



GREAT HORKELEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2024
IN GREAT HORKELEY NEW VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM

Those present:

Cllr Arnold (Chairman)	Cllr Burns-Langton (Vice- Chairman)
Cllr Banks	Cllr Jarvis (arrived late)
Cllr Mead	Cllr Sudbery
Cllr Tempest	
+ 2 members of the public in attendance	

24/051 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

24/052 Apologies and Reasons for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllr Baker.

24/053 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Jarvis declared an interest in respect of item 24/060 (d) as a member of the Community Events Team.

24/054 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 16th July 2024 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

The approval of the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 30th July 2024 was deferred to the next meeting.

24/055 Have Your Say – Public Open Forum

Sally Groom, the wife of the former Clerk, Sean Groom, expressed thanks that the installation of a bench to commemorate her late husband is now being arranged. Cllr Arnold confirmed that the bench would be added to the Parish Council's asset register and maintained by the Council.

The new editor of the Village News came to introduce herself to the councillors and advised that the Village News would now contain colour images, and a pdf version would be produced for the Parish Council website. Councillors thanked her for taking on the role.

The members of the public left the meeting.

24/056 Reports from Members and Officers of Other Authorities

Cllr Arnold reported that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is currently reviewing ward boundaries of the Colchester area. At an online meeting with LGBCE, Cllr Arnold asked if the parish boundaries could also be reviewed and was told that this could be initiated by CCC after the review of the ward boundaries.

Cllr Jarvis entered the meeting.

24/057 Finance

- (a) The Statement of Accounts as at 31st August 2024 was noted, and Cllr Sudbery checked and signed to say that balances reconcile with those on the bank statements.
- (b) The July and August payments list was approved in accordance with the 2024/25 Budget.
- (c) It was noted that the External Audit Report for the 2023/24 financial year has been received and the audit process is now complete. The Council thanked the Clerk for her exemplary work in maintaining its accounts faultlessly.
- (d) **It was resolved** to renew the Council's membership with CALC at a cost of £35.

24/058 Planning & Highways

- (a) The draft minutes from the Planning & Highways Committee meeting held on 23rd August 2024 were noted.
- (b) The following Planning Application was discussed, and it was unanimously agreed to notify the Planning Authority that GHPC does not wish to comment on the proposals.

241788

21 Pattinson Walk

Proposed garage and loft conversions and side and rear extensions

- (c) Cllr Arnold advised that he has investigated the possibility of running electricity from two poles on the A134 to power a new light underneath the A12 bridge, however either option would cost well in excess of £10,000 just to install a terminal from which a cable could be run. He had also contacted the highway authority and established that when the new shared cycle and footway between Gt Horkesley and Chesterwell is built, it would include lighting along the entire stretch.

It was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr Arnold) not to pursue this option until it was known when the footway would be upgraded rather than spend a comparatively large sum now to install one temporary light.

Cllr Sudbery asked whether solar powered lighting was a possibility. Cllr Arnold replied that his initial investigation suggested these lights were vulnerable to vandalism and theft but he would look further at the matter.

- (d) Speeding and flooding on the A134 near the Blue Owl: this item was deferred until the member of the public who reported the matter could attend a meeting.
- (e) Cllr Arnold reported that Anglian Water had initiated a series of Multi Agency Meetings, known as MAGs, to improve joint working between agencies involved in dealing with flooding in villages; Gt Horkesley and Boxted are in MAG10. He gave an update regarding the meeting held 22nd August 2024 and advised that Essex Highways are still declining to attend the meetings, which is impeding progress. There will be a site visit in the village on 30th September.
- (f) Cllr Jarvis reported that a family member had a near miss at the crossroads of Coach Road, Nayland Road and London Road, as there is no stop sign or other sign to indicate there is a junction and the white lines have completely faded. Three cars also crashed at the location on 11th September. The Clerk will check that Cllr Barber is aware.

Cllr Mead reported that parking around Malvern Way and Coach Road is still dangerous around the times of school starting and finishing, where people are parking on double yellow lines; at times the roads are completely blocked. The Clerk will advise the Parking Partnership, Cllr Laws and CCC.

