

Minutes of the Hadlow Annual Parish Meeting held on 19 April 2017 at Old School Hall, Hadlow

Present: Hadlow Parish Cllrs L Bright, E Bright, D Carey, N Collins, J Massy, J Newman, S Richardson. KCC Cllr Matthew Balfour, TMBC Cllrs J Anderson, J Sergison, H Rogers
Representatives and Members of the following in addition to ten other members of the general public were present: N Roberts (Hadlow Amateur Dramatic Society), P & C Large (Hadlow Seniors Pop In Club), S Rhodes (Hadlow WI), A Hughes (Hadlow Historical Society), D Isted (Hadlow Bowls) Club & Short Mat Bowls, A Waddingham (Golden Green Association and Resident)

Also in Attendance:-Melanie Stepkowski (Parish Clerk),

1/ Welcome by the Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Nick Collins - the Parish Council Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reminded attendees that the Parish Council was only the facilitator of the meeting but it was a Parish Meeting and therefore any questions for the Parish Council would be addressed at the next parish council meeting.

2/ Apologies For Absence – These were received from Parish Councillor’s Cllrs C Barbary, R Morley, R Smith. PCSO’s Toni Matthew & Kim Hockey

3/ Minutes of the meeting held Wednesday 20 April 2016 – Proposed by N Collins, seconded L Bright and carried unanimously, the minutes were signed by the Chair of Council.

4/ Reports from Parish Council

Reports were read by the Chairman and Chairs of Committees as follows: Chairman of Parish Council (appendix a), Finance & General Purposes Committee (appendix b), Planning & Environment Committee (appendix c), Staffing Committee (appendix d)

5/Reports from Borough and County Councillors – TMBC Cllr Howard Rogers introduced the Borough Councillors to the meeting.

He explained the Scheme of Financial Arrangements with Parish Councils and the Council Tax Reduction Grants had now ceased and been replaced with a charging system deemed fairer to the Borough as a whole.

Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan – Cllr Rogers summarized the position to date and emphasized the importance of the plan to guide future planning development within the borough. The existing plan would end in 2019 and work on the new plan was well on the way with the recent Call for Sites initiating the process. To ensure a robust plan for the future was in place by 2019 the draft ‘Local Plan’ would be issued in the summer and a further consultation exercise would take place in the Autumn.

In response to public question he confirmed that the Water companies were consulted on all building aspects of the plan as they had a duty to provide adequate water supplies to all developments. He went on to explain that due to a lack of rain over the last six months there was a possible water shortage this summer.

Cllr Balfour added that a water project had been initiated by KCC due to the demand for water within the agricultural environment, which would look at demands, possible ways of reducing the amount of water required but also looking at how domestic supply could be protected.

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'DEFRA' is currently holding a public consultation on how water companies should be monitored and looking at how 'OFWAT' regulatory board worked.

KCC Cllr Balfour provided an update on County matters including:

- Continued budget cuts
- Bus Services – KCC is working closely with Arriva to ensure the contractor is fully aware of the needs in rural areas. He was pleased to report the provision of additional services provided by New Venture Bus Service and in particular the #77 route to Kings Hill.
- Pot Holes – repairs continued and future considerations of how to deal with the constant repairs were being looked at.
- Schools – placements for both primary and secondary schools went well overall
- Local Government – The current three tier system was under review.
- Recycling – In response to a member of the public both Matthew and TMBC Cllr Anderson explained the process in our area under which recycling was the responsibility of Borough but Disposal was under KCC authority. The current waste contract is to expire in two years and authorities are looking at new initiatives. Concerns from local residents that there are no local recycling facilities was noted.

(Cllr Balfour was then excused from the meeting to attend another meeting)

6/ Reports from Village Organisations

Hadlow Historical Society – a small exhibition was displayed at the meeting.

Hadlow Amateur Dramatic Society – a report was provided (appendix e)

Other organisations were then invited to report but none were forthcoming.

7/ Public Time – Matters of Interest

Border opposite Hadlow College – it was noted that the new pedestrian crossing meant that some of crocus bulbs on the border had been damaged. The Parish Clerk was asked to see whether these could be replaced.

