

Minutes of the Hadlow Annual Parish Meeting

held on 8 March 2021

at Old School Hall, Hadlow

Present: Hadlow Parish Cllrs M Barrett, E & L Bright, D Carey, N Collins, M Harvey, J Massy, C Mitchell, R Morley, J Newman, S Richardson. PCSO Josh Vincent. Members of the community and group representatives: Sue Tippin & Les Tippin (Hadlow Park Residents Assoc), S Sharpe (Hadlow Scouts), J & D Insted (Short Mat Bowls), A Waddingham (Golden Green Association), A Connor & K Morrison (Footsteps), M MacDonald, A Barrett,

Also in Attendance Minute taker: M Stepkowski (Parish Clerk),

1/ Welcome by the Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Nick Collins

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 which was due to follow on at the end of the current meeting.

2/ Apologies for absence

These were received from TMBC Cllrs J Anderson, S Hudson, H Rogers (TMBC Joint Transportation Board meeting), TMBC Cllr Sergison, KCC Cllr. M Balfour, Community Warden.

3/ Minutes of the meeting held Monday 9 March 2020

The Chair confirmed these had been approved and signed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 11 May 2020, Minute 4145.

4/ Reports from Borough, County Councillors & Community Warden

No Reports.

5/ Summary Reports from Parish Council

Reports from the Parish Council Chairman and Chair of Finance & General Purposes were noted. (*see appendix a & b*)

6/ Report on Hadlow Voluntary Assistance Scheme

Cllr L Bright explained that the programme had been organised between the Parish Council, Hadlow Primary School and St Mary's Church in addition to help from other groups and individuals, with the paperwork being administered from the Parish Office. During the initial lock down over 120 of the elderly and vulnerable within the Parish were assisted using a Buddy Scheme. Buddies took on tasks such as shopping, dog walking, calls, prescription collection etc and it had been so successful that when the second lock down came into force most people already had ongoing assistance in place. The few that still required help were being supported

mainly by Parish Councillors and Parish staff. It had been a great community effort to look after each other and the buddies were thanked for their dedication.

7/ Reports from Village Organisations

(See appendix c & d attached)

8/ Public time – matters of interest

PCSO Josh Vincent was introduced to the meeting and welcomed as Parish PCSO. He reported that he felt within the last year he had found his feet and despite having to cover a large rural area including Hadlow, East Peckham, West Peckham, Mereworth and Watlington, he would spend as much time as possible within our Parish. There had been several incidences within Hadlow involving a youth who despite being told gatherings in lock down were not permitted continued to ignore the law and was therefore issued a £200 fine and Josh was pleased to say the youth seems to have learnt his lesson and no further reports have been received.

A regular hall user enquired as to correct procedure if their group felt threatened or intimidated when using Hadlow halls. Josh said that in such a circumstance 999 should be called for a quick response, if however, the matter was not urgent then they should call 101. He also provided members with his work mobile number and direct work email. He was keen to work alongside parishioners and other government bodies to tackle anti-social behaviour and prevent criminal acts within the Parish.

Litter Picking – The Parish Clerk confirmed that although no organised litter pick was currently scheduled due to COVID, litter equipment, hi vis jackets and rubbish sacks were available to residents who wished to go out collecting rubbish of their own accord. Their details would be logged at the parish office and the equipment could be returned when lock down was finished. A note of selected roads already being voluntarily cleaned was being kept to prevent duplication and to encourage more areas to be tackled.

(Mr & Mrs Tippins, Cllr Morley and Massy joined the meeting and apologised for late entry)

9/ Climate Change – To invite members of the Parish to discuss possible environmental improvements within the Parish

Local government bodies are being encouraged to lead the way and to support local schemes to reduce fossil fuel dependence. It was hoped that a group similar to the Hadlow Carbon Group which was believed to be currently inactive would be set up by parishioners and provide a platform for residents to brain-storm. The Parish Council were keen to influence attitudes within the parish and would work to identify opportunities to implement carbon saving measures when repairing or replacing its property or equipment. A climate change action plan would be set drawn up to engage with parishioners of all ages to see what could be done locally to protect the environment.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 19.30

Signed..... Date.....

Appendices

- a/ Hadlow Parish Council Chairman Report
- b/ Hadlow Parish Council Finance & General Purposes Committee Report
- c/ Golden Green Association Report
- d/ Footsteps Theatrical Workshop Report

(Appendix a.)

Hadlow Parish Council Report

It goes without saying that the last twelve months have been unlike any that most of us can remember. Rules and regulations and a myriad of changes have altered much that was familiar and rather taken for granted.

Once the gravity of the Covid-19 pandemic became clear and Lockdown one was implemented the Parish Council was instrumental, along with St. Mary's Church and Hadlow Primary School in setting up a help and support scheme for those people in the parish who were obliged to self-isolate. This was a very time-consuming exercise that worked extremely well thanks to much hard work by Melanie our Parish Clerk and Nikki Harvey who was still the Curate at St. Mary's at that time. Fortunately, many of the volunteer "buddies" remained active after the first wave of the pandemic passed so resuming the service was a much easier task in the autumn as the second wave and lockdown took hold.

As the lockdown eased off the Parish Council did what it could to reopen its facilities in line with all the precautions stipulated. This was a further major task and one that required the occasional interpretation of some of the rules and guidance that were all pervading.

