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Chairman:
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MINUTES

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 13th November 2019 at 7.30pm at the United Reform Church

Public forum (Names always withheld for Data Protection)

A councillor from Odell Parish Council attended with a request to collaborate on the placement of the new Harrold village entrance signs. Chairman Tickle confirmed that this was the intention and that the decision on the agenda was for just two of the signs, not the one near Odell as the council was aware an agreement with Odell PC was needed. The Odell PC Councillor was also interested in the progress of the Harrold Neighbourhood Plan, and an update was given.

- 1. Present:** Cllrs R Tickle (Chair), D Mercer (Vice Chair), R Barrett, R Brough (Clerk), A Foster (Bedford Borough Council), J Peverell, J Calver, P Pedersen, H Mead, A Bryce, B Muller, S Reger, E Thompson
- 2. Apologies:** Cllr Ross (Play rehearsals)
- 3. Disclosure of Interest** – *members were invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in any items on the Agenda. None were declared.*
- 4. Cooption of new councillors** – *The Parish Council requested a Governance Review from the Borough Council following the last meeting where there were two strong applicants for one vacant councillor position. However, the Borough Council confirmed this could not be carried out at the present time: "it can take more than a year to complete and should be avoided where there is an ongoing electoral review being carried out – there is a Boundary Review being carried out by the Borough Council".*
Motion is therefore to agree to the cooption of either Geoff Turner or Heather Paston. Should both candidates attend then a council vote will need to occur.
Heather Paston was ill and could not attend. Agenda item to be moved to next meeting, which Geoff Turner agreed was fair.
- 5. Approval of Minutes** from the Annual Parish Council meeting held 9th October 2019.
Resolved unanimously to approve the minutes and the Chairman signed them.

6. Matters arising: Clerk's report on the Actions List.

- Two quotes received for refurbishing the 12 Parish Council owned streetlights, both at approximately £10k. Clerk has found a company who can fix the older style lights – a potential way to resolve the issue in the short-term – pictures of the 5 blown lights have been sent to the company for a quote. Clerk is also investigating a government funded loan company (Salix) who specifically support streetlight replacement. The interest free loan repayments are structured to offset the savings in energy costs related to upgrading to LED.
- BBC Highways' proposal for parking restrictions on the High St and Green has been accepted – remain on waiting list. Clerk has chased.
- Clerk is meeting BBC Highways this week to discuss the flooding of the zebra crossing by the Green and the broken pavement edging outside Harrold Green fish bar.

7. Finance Report

The following payments were approved, and income and balances were noted.

Ref #	Invoice Date	Payment	Details	Payments Gross	Receipts Gross
Trans143	03 October 2019	Electricity: Buttermarket EON		32.82	
Trans145	04 October 2019	Clerk Salary: R Brough Pension		73.38	
Trans146	07 October 2019	Project income: Harrold Calendar	Cash Sales		220.00
Trans147	09 October 2019	Brook: Skip at Town Farm		262.00	
Trans148	10 October 2019	Project: Neighbourhood plan	Neighbourhood Plan Consulting Fees- T Roff	250.00	
Trans149	11 October 2019	Grass: In Trim		552.00	
Trans152	11 October 2019	Grant: Harrold Centre		5,000.00	
Trans153	14 October 2019	Project income: Harrold Calendar	Cash Sales		785.00
Trans154	15 October 2019	Electricity: Street EON	Qtrly payment	488.91	
Trans155	15 October 2019	Project income: Harrold Calendar	Cash Sales		300.00
Trans156	16 October 2019	HMRC PAYE Liability		314.41	
Trans157	16 October 2019	Clerk Salary: R Brough		784.88	
Trans158	16 October 2019	Street Ranger	Street Ranger and Brook	842.04	
Trans159	21 October 2019	Project income: Harrold Calendar	Cash Sales		330.00
Trans160	25 October 2019	Project income: Harrold Calendar	Cash Sales		295.00
Trans161	04 November 2019	Electricity: Buttermarket EON		47.59	
Trans162	05 November 2019	Clerk Salary: R Brough Pension		136.38	
Trans163	13 November 2019	Project outgoing: Harrold Calendar	D Mercer BBC Archive costs	180.00	
Trans164	13 November 2019	Project outgoing: Harrold Calendar	XLPress Printing	675.00	
Trans165	13 November 2019	Plants & Trees: Memorial Wreath	Elworthy Flowers	55.00	
Trans166	13 November 2019	Office: Supplies	Sacks for Street Ranger	20.10	
Trans167	13 November 2019	Plants & Trees: Memorial Wreath	RBL Wreath	50.00	
Trans168	13 November 2019	Office: Supplies	Fasthosts: Oct Monthly email mailbox fee	6.59	
Trans169	13 November 2019	Office: Supplies	Fasthosts: Nov Monthly email mailbox fee	6.59	
Trans170	13 November 2019	Harrold Centre Room Hire	July to October 2019	356.40	
Trans171	13 November 2019	Project outgoing: Harrold Calendar	XLPress Printing	275.00	
				10,409.09	1,930.00

Accounts

Natwest Current Account	Balance	44,778
Natwest Bonus Saver	Balance	75,108
Beds Bucks Herts	Balance	31,034
TOTAL		150,920

8. First review of draft budget for 2020/21

As presented by the Finance Committee and local accountant, David Brough. Final budget to be approved in the January council meeting.

The council reviewed the proposed budget in detail, which required a precept increase by the rate of inflation. A request was made by a councillor to increase the precept by £5k to account for an annual grant to the Harrold Centre. The council will vote on the final budget/precept in either the December or January meeting. Councillors were keen to keep the grants budget at the same level (approx. £11k) to keep village organisations alive. Also requested to keep the gritting of the High St pavements during the winter. The rest of the budget was accepted as required. Full budget to be added to the website once approved in January 2020.