Country Fair – Cllr Carey thanked Hadlow Cricket Club for organising the Country Fair over the previous two years and thanked Hadlow Village Hall Management Committee for taking this on for this year. He encouraged everyone to attend the 'Fun Day' at the Williams Field on Saturday 15 July.

Manure Spraying – a new resident to the Parish was concerned that manure was being spread over the bank holiday which he thought may contravene regulations. The Clerk would liaise with farmers.

Dog Fouling – it was agreed that this remained an issue and that members of the public should report any incidents to the Borough Dog Warden. TMBC Cllr Sergison encouraged people to join in voluntarily when 'Bag and Flag' events were held.

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8/ Close TMBC Cllr Anderson thanked the Parish Council for their work within the Parish. There were no other questions and the Chair thanked everyone for attending and particularly those that had presented reports.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20:55

Signed.....

Date.....

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Appendices

- a. Hadlow Parish Council Chairman Report
- b. Hadlow Parish Council Finance & General Purposes Committee Report
- c. Hadlow Parish Council Planning & Environment Committee Report
- d. Hadlow Parish Council Staffing Committee Report
- e. Hadlow Amateur Dramatic Society Report

(Appendix a.)

Hadlow Parish Council Chairman's Report Year ending 31st March 2017

As Chairman, I will start by offering my thanks and gratitude to everybody who has worked so hard for the benefit of the community during this past year. I am thinking of all my fellow Parish Councillors, Parish Council staff, our Borough and County Councillors, the PCSOs Kim and Toni and the many volunteers who contribute their time and expertise to enhance life in the parish.

It's been a busy year in the Parish. I hope the summary below covers fairly the areas and works undertaken.

- Staff & Members Training – Congratulations to the Clerk for passing her CILCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration) in October. I must also acknowledge those other members of Council who have completed various forms of training during the year. Well done and thank you all.
- Cemetery & Extension – Thanks are extended to the Warden who together with assistance from the Community Pay Back team has improved the appearance of the memorial gardens and surrounding areas within our cemetery. Further thanks must go to KCC Landscape Services and members of the community who all help to keep the grounds well maintained. Phase 1a of the cemetery extension works were completed this year and Phase 1b should commence over the summer.
- St Mary's Churchyard – The Council are responsible for maintenance of the grounds and for ensuring general safety in the churchyard: tree works have been carried out and the May Vault fenced off as it is in danger of collapse. Responsibility for maintenance and repairs of the monuments in the churchyard is a more complicated issue. The Council has tried to obtain funding to cover repairs to the May Vault so far without success.

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- Williams Field
 - I. Because of vandalism, it was necessary for welding works to be undertaken on fencing at the ballcourt, the play area and the dog walking areas.
 - II. We were saddened to see both football teams close this year due to lack of members. We would welcome any new teams as the football pitch is no longer used.
 - III. Shared Access Telecommunications Mast proposal – following the public consultation the Council decided that the proposed location was not suitable. Shared Access have been advised and we await a response.

- Old School Hall – Continues to be well used by the community.

- Old School Hall Annexe – The building will be demolished this summer. We wish the best of luck to the Hadlow College Community Preschool in their new home.

- Hy-Arts Centre – Sure Start Active Tots continues on a Thursday morning (term time only) and a disability group uses the hall two days a week. The Parish Council continues to work in partnership with KCC and more recently St Mary’s Church with a view to reinstating youth services.

- Signpost Field – New swings were installed this year using the grant generously provided by the Combined Member Grant Scheme recommended by KCC Cllr Matthew Balfour.

- Highways & Footpaths – Work continues to ensure these are well maintained for public use. We acknowledge some improvements within the Parish including the extension to the 30mph speed limit along the A26, the new Hadlow College crossing, and improved road signs at the Carpenters Lane junction and on Three Elm Lane.

- Allotments – For the first time in recent years we currently have three vacant allotments and no waiting list. Let’s hope some green fingered members of the community step forward soon.