In the meantime, routine business continued. Traffic volumes and speeding soon became an issue once lockdown eased. Anxiety continues about the uncertain situation of TMBC's draft Local Development Plan. Planning applications remained plentiful as people found themselves spending longer at home than usual. Council facilities still require to be maintained even if usage fluctuates widely.

Council meetings were moved online as soon as the law was temporarily amended to allow it. HPC members have done their bit to help the dramatic increase in the use of products such as Zoom. Some of us are less inclined than others to stay muted.

Sadly, we must record the death of Ken Terry in February. Ken served as Chairman of Hadlow Parish Council from May 2006 to April 2011. I remember him as knowledgeable, cheerful, and always polite.

Nick Collins

Chairman of Hadlow Parish Council

(Appendix b.)

Finance & General Purposes Committee Report

Despite this being a very challenging year, the Council finances have remained within Budget. This has been mainly due to our ever-vigilant Clerk seeking grants to replace our loss of earnings due to closure of our Halls. She has also made sure that all facilities have complied with the current covid regulations which have changed month by month. Unfortunately, our community buses have also been grounded but will be running again as soon as conditions allow.

We start next year in a relative healthy position. The precept has only been increased by 2% equivalent to 50p increase on Band D to cover the 21/22 budget.

No large projects have been planned for next year due to the uncertainty of the path of the pandemic. We do not know when our facilities may reopen and therefore our income restart.

I would like to take this chance to commend our Clerk and Administration Assistant for their hard work in keeping us all safe. We will be looking for additional help in the new financial year as work has increased with the addition of new assets and legal changes.

Finance Chair

Lesley Bright

(Appendix c.)

Golden Green Association Report by Alec Pelmore

Golden Green residents seem to have emerged in fair shape from the pandemic and I am pleased to say that lots of people have played a part, helping others with shopping etc and keeping spirits up. A highlight of the first lockdown was Heidi Cummings and her bear which featured a new theme and outfit on her front porch (and on Facebook) every day for some months - as a result of a competition she was named 'Comfort'. In the village we were very fortunate in being able to keep our coffee mornings going for the summer (in the tent outside at the Bell) and the village quiz night has seamlessly transferred to a fortnightly 'zoom'. Sadly, though other events like the fete and carol service could not take place - although some wandering minstrels did appear by chance one evening and played for some spontaneous carol singing outside on the street.

We have also been fortunate that the Mission Hall remained in use for a good part of the year since Diana Gibb's dance classes for children were allowed under the rules - so the hall's finances are not in too bad shape.

We are lucky that we have such good access to a myriad of local footpaths and thus to countryside and walking and we not too grudging (!) that we have to share them with less fortunate Tonbridge residents ... except that the mud has been awful and the cars parked by the bridge can make driving a bit hazardous! Long may this current spell of dry weather last.

Roll on the summer and 'freedom'!! We are planning to hold our fete on 27th June - the first opportunity after 'freedom'.

(Appendix d.)

Footsteps Theatrical Workshop Report



Although Footsteps Theatrical Workshop has been mainly on Zoom for much of this pandemic, there has been occasion when the Parish Council has been able to allow us to run some of our classes in person.

The children and teachers alike were so grateful for this and it was a delight for us to see how excited they were to be back to these classes ever so often.

We have received numerous emails and messages from parents saying the classes both digitally and in-person, have made a huge difference to the children and have kept them centred.

A couple of messages from parents:

**Thank you again for all your hard work in keeping things going. It's been a breath of fresh air for Z'.*

**Just wanted to also say a huge thank you to all of you at Footsteps for your hard work and for keeping everything going in these awful times. It has kept a degree of normality for M' which I know has meant a great deal to her, and definitely kept her going through all of this. So thank you so much!*

**Once again thank you for all the inspirational on line work you do - it's so much appreciated - it really is a much needed meaningful escapism!! Thank you!*

We've been so pleased that we have been able to keep going one way or another although it has created a lot of work constantly changing schedules to suit the altering circumstances.

We wanted to reward the children for their hard work & dedication while on zoom so we created 'You're A Zoom Star'. The children are sent a message saying that their Footsteps teachers have chosen to recognize them as a **ZOOM STAR** and that their hard work and dedication in their classes has not gone unnoticed! They each receive a personalised certificate to download & print off to keep.

Alongside this, we have introduced a 'Student of the Term Award' for two individuals that have excelled in various ways from dedication, kindness or ability to grow, resilience or determination. The recipient receives a personalised certificate in the mail & a shout out on our private Footsteps Digital Facebook group.

We were very lucky to be able to allow our students to take their ISTD Ballet & Modern exams by filming remotely in the OSH. We are pleased to say that we received a 100% pass rate and are extremely proud of them all. A huge thank you to the Parish Council for allowing this to take place.

We have been delighted to continue to provide some of our senior residents of Hadlow with their Friday afternoon Dancercise classes. Although at the beginning there was a bit of a shaky start due to the nature of technology, it wasn't long before they got the hang of a totally different way of doing their exercises and dancing by waving at the teacher frantically whilst being muted so they could ask a question. They've all been brilliant and a real joy to see each week. Their WhatsApp group has been a constant source of amusement as they search the internet for inspirational and I have to say some outlandish items to keep their team mates inspired and laughing.

We are looking forward to be able to support the Old School Hall as soon as the government allows schools like ours to return and would like to thank Melanie and Elaine in keeping a safe environment for us to do this. The children have never been so clean in their lives!