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MINUTES

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 12th February 2020 at 7.30pm at the Harrold Centre

Public forum (Names always withheld for Data Protection)

Two members of the public attended to support, and answer questions about, the funding request for Harrold Primary Academy PTA in agenda item 7.

1. **Present:** Cllrs R Tickle (Chair), D Mercer (Vice Chair), R Barrett, D Brough (Shadow Clerk), A Foster (Bedford Borough Council), H Mead, A Bryce, F Ross, J Peverell, P Pedersen, S Reger.
2. **Apologies:** J Calver, R Brough (Clerk), E Thompson, B Muller, H Paston.
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. **Approval of Minutes** from the Parish Council meeting held 8th January 2020
Resolved unanimously to approve the minutes with one requested change: Item 13 Code of Conduct – to add that the Code of Conduct will be modified at a future date to make it more bespoke for Harrold (**Action Cllr Barrett**). The Chairman noted the amendment and signed the minutes.
5. **Matters arising:** Clerk's report on the Actions List.
 - Items with BBC Highways following a recent on-site meeting:
 1. Resolving the flooding of the zebra crossing – perhaps with additional drains being installed – survey work has been requested by BBC Highways.
 2. The poor state of the pavement by the Fish bar – works order has been raised by Highways.
 3. Remove the third bollard on The Green and repaint the other two – works order has been raised.
 4. Additional single yellow line on the High St, double yellows on a small narrow section of The Green and removal of a High St bus bay following the public consultation.
 - MKA Ecology assessment of the brook: Report being created by MKA Ecology following site survey. Clerk to follow up for receipt before the March meeting.

- Automated flood signs: feedback provided to BBC Senior Flood Officer Melanie Bright. Also discussed the potential for a flood camera that could be viewed by the public. Melanie is due to discuss this with the Environment Agency to see if it's viable. One of the requirements is that there is an active Flood Committee. Melanie is willing to attend a council meeting to discuss the creation of one, if the council is interested.
- The works on the beech tree on the corner of Church Walk have been completed by Heritage Arboriculture.

6. Finance Report

The following payments were approved. Income, balances and variance analysis were noted.

Ref #	Invoice Date	Payment	Details	Payments	Receipts
				Gross	Gross
Trans210	13 January 2020	Electricity: Street EON	Qtrly payment	488.91	
Trans211	13 January 2020	Grass: In Trim		552.00	
Trans214	14 January 2020	Project: Neighbourhood plan	Peter Bull – 2nd instalment of Draft Neighbourhood Plan	1,820.00	
Trans217	16 January 2020	Street Ranger	Inc £200 for fixing 4 posts on The Green	1,094.04	
Trans218	17 January 2020	Cemetary Income:			24.00
Trans219	21 January 2020	Clerk Salary: R Brough		442.52	
Trans220	21 January 2020	HMRC PAYE Liability		734.17	
Trans221	23 January 2020	Bottle Bank: Income	Quarter 2 Jul - Sep 2019		277.11
Trans222	27 January 2020	Project: Neighbourhood plan	Groundwork UK - Return of residual grant	30.00	
Trans223	03 February 2020	Electricity: Buttermarket EON	EON	52.52	
Trans224	05 February 2020	Pension: R Brough & Street Ranger	NEST	157.38	
Trans225	12 February 2020	Brook: Skip at Town Farm		262.00	
Trans226	12 February 2020	Other: Various	Uplighter bulb buttermarket	11.93	
Trans227	12 February 2020	Office: Supplies	Fasthosts: Monthly email mailbox fee	6.59	
Trans228	12 February 2020	Plants & Trees:	Heritage Arb: Church Walk beech tree	720.00	
Trans229	12 February 2020	Other: Various	RBL 300 Poppies for VE75	300.00	
Trans230	12 February 2020	Office: Supplies	Shredding machine	109.99	
				6,782.05	301.11

Accounts

Natwest Current Account	26,072
Natwest Bonus Saver	75,108
Beds Bucks Herts	31,034
TOTAL	132,214

7. Request for funding from Harrold Primary Academy PTA

To approve a funding request from Harrold Primary Academy PTA for a £5k contribution to playground equipment totalling £17k. Grant form distributed to councillors prior to meeting. (Note: This can be funded without using Section 137, under Local Government Act 1976 Misc Provisions Act, Sect. 19, 3a)

PTA group attended in July 2019 to request funding and were asked to form a plan for the play area and return with a request for a set amount. Request to include details of the number of Harrold children who would benefit from this area.

"We are requesting a grant for playground equipment for the school. Currently the main playground and the smaller one for year 1 has no fixed play equipment other than a very old small climbing wall. The main building had a complete overhaul and was refurbished in summer last year and this was funded by SAF. SAF also re-surfaced the Year 1 playground during the summer holidays 2018. As with everything, there is only so much money available, hence the request to the PTA to raise the funds for playground equipment.

Children are naturally drawn to playing outside and there are numerous benefits of outdoor play: it allows them to explore their environment, develop muscle strength and coordination, and gain self-confidence. We want Harrold Primary Academy to be the desired school of choice locally and we really need these resources to improve outdoor fun and learning.

