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Chairman:
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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 9th May 2018 at 7.30pm at Harrold Centre main hall

Present: R Tickle (Chair), B Muller, B Page, D Brough (Vice Chair), L Duggan, S Reger, R Brough (Clerk), J Peverell, R Barrett, B Page, A Foster (Bedford Borough Council), L Hoad, P Pedersen,
Apologies: G Lloyd, D Mercer

1. **Approval of Minutes** from the Annual Parish meeting held 11th April 2018
 Minutes approved.
2. **Year-end Finance Report for 2017/18**

Cllr Brough talked through the 2017/2018 finances. Key points are that there is only a small overspend overall (ignoring projects), meaning our budgeting was accurate. The underspend on projects is due to projects being in progress. These will be rolled into the next year's finances.

2017/18 P&L (Adjusted for VAT) - As at Mar 2018

Harrold Parish Council 2017/18

<u>Income</u>		<u>YTD (Actual)</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Precept Income	Precept Income	72,645	72,645	
Bottle Bank Income	Bottle Bank: Income	792	1,089	
	Grant Income: CTB reduction Grant	1,568	1,568	
	Grant Income: A Foster Ward Fund - Saxon House playground	1,000	0	
	Grant Income: A Foster Ward Fund - Scout hut redevelopment	479	0	
Rural Grant Income		1,568	1,568	
Cemetery Income		2,209	622	
	Section 106: Harewelle Way playground	149,000		
Section 106 (Development)		149,000		
Bank Interest		283	329	
Total Income		226,497	76,253	

Outgoings

Bottlebank		<u>0</u>	<u>914</u>	<u>914</u>
	Clerk Salary: R Brough	11,319	12,116	
	Clerk Salary: R Brough Pension	88	0	
	Clerk Salary: R Brough Tax NI	<u>1,159</u>	<u>1,046</u>	
Employment Costs		<u>12,565</u>	<u>13,162</u>	<u>597</u>
	Clerk Expenses	0	268	
	Office: Phone & Broadband BT	553	689	
	Office: Rent	4,500	4,500	
	Office: Supplies	0	300	
	Office: Large Map printing	0	97	
	Office: Four Chairs	<u>0</u>	<u>102</u>	
Office & Admin		<u>5,053</u>	<u>5,957</u>	<u>905</u>
Training		<u>354</u>	<u>492</u>	<u>138</u>
	Electricity: Buttermarket EON	501	254	
	Electricity: Street EON	1,288	1,223	
	Plants & Trees: Heritage Arboriculture	3,995	3,320	
	Plants & Trees: Tree Survey & Independent Advice	275	0	
	Plants & Trees: Memorial	0	0	
	Plants & Trees: Memorial Wreath	65	87	
	Playgrounds: ROSPA Inspection (Playsafety Ltd)	322	475	
	Brook: R Sinclair	3,000	3,000	
	Brook: Skip at Town Farm	467	253	
	Grass: In Trim	5,612	4,090	
	Maintenance: Outdoor Gym - Quarterly Maintenance	1,400	1,200	
	Village Maintenance: R Sinclair	2,230	2,459	
	Maintenance: Cemetery bench	280	0	
	Bin Collection: HC BBC	<u>482</u>	<u>472</u>	
Parks and open spaces		<u>19,917</u>	<u>16,832</u>	<u>-3,086</u>
	Grant Out: The Bridge magazine	500		
	Grant Out: Friends of HOCP (Country Park)	3,000		
	Grant Out: United Reformed Church - Cooker	1,500		
	Grant Out: Harrold Centre - Part 1	1,000		
	Grant Out: Harrold Snooker Club	<u>3,680</u>		
Section 137 (Current Year)		<u>9,680</u>	<u>9,532</u>	<u>-148</u>
	Other: BDO External Audit	720	756	
	Other: Internal Audit	0	100	
	Payroll: Cambridgeshire ACRE	249	36	
	Church Clock: Clock Repair	0	0	
	Church Clock: Clock Annual Maintenance	0	286	
	Membership: BATPC (Beds Assoc Town & Parish Councils) Annual	0	338	
	Membership: SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) Fees	0	149	
	Membership: CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) Annual	0	36	
	Other: Insurance	3,055	3,057	
	Other: New Parish Council Website	0	446	
	Other: BBC	49	27	
	Other: Buttermarket restoration (Prior year)	2,725	0	
	Other: Lamppost restoration	3,290	0	
	Other: Hydrant restoration	2,200	0	
	Other: Lower Green Bins	1,500	0	
	Other: Portable Speed Sign	2,449	0	
	Other: Various	<u>1,445</u>	<u>12,720</u>	
Miscellaneous		<u>17,682</u>	<u>17,950</u>	<u>268</u>
Total Outgoings without projects		<u>65,252</u>	<u>64,839</u>	<u>-412</u>

Project: Harewelle Way playground	87,761	85,000	
Project: HPFA/Scouts Facilities	0	100,000	
Project: Harrold boundary signage and wall	350	20,000	
Project: Neighbourhood plan	7,674	5,000	
Project: Buttermarket and Lockup renovation	0	15,000	
Project: 2018 Memorial plans (inc peace garden)	0	10,000	
Project: Contingency	0	5,000	
Project Expenditure (Budgeted)	95,786	240,000	144,214 U
Total Outgoings with projects	161,038	304,839	143,802 U
Harrold Centre Development	Harrold Centre Development payment	43,993	0
Year To Date Net P&L	21,466	-228,586	

3. Chairman's