- Litter pick - once again this year the annual litter pick was a success in both Golden Green and Hadlow with many residents joining in and a special thanks to the Scouts for assisting. Over fifty bags of rubbish were collected during the two-day event.

- Speed Watch – Thank you all those volunteers that have worked on this project. Alan and Phillip for their continued dedication.

Nick Collins – Hadlow Parish Council Chairman

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(Appendix b.)

Report of Finance & General purposes committee (F&GP) for year ending 31/03/2017 Chair – Stephen Richardson FCA

The main function of F&GP continues to be the safeguarding of the assets of the Parish, its Income and expenditure within the regulations governing Public funds. This is achieved through the application of processes of internal control.

We are fortunate in having a very competent Responsible Financial Officer, the Clerk, who, together with her assistant, maintain rigorous financial management.

Major events

1. As a result of effective financial management we have again maintained expenditure within budget, the benefit being added to general reserves.
2. As predicted last year, there has been a reduction in the financial support from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC). Rather than transfer services to the Parish, TMBC have withdrawn £23,696 direct cash support from the Parish. We have released some of the Parish's own reserves but this withdrawal of cash support, partially explains TMBC's reduction in Council Tax, and why the Parish element has increased.

We cannot predict how these changes may develop in future.

3. The cemetery extension.
As a result of underestimates of cost by BdR Engineering, work on the cemetery extension has been delayed. We have insisted on reductions in proposed costs but the scheme will still exceed original cost estimates, however it can still be met from reserves with no impact on Council Tax.

Work is due to resume in April/May.

4. We are pleased to report that both the Village Hall and Hy-Arts centre have been self-financing during 2016/17. Without underestimating the task, it is to be hoped that this continues to be the case.

The future

Local council finances continue to be under pressure and we must be vigilant and apply controls to minimise the impact on residents.

Local businesses

We are very fortunate in Hadlow having a range of local shops that meet the majority of one's needs. They need your support if they are to continue in business. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that they are able to stay open.

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(Appendix c.)

Hadlow Parish Council Planning and Environment Committee - Report to Annual Parish Meeting 2017

The committee has two main functions:

Firstly it discusses planning applications for development within the Parish and comments on these to the local planning authority, the Tonbridge and Malling District council, on behalf of the Parish Council and Parishioners. Applications are dealt with at both the Parish Council meeting and the Planning and Environment Committee meeting in order to provide timely recommendations to the Planning Authority.

Secondly the Planning and Environment Committee deals with a wide range of open spaces and buildings that encompass the environment of the Parish and which the Parish Council is involved with. These include: -

Open Spaces:

Williams Field including football pitches and play areas etc.

Signpost Field in Golden Green including play area.

Hadlow Cemetery.

St Mary's Churchyard.

The Cricket Field.

Numerous Footpaths around the Parish including the Access Trail and School Lane.

The Allotments.

At Williams Field there have been many repairs to fencing and play area carried out due to vandalism earlier in the year and there was also damage caused to the Village Hall but after action by PCSO's this has now been resolved.

In October the Parish council was approached by Shared Access re the installation of a Telecommunications Mast at Williams Field. After due consideration of the site, legal matters, health and safety and the parishioners views the council decided that the selected location was unacceptable.

A new seat has been supplied and installed in the dog walking area.

The play area at Signpost Field in Golden Green has had a new swing installed.

Elsewhere in the Parish tree working has been carried out in various areas of the Parish to make them safe including in St Mary's churchyard where funding is still being sourced to effect repairs to May's Mausoleum. The frequency of inspection has also been increased. A good report was received from Kent Men of Trees on our village trees.

The contracts are now being placed to complete the works on phase 1b of the cemetery extension on Cemetery Lane. Parishioners were pleased with the state of the Cemetery and Memorial on Remembrance Day.

The walls have been rebuilt next to Littlefields and the border will be replanted in the near future. Councillors are now checking footpaths on a regular basis to help the Village Warden maintain access on them. The third edition of walking leaflets has also been produced.