Over half of the children attending Harrold Primary Academy live in Harrold or Odell plus pre-school children will also grow to use the equipment too as they move up into the school. The chosen Supplier is Sovereign based on plans and price. The Multi Activity Centre for KS1 will cost £6,859 and the Trim Trail £11,933."

Resolved (8 For and 1 Against) to approve the funding request for £5,000 and take this from the budgeted amount for Section 137 grants.

8. Crime statistics and information and intelligence exchange

Crime report covering 8th January to 28th January showed one instance of "Burglary - Residential" on Hall Close (17th to 19th January) and one "Sending letters... to cause distress..." with no location details.

No actions recorded. For note: PCSO James Dancer will be running a Community Surgery for the public on 27th February on The Green from 3pm to 4pm.

9. Borough Councillor's report for Harrold Ward

Report will be 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.

10. Church Walk fence

Council resolved in November to adopt the area of land at the top of Church Walk before committing to repairing the fence, however, legal advice from Legal Services at Bedford Borough Council advised against attempting to take ownership of the land; from old land searches it was suggested that the land was possibly owned by the church. Cllr Tickle contacted the Diocese of St Albans, but this has not returned an owner. Clerk has been chasing the contractor for a picture of the replacement fencing style so that Pre-Planning advice can be sought (conservation area). To decide whether to approve 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

Council requested that pre-planning advice is sought in relation to removing the fence and take a decision based on that information, given the expense of replacing a fence on land that is not owned by the parish council, and which the council has been advised by Borough Council Legal services of the potential risk in maintaining.

11. Dog fouling

The council approved in December the purchase of three dog poo bag distributor boxes (JRB Enterprise - £80 plus c.£20 for 800 bags).

To determine a) the precise locations of the boxes, b) whether more are required (Cllr Mercer), and c) who will monitor and restock the boxes with bags.

Resolved to purchase only three dispensers next to the dog waste bins at the following locations: on the footpath from Dove Lane across to Roman Paddock, on Church Walk, and at the top of Brook Lane (adjoining Orchard Lane/Wood Road). Cllr Peverell has agreed to monitor and restock the bags.

12. Code of Conduct

To adopt the following approach in relation to the behaviour and conduct of councillors in relation to:

- a) Members of the public and wider community*

- b) *Members of the parish council*
- c) *Clerk to the parish council*
- *New councillors to be sent the Code of Conduct as routine*
- *(a) Members of the public with complaints relating to councillor conduct should still be directed to the Monitoring Officer, who will alert the council if it is deemed appropriate*
- *Where there are perceived breaches of the Code of Conduct in relation to (b) and (c) notifications shall be made to the Chairman, who shall act objectively/impartially and will pass the information to the Monitoring Officer; information can be held by the Monitoring Officer to create a history*
- *It is Best Practice that perceived breaches relating to (a), (b) and (c) are not discussed in council meetings and are dealt with independently by the Monitoring Officer*
- *If the history builds to a point where the Monitoring Officer raises an issue then the parish council may request the councillor attends training/support*

Action: *Current councillors to sign a copy of the Code of Conduct to confirm they have read it.*

Resolved to adopt the outlined approach and to customise the Code of Conduct for adoption at a later date. Cllr Barrett to create a draft proposal for amendments to the Code of Conduct for council review (**Action Cllr Barrett**). Councillors that were present signed copies of the current Code of Conduct to confirm it had been read.

13. Village entrance signs

To approve an amended install quote for £607. Council has previously agreed the locations of the three new entrance signs and the plan is available on the council website. The quote from Borough Council Highways to install the signs was approved at £500. Due to 2020 price variations, and the need for a utilities survey at the Little Odell sign location, the quote has increased to £607.

Resolved to approve the Borough Council Highways installation quote for £607.

14. Change of Clerk email address

To note the change of the Clerk's email address from clerk@harrold.org.uk to harroldparishcouncil@outlook.com. Previous email address functionality was slow and has a very high level of junk email due to the length it has been in use. New email has two-factor authentication, smoother functionality, and better spam filters.

Council noted the change in email address.

15. Purchase of Clerk reference books

To approve the purchase of two recommended books of reference for use by the Clerk.

- a) *The Clerk's Manual 2019 by SLCC at £69*
- b) *Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration 12th Edition by Paul Clayden – Pre-order for September 2020 at £150*

Resolved to approve the purchase of both books.

16. Chatty benches

To agree to purchase and install a Happy-To-Chat sign on the bench on the corner of Roman Paddock/High St to encourage people to talk and reduce isolation. These signs have proven effective across the world: "The Happy To Chat Bench. Sit here if you don't mind someone stopping to say hello".

Resolved to approve the purchase of the sign and to locate it on the bench at the entrance to Roman Paddock (**Action Clerk**).

17. Request for information from Richard Fuller MP

To raise any issues for Cllr Tickle to take to Richard Fuller MP. Richard has written to Chairman Robert Tickle to ask what the main issues facing the community and the Parish Council are, so that he can focus his efforts.

Councillors agreed to email issues to Cllr Tickle.

