arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Clerk, in consultation with **both** the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council, be delegated authority to authorise expenditure on behalf of the Council, which in the Clerk’s judgement, it is necessary to carry out, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure. Such expenditure shall be subject to a limit of £2,000.00. The Clerk shall report such action to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

## 11. Payments

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the payment of accounts for April 2020, attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes, be approved.
- (2) the Council detail report as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 , setting out actual income and expenditure against budgeted estimates be received and noted; and
- (3) the bank reconciliations for the Council’s three bank accounts for March , be verified by Cllr Graeme, after the close of the meeting.

(4) it be noted that the bank reconciliations for the Council's three bank accounts for March 2020 had been due to be verified by Cllr Bennett, but that due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, this had not yet been feasible, but would be carried out as soon as possible.

The meeting closed at 7.58p.m.

Signed:.....  
Chairman of Hartley Parish Council

Date:.....

<b>Schedule of Payments April 2020 - Paid by Internet Banking from Unity Trust Bank</b>					
<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Payment to</b>	<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>Total</b>
535100529		PAID 09/04/20 - Water at allotments 29/10/19-30/03/20	490.97	-	490.97
184890168		Salary 01/04/2020 - 30/04/2020 (Pre-approved)	2,278.99	-	-
		Reimburse re LogMein remote working re laptop parish office	294.47	58.89	2,632.35
271739738		Salary 01/04/2020 - 30/04/2020 (Pre-approved)	1,316.96	-	1,316.96
465419627		Month 1 Employer & Employee NIC & PAYE	1,390.21	-	1,390.21
434932548		Employer & Employees pension contributions April 2020	1,313.31	-	1,313.31
502388245		Annual subscription 20/21	95.00	-	95.00
614970873		Photocopier rental 18/02/20 - 17/05/20 inv KPS161906	140.45	28.09	168.54
502117967		Cleaning of pavilion and water testing 02/03-31/03 inv 02263	186.25	-	186.25
765648359		32 rolls of recycling sacks 13/01/20 inv 2056545	16.00	-	16.00
297468973		Business rates re Parish Office inv 16/0	1,010.48	-	1,010.48
144068506		Year end Internal audit & travel expenses for Dec (not previously charged) & April. Inv 1134	509.40	-	509.40
			<b>9,042.49</b>	<b>86.98</b>	<b>9,129.47</b>

<b>Schedule of Payments April 2020 - Paid by cheque/DDR from Barclays Bank</b>					
<b>Chq No</b>	<b>Payment to</b>	<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>Total</b>
106998	Hartley Parish Council	PAID 24/03/20 - Top up Unity Bank Account to £85,000	21,000.00	-	21,000.00
106999	Hartley Parish Council	Top up Unity Bank to £85,000	19,100.00	-	19,100.00
			<b>40,100.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>40,100.00</b>

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7.34 p.m.

Cllr Brazier was unable to give a report, as there was a technical issue with his microphone.

Cllr Penny Cole reported that the volunteering scheme launched by Sevenoaks District Council, to help residents during the Coronavirus outbreak, was working well. Cllr Cole reported that there were currently 33 volunteers in Hartley.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs Penny Cole and Perry Cole for their continued efforts with the scheme.

Cllr Abraham reported that a challenge has been lodged by the District Council, in respect of the Local Plan.

Cllr Abraham advised that a response was not expected before the Summer, but that the District Council would be issuing a press release within the next few days.

Cllr Oxtoby advised that she intended to purchase a banner thanking the NHS and key workers, using funds from her Chairman's allowance, to be erected outside the Parish Office.

Members were consulted for their views and wholeheartedly supported the proposal.

The meeting resumed at 7.41p.m.