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Thankfully the Parish has had no incidents of flooding this winter and no snow to speak of. However action plans were in place should they occur. The Hadlow Emergency Plan has been updated and approved by the Kent Resilience Forum.

We still have an active Speedwatch team in Hadlow but more volunteers are always needed. A flashing speed indicator has been installed just prior to the Carpenters lane junction but we are still awaiting one for Golden Green. The puffin crossing next to Hadlow College has been installed but unfortunately there has been three serious accidents on the A26 recently in the Hadlow neighbourhood. This shows the trend to an increase in the volume of traffic on this major artery.

The Xmas lights again created a festive air in the village and Golden Green together with a xmas fair hosted by St Mary's church and carol singing in the square. An impressive tree was again donated by Hadlow College.

During this year Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council started the process of call for sites. The Parish Council put in its recommendations but when the local plan was exhibited by them only one remained within the process but others had been put forward. This process is now proceeding with further in depth investigation of each site by the TMBC. Further consultation will take place later this year.

Buildings:

Old School Hall

Hadlow Medical Centre

Hadlow Pre School

(The Parish Council is also Landlord for the Village Hall and Hy-Arts Centre). The Council continues to maintain and promote its buildings for hire. The Pre School building however has come to the end of its life and is due for demolition this summer. It will be replaced by designated parking for the Parish Council and Medical Centre. The Parish Council continues to support these facilities so that they may continue and prosper.

Summary

As you can see the Parish Council has many varied assets to maintain and duties to perform all on a voluntary basis. The role and dedicated time of the Parish Clerk, Admin Assistant and Village make this possible. They provide a friendly and efficient service to the parish and should be supported not only by the Councillors but by all the parishioners. It is their village that we are trying to keep in a condition that they wish it to be. We have welcomed two new Parish Councillors this year but still have vacancies for three more.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the Planning and Environment Committee for all their help and support in carrying out the many tasks needed to keep the village facilities in good order.

Ed. Bright, Chairman of Planning and Environment Committee

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(Appendix d.)

Staffing Committee Report 2016 to 2017

This has been another extremely busy year in the office and around the parish for our staff, Parish Clerk(RFO) Melanie Stepkowski ably assisted by Admin Assistant Elaine Battain. The Village Warden Dave Dodge has kept a close eye on the Parish and its environs.

Melanie has gained her CILCA qualification and has been rewarded with an extra pay grade in addition to her annual rise. Due to the busyness of the office we have designated Monday as a quiet day with no access to public or councillors. This enables her and Elaine to get on with their work in a peaceful atmosphere.

This year in addition to their myriad of regular duties time has had to be dedicated to complicated projects such as the cemetery extension, the demolition of the annexe and the TMBC call for sites. Recently a great deal of work was required to assess the offer of a Telecommunication Mast to be sited on Parish Council land. They have met all the challenges.

I am pleased to say that all our staff have worked diligently and efficiently as a team and I hope that they will continue with us for the foreseeable future.

Lesley Bright

Chair of Staffing Committee

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Hadlow Amateur Dramatic Society

30 The Freehold,
Hadlow,
Tonbridge,
Kent.
TN11 0ES

Although our Spring show last year, 'It's a kind of magic', was not well supported it provided an interesting activity for members of the society and income for the village hall.

Our pantomime, 'Babes in the wood', was very well supported and for the Saturday matinee we had to squeeze in as many seats as possible. It was also lovely, from my point of view, to have so many younger members returning for our auditions last September and, in many cases, bringing their friends with them.

On a sadder note, in January we lost two of our longest serving members with the deaths of Avril Roberts, who will be particularly remembered for 'Nobody loves a fairy when she's forty', in our old time music halls, and Marilyn Apps who wrote and produced many shows for HADS including our successful 'Murder Mysteries'.

We are well into rehearsals and preparations for this year's spring show, a comedy thriller called 'Forever Towers'. It is written and produced by Jane Apps and will be at the village hall on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th May.

After that we start working on next year's pantomime, 'Cinderella'. Auditions are at the village hall on Monday 4th September with performances on the 12th & 13th January.

For further information contact Nigel Roberts 01732 851553