Cllr Arnold reported that Cllr Barber is now speaking with Cllr Cunningham, the County Cabinet member responsible, to ensure Essex Highways move quickly to reduce the speed limit on the derestricted section of the A134 between Gt Horkesley and

Chesterwell. The cost of reducing the speed limit is likely to be higher than first anticipated, however two County councillors have offered to release money from their personal budgets on the project. The Clerk will also write to Cllr Cunningham explaining that approximately a further 30 children are now walking along the route since the start of the new school year.

24/059 Public Spaces

- (a) Councillors discussed the installation of a memorial bench to be dedicated to the former Parish Clerk, Sean Groom.
 - i. **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Sudbery) that the Modern Teak Memorial Bench for £425 +VAT be purchased.
 - ii. **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to install the bench on land owned by the Parish Council around the Village Hall.
 - iii. **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to delegate authority to the Clerk to purchase a plaque and arrange installation of the bench (up to a total cost of £1,000 as agreed in item 24/042).
- (b) Cllr Arnold advised that the possible transfer of ownership of the Jubilee Green is caught up in the authority-wide asset review currently being undertaken by CCC. He has spoken directly to the cabinet member responsible and stressed that the Parish Council wishes to make swift progress in the matter. He has not yet had a reply.
- (c) Cllr Tempest has received information from other local councils regarding the cost of grass cutting and will continue to obtain quotes for ground maintenance and installation of new equipment on the Jubilee Green, in order to apply for any grant funding opportunities that arise and also aid discussion on next year's budget.

Cllr Tempest reported that there is now a geocache situated near to St John's Church.
- (d) The Council considered a proposal for a Christmas event on the Jubilee Green which had been prepared by Great Horkesley Community Events and circulated with the meeting papers. The organisation would fund the event from its own resources.

The Council had set aside £1,000 in its budget for a community Christmas tree, lights and decorations.

 - i. **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Mead) to purchase a tree for £250 +VAT from Fred Smith Christmas Trees.
 - ii. **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to delegate authority to the Clerk, in consultation with Cllr Burns-Langton, to purchase outdoor Christmas tree lights and decorations (up to a total cost of £750). It was established that the lights would be stored at the Village Hall for use in future years.

24/060 Village Hall

- (a) The draft minutes from the Village Hall Committee meeting held 10th September 2024 were noted.
- (b) There were no recommendations from the Village Hall Committee for discussion.
- (c) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to delegate authority to the Clerk to arrange the installation of an outside socket at the Village Hall, up to a total cost of £200, to be taken from Village Hall reserves.

Cllr Jarvis left the room.

- (d) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to waive the hire fee for the Community Events Team when volunteers book to use the meeting room to plan community events.

It was also agreed to waive the hire fee for the Community Events Team to book the Village Hall for the 2024 Community Christmas Event.

Cllr Jarvis returned to the room.

24/061 Councillors

It was noted that Cllr Burns-Langton is booked on to attend Advanced Councillor Training in January and February 2025.

24/062 GHPC Website & Emails

- (a) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to update the GHPC website with new images and layout, as per examples given by the current website provider.
 - (b) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to add pdf copies of future Village News editions to the website.
 - (c) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to engage VCS Websites Ltd to set up new councillor email addresses and migrate the current Clerk and Booking Manager email addresses to the new server.
- It was also agreed** to engage VCS Websites Ltd to manage the renewal of the Council's domain name for a ten-year period to benefit from a drastically reduced cost.

24/063 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report to date was noted, including a list of resolutions agreed at earlier Parish Council meetings and any progress to date.

24/064 Village Warden

The Village Warden's report to date was noted.

24/065 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday 15th October 2024 at 7.30pm in Great Horkesley New Village Hall.

24/066 Exclusion of Press and Public

There were no members of the public still present, so the resolution was not moved.

24/067 Staff & Contractors

- (a) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to increase the Clerk's hours and make minor changes to her job description to incorporate more booking duties. In the accounts, Clerk costs will be split between Parish Council and Village Hall accordingly.
- (b) It was noted that in line with contracts of employment, some staff wages should have been increased from 1st May 2024; the increases would now be implemented and arrears paid.
- (c) **It was unanimously agreed** (proposed Cllr Arnold) to increase the hourly rate paid to regular contractors.

These minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed(Chairman)

Date