9. Crime statistics and information and intelligence exchange

Crime report covering 25th September to 29th October showed one instance of "Sending letters to cause distress" with no location provided, and one instance of a "Theft from a motor vehicle" on Church Walk.

No actions recorded.

10. Borough Councillor's report for Harrold Ward

Report has been uploaded to the Communications section of the council website and placed on the noticeboard in the centre of the village. Report also available from the Clerk on request.

11. Neighbourhood Plan – Draft Plan Review

- *Update on Plan progress:* The Neighbourhood Plan is now reaching its final stages. After the latest village consultation in early Summer concluded, a draft plan was prepared. The draft plan will be reviewed and discussed by the Parish Council during November. This will be followed by a further village consultation and discussions with the Borough Council before the draft plan will be submitted for official examination in Q1 2020. The process will be concluded with a Village Referendum following the official examination.
- *Review and discussion of draft plan:* Cllr Reger presented the draft plan and encouraged councillors to provide feedback over email during November.

12. Christmas lights plan

Review and approve plan for Christmas lights, as presented by Cllr Muller.

The original string lights broke strand by strand over the years and finally gave up in 2018; the council was spending hundreds of pounds each year to replace the failing strands. Leaving the lights up through the year reduces their lifespan significantly, not least because they have also been vandalised. Taking them down and then getting them back into the branches of such tall trees every year is a monumental effort and requires a team of tree surgeons with ropes – expensive and not practical on an ongoing basis – it also increases the risk they will get broken. Cllr Muller has been testing the use of Christmas light projectors and they seem very effective, although it still presents its own installation challenges. This year will therefore be an experiment. Proposal is for £900 to cover projectors, cabling/connectors/weatherproof boxes/security straps and LED rope lights for the Buttermarket.

Resolved to approve proposal and the council thanked Cllr Muller for the time he's put in to arranging this.

13. Ecologist survey for brook maintenance

To consider a quote from MKA Ecology for £1350 (Ex VAT) for a survey of the brook and creation of a Management Plan for ongoing maintenance:

- *Protected/Invasive Species Scoping Survey: A site visit and desktop study to assess the potential of the Brook and adjacent habitats to support protected species and invasive non-native species.*
- *Management Plan: a report outlining our findings (including a map of the site) and detailing any protected or invasive species issues and mitigation procedures to be followed. The plan will also highlight opportunities for enhancing the Brook for biodiversity where appropriate.*

Resolved to approve quote and incorporate the management plan into the Brook maintenance contract. (Proposed: Cllr Tickle, Seconded: Cllr Barrett. 10 in favour and 1 abstain).

14. Manchester bollards on The Green

To review the installation of the new bollards on the Green, which happened last month.

Council noted that the posts installed by the Borough Council looked to be in a poor state. Further, that the required gap (for wheelchair access) for the single bollard furthest from the road meant that it was more or less redundant. Resolved to remove the single bollard and register a complaint with the Borough Council about the quality of the bollards.

15. Church Walk fencing and tree works

The council is aware of the poor state of the fence along Church Walk and has spent considerable time trying to find the correct owner; this has proved unsuccessful and the area appears to lack ownership.

To review a quote from Street Ranger Luke Clarke for £2300 to fix the fence from the High St down to the first house on Church Walk – ie along the “wedge-shaped” unregistered section:

- *28 panels £727 (Many panels/posts are rotten – new panels are as close a match as possible, but may look odd against the original aged panels if all aren't replaced)*
- *30 posts £209, 30 concrete bags £149, Gate fixings £55*
- *Labour: Remove and dispose of old fence £500. Construct new fence over 3 days £750*

Resolved to adopt the area of land before repairing the fence.

16. Village entrance signs

The village entrance signs have now arrived with their wooden posts. To approve a BBC Highways quote of no more than £500 to install the first two signs and to agree the precise sign locations. Note that a survey will need to be carried out at the Hall Close location to check for services.

Resolved to install the Lavendon sign and then discuss with Odell Parish Council on the locations of the remaining two.

17. Planning Applications

APPLICATION NO: 19/02376/TPO Tree Preservation Order Application

PROPOSAL: Mixture of Broadleaves and Conifers - Crown uplift all tree branches under 10ft, removal of various strangler trees and ground ivy.

LOCATION : 19A High Street Harrold Bedford Bedfordshire MK43 7DQ

Resolved not to object.

18. Any other business

Councillors requested the Chairman to call an extraordinary meeting for December for the purposes of further budget discussion, planning applications and cooption. Currently there is no meeting planned for December.

19. Correspondence:

- *Parishioner emailed in relation to two BBC streetlights obscured by foliage, and the overgrown hedge on the footpath by the Lower Green.* Clerk reported both streetlights to BBC and Street Ranger agreed to adopt the hedge maintenance into his regular work at no extra charge.
- *Parishioner called about the blown streetlight on Mowhills.* This is a PC-owned light in the old style. Clerk has found a company who can provide spares for this old style. See Matters Arising at the top of the agenda.
- *Parishioner called about the overgrown hedge on the Lower Green path.* Street Ranger has resolved this. No phone number was left to call the parishioner back.
- *Parishioner emailed requesting the PC investigate having Electric Vehicle charging points installed in the village.* Email shared in full with council. No actions recorded by the council on this item.

Date of next meetings:

**Extraordinary meeting on Wednesday 11th December 2019
and Wednesday 8th January 2020
In the Harrold Centre**