



GREAT HORKESLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of Great Horkesley Parish Council

held at 7:30pm on Tuesday 18 June 2019

Members Present: Councillors Arnold (Chairman)

Harris, Mead & Williams

One member of the public

1. Chairman's opening remarks

Cllr Arnold welcomed those present to the meeting. He introduced the member of the public as Mr Vic Flores, formerly a resident of Great Horkesley and explained that Mr Flores had offered to assist the Council overhaul its use of IT and social media. The Council would discuss this under item 15 later in the meeting.

2. Apologies and reasons for absence

Cllr Baker had sent apologies because he could not attend. **Cllr Chapman (CBC)** was attending a Colchester Borough Homes meeting.

3. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared in respect of any items on the agenda.

4. Public open forum

No members of the public wished to speak.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

It was agreed that the published draft of the minutes of the meeting of 14 May be adopted as a true record.

6. Planning Applications

(a) It was agreed that the Council did not need to make representations on the application considered:

191325 – land north of Ivy Lodge Road, erection of agricultural shed.

(b) There was no discussion of any Great Horkesley application notified by CBC after the meeting agenda was published.

7. Reports from visiting councillors

No members of other authorities were present other than Cllr Arnold, who reported that ECC had agreed to fund work to cost the proposal for a shared footway-cycleway between the land around Great Horkesley Manor and the Chesterwell development in Mile End. He has met the ECC Cabinet member for Education, who was supportive, as were the ECC and CBC members for Mile End who were anxious to avoid Great Horkesley parents driving their children to and from the new Trinity secondary school from September 2019 onwards.

8. Draft Annual Report

It was agreed to adopt the draft Annual Report for 2018-19 which had been incomplete at the time of the Annual Meeting on 14 May.

9. Chairman's report

The chairman reported that he had been busy monitoring resurfacing works on the A134 and residents' reactions to it on social media. He had been reporting both 'up the line' to Cllr Brown and the ECC Highways Cabinet member Cllr Bentley along with his own comments regarding the shortcomings of the works.

10. Clerk's report

a. 2020 CBC Elections. The Clerk reported that CBC had booked the hall for use as a polling station on 7 May 2020, thus securing the current hire rate.

b. VAT reclaim. This was submitted on 5 June 2019.

c. The 'Half Butt' bus shelter seat had been inspected. It was found that the seat was intact but had come away from the batten on which it rested. The chairman had agreed to screw the two parts back together.

d. The faulty disk drive of the council's laptop was continuing to interrupt her work – for example, between 12 and 17 June she had been unable to send or receive any emails.

11. Highways.

a. It was agreed that there was no need to order salt for the forthcoming winter, there being plenty stored at the Bishop William Ward School. What was needed was a means of distributing within the village, a job that the Council still hoped could be carried out by an appointed Village Warden.

b. Village Warden. The chairman reported that whilst there had been no response to the advertisement in the Village News, the clerk to West Bergholt PC had passed on the name of a contractor who could carry out some parts of the Warden's role. Along with the vice-chairman and clerk he had met the individual who it turned out ran a small company carrying out roadside works for the highway authority and various supermarkets. The work that could be undertaken included the treatment of roadside weeds, for which his workforce was qualified, cutting back hedges and growth obscuring signs and restoring footways to their original width. As it happened, the individual lived in the village. They had formed the view that the individual should be hired to undertake the work on an ad hoc basis.

Cllr Harris sounded a note of caution: the individual had not responded to the advertisement in the Village News so the requirement for contracts to be let on a competitive basis had not been met. There was support for this view. In the ensuing discussion Cllr Harris suggested that where there was clear evidence that the safety of residents would be avoidably compromised if time was spent on a tendering process, it should be possible to set aside the need for a competitive process for the current year.

It was unanimously agreed

(i) that the chairman would identify to Cllr Harris and the clerk the elements of work which the contractor might be asked to undertake;

(ii) that Cllr Harris would use her professional skills to rank these according to the risk that not carrying them out would present to local residents;

(iii) that simultaneously with (ii) the clerk would ask the contractor to cost the identified elements of work;

(iv) that the power to instruct the contractor to carry out the elements of work, starting with the most urgent as defined by Cllr Harris, be delegated to the clerk in consultation with the chairman or vice-chairman.

c. Hedge in Ivy Lodge Road. The chairman pointed out that the owner of the land to the east of Orchard Cottage on Ivy Lodge Road could be identified from planning application 191325 which the council had considered earlier in the meeting. It was therefore possible for the council to write to the owner, who lived in East Sussex, asking that the boundary hedge overhanging the road be cut back in accordance with highway authority standards. **It was agreed** that this should be done.

d. Street lamp south of ‘The Yew Tree’. The chairman reported that the clerk had invited him to inspect this lamp, which had been dark for some time. He was aware – and the vice chairman confirmed – that the lamp had provided light on The Causeway for WI members who parked their car in the Yew Tree car park and walked to the WI Hall. Since the Hall was no longer there, replacing the lamp would seem to serve little purpose. The clerk was therefore seeking the council’s approval NOT to carry out the standing instruction to have the lamp repaired.

It was unanimously agreed that the street lamp to the south of ‘The Yew Tree’ not be repaired or replaced.

e. Ivy Lodge Road village gate. This matter was withdrawn from the parish council agenda following an offer by the Village Funraisers to fund the work. **Cllr Mead** said he would discuss the matter with the resident offering to do the work.