18. Planning for the Xmas lights 2020

Agenda item requested by Cllr Mercer: To discuss the approach for the Xmas lights for December 2020.

Cllr Mercer offered the profit from the sale of the calendars towards Christmas lights for the village. Cllr Ross agreed to assist with the lights for 2020. Agreed to defer the item until Cllr Muller was in attendance as he was involved in the installation for 2021.

19. Repairs to the Outdoor Gym cross trainer

To agree a fix of the cross trainer at £400. The cross trainer at the outdoor gym at HOCP requires a fix as the motion is rough and noisy. The council has budgeted £1050 for maintenance of the gym. The company who installed the gym (The Great Outdoor Gym Company) will charge £400 to attend and fix the machine. An annual maintenance contract would have been c. £2000 a year.

Resolved unanimously to approve the maintenance by The Great Outdoor Gym Company at £400 (**Action Clerk**).

20. Buckinghamshire Building Society savings account address change and signatory additions

To change the address on the Buckinghamshire Building Society savings account to Brookfield House, 79 Harewelle Way, Harrold, MK43 7DW and to add Cllr David Mercer as a signatory, as a member of the Finance Committee.

Resolved unanimously to approve the changes (**Action Clerk**).

21. Grant request from The Bridge magazine (Section 137 - Local Govt Act 1972)

To approve a grant request of £500 from The Bridge magazine editor Debbie Earl for production costs, which total £1720 per issue. Grant application sent to council prior to the meeting.

Resolved unanimously to approve the grant request in full; payment of it must wait until after 31st March however, due to the annual limit against Section 137 spend (**Action Clerk**).

22. Annual Parish Council Risk Assessment as part of the Risk Management process

To approve the Risk Assessment. The Risk Assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the Parish Council to identify potential inherent risks. The Parish Council, based on this recorded assessment, will take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible.

Resolved unanimously to approve the 2020 Risk Assessment, with a decrease in risk (3 to 2) against Probity and an increase in risk against Communication (1 to 2).

23. Harrold Centre car park resurfacing

To consider a request from the Harrold Centre Committee for funding to resurface the car park with a solid surface instead of using a gravel surface again. Further details to be provided by Harrold Centre Chairman Phil Briggs.

In the December meeting, Phil Briggs was in attendance to explain the request: The car park is heavily used for community events, in addition to regular users of the bottle and clothing banks. The surface is now in a very poor condition – perhaps even unsafe.

The decision was deferred until: Research was carried out for the new surface in relation to drainage and the weight of heavy vehicles, including meeting a representative from the Borough Council; a Rural Grant from the Borough Council was investigated (match-funding of up to 25%). Agenda item has been deferred. The Borough Council representative assessed the surface but wished to return again when the temporary surface had been laid – this is currently in process.

24. PC-owned streetlights

To agree an approach to the upgrade of the Parish Council owned streetlights and to ratify the decision for EON to repair the streetlight on Hall Close at £60 plus parts.

15 streetlights have been identified by the Borough Council Streetlights team as being owned by the Parish Council (there is some uncertainty about the 2 on School Lane). 7 of the 15 require maintenance. EON provide maintenance of older streetlights and have confirmed that only 1 of the 15 can be repaired in its current state due to parts no longer being available. The remainder will require an upgrade. EON can produce a plan for upgrade by carrying out a survey at £200. Skyscape have produced a survey of the lights and quoted at £10k to perform the upgrade to LED. Clerk has also been in contact with The Zeta Group who carry out LED upgrades and have been recommended by other parish councils.

Resolved to instruct both EON and Zeta Group to carry out a survey and produce a quote at £200 and £295 (Ex VAT), respectively (**Action Clerk**).

Resolved to ratify the decision to repair the Hall Close streetlight at £60 plus parts – councillors noted that this repair had been carried out.

25. Planning Applications

None

26. Any other business

Cllr Peverell requested that the Street Ranger clear the leaves on the corner of the High St and Carlton Road. This is not part of the Street Ranger contract, but he is willing to cover this section anyway.

Cllr Bryce requested that the HPFA pavilion renovation project be a standing item on the agenda so that the council was aware of the progress – Cllr Mead to represent the agenda item each month.

27. Correspondence (requiring council attention):

- *Parishioner sent a letter in relation to a hand bier (wooden funeral cart) in their possession that they believe is owned by the parish council; requests that they be allowed to give it to St Peter's church. Council decided over email that there were no objections to it being handed to the church, however, the church have no room for it. Cllr Paston has confirmed over email that she has a place to store it, to which the council raised no objections.*
- *Parishioner emailed regarding trees blocking a footpath (Right of Way 3) from the fire station across to Harewelle Way playground. Clerk raised this with the Borough Council Rights of Way team and the issue has now been resolved.*
- *Parishioner has requested a fix to the PC-owned streetlight in Hall Close, which is out. See agenda item 24.*
- *Parishioner emailed in relation to ownership of the streetlights on School Lane and a number of other points that they wished the council to consider when making future decisions. Clerk shared this information with the council, who noted the correspondence.*
- *Parishioner emailed with the suggestion of creating a Chatty Bench. See agenda item 16.*

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 11th March 2020 in the Harrold Centre