12. Financial matters

a. It was agreed to note the payments made at the last meeting, those made under the clerk’s delegated powers since the last meeting and the receipt as set out in the table below:

Account Dates: 09 May 2019 – 07 June 2019				
ID	TO/FROM	DETAILS	REF:	PAYMENTS/ RECEIPTS
16	HMRC	Tax & NI Contributions	Bacs	£229.15
17	Contractor	Bus Shelter Maintenance	2	£30.00
18	CALC	Annual Subscription	Bacs	£35.00
19	Clerk	Salary & Expenses	Bacs	Left Blank
20	EE & T Mobile	Clerk’s Mobile Phone	DD	£13.61
21	SLCC	Annual Subscription	Bacs	£175.00
22	Zurich	Insurance 40% split with VH	Bacs	£411.32
23	Mrs J Stobart	Internal Audit	Bacs	£175.00
24	HMRC	Tax & NI Contributions	Bacs	£229.35
25	Essex Pension Fund	Contributions	Bacs	£390.48
26	Business Account	Interest		£33.26
27	EALC	Allotment Course	Bacs	£132.00

b. No payments not covered by the clerk’s delegated powers needed to be authorised .

c. It was agreed to refund deposits against damage provided by village hall hirers as set out in Appendix C to the agenda (distributed to members only) and cheques were signed accordingly.

d. It was agreed to note that Village Hall payments and receipts as set out on Appendix D (displayed on GHPC website)

e. External Audit 2018-19: Annual Governance Statement 2018-19

It was agreed to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2018-19; this was duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

f. External Audit 2018-19: Accounting Statements 2018-19

It was agreed to approve the Accounting Statements 2018-19; these were duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

It was further agreed that the Parish Clerk be thanked for maintaining financial records in such a way during 2018-19 that the internal auditor had been able to give the council a clean bill of health with no recommendations for remedial action made.

g. Village Hall budget. It was agreed that in the light of considerable unanticipated but necessary expenditure a revised budget for the village hall be prepared for consideration by the Village Hall Management Committee and then referred to the next available meeting of the Parish Council for approval.

h. Debit Card. The clerk reported the considerable difficulty she had experienced discovering the correct process through which she could obtain a debit card for use on the council's bank account. Poor advice received at the start had caused several weeks' delay and she had only recently been sent the correct application forms which she could now ask members to sign.

It was agreed that the council should apply for a debit card on its bank account to be used by the clerk in consultation with the chairman or vice chairman on those occasions when goods or services required by the council could not be paid for in arrears.

i. NALC Annual Conference. Following discussion Cllr Harris decided that it would not be appropriate for her to attend this conference so no approval was required.

13. Village Hall

a. Car park security. Cllr Harris reported that she and the chairman had inspected the gate to the St John's Church car park and were of the view that a similar gate could be installed between the existing posts at the entrance to the village hall car park, with a third post installed so that the gate could be locked open when the hall was in use. Given that the distance between the posts was fixed it would be necessary to have a blacksmith construct a bespoke gate, which need not be elaborate.

It was agreed to proceed with this work and that two estimates should be obtained.

b. Toilet cisterns. The chairman reported that the caretaker was of the opinion that the estimate for labour submitted by the plumber originally identified to install the new cisterns was such that further estimates for the work should be obtained. **Cllrs Williams and Harris** each agreed to approach a plumber to obtain such an estimate, the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman would then decide on the contractor to complete the work, as this was required to be completed as soon as possible due to water leaks.

c. Fire Risk Assessment. The chairman reported that he and Cllr Harris had discussed the item from the FRA that still required resolution, namely the potential for the freestanding coat rail in the lobby to fall and trip people hurrying out of the village in an emergency. It was Cllr Harris's professional opinion that were the rail to be replaced with hooks mounted on a batten screwed to the wall, the risk would be satisfactorily dealt with. **Cllr Harris** confirmed this. Cllr Arnold volunteered to carry out the work subject to the council paying for the hooks.

It was agreed that the coat rail in the village hall lobby should be replaced with a batten and hooks screwed to the wall. Cllr Harris abstained.

The chairman also confirmed that the automatic door closers mentioned at the last meeting held a door open with a permanent magnet, so there was no requirement for an external power supply. It was only if the fire alarm sounded that the battery within the device operated an electromagnet to release the door.

d. Heating system. The clerk reported that the repair and upgrade of the hall's heating control system was under way: there was now a new thermostat in the main hall which could not be adjusted by hall hirers. However, it could be set remotely over the internet, so in future it would be possible to adjust the heating well in advance of the hall being occupied or empty as appropriate. The additional control for the air conditioning had yet to be installed.

15. Community engagement.

Mr Flores told members that on the basis of his exploration of the website and his attendance at the meeting he believed he could make changes which in conjunction with an independent social media outlet would enable to council to have a web presence of the standard expected by the public.

It was agreed that Mr Flores be given access to the website and any other material needed for this task to be undertaken.

Mr Flores said he also wanted to work with the Funraisers to make the material published in the Village News accessible online, though quite how this would be done was yet to be explored. For the Funraisers, **Cllr Mead** said that they approved of this idea in principle and looked forward to meeting Mr Flores to discuss it.

16. Agenda items for next meeting: 16 July 2019.

The Chairman reminded members that the Council could only conduct business at any meeting which had appeared on the duly published agenda. To ensure that meetings did not become over long, discussion of other matters would not be permitted. Members should notify the clerk of any matter for inclusion on an agenda at least one week before the relevant meeting. He also invited members to submit items for inclusion on the agenda of the forthcoming Village Hall Committee meeting.

The Chairman mentioned that the WI President Mrs Ruth Dowie wished to address the council about the future maintenance of the former WI Hall site at its July meeting.

Duly approved at the parish council meeting held on the 16 July 2019

Chairman's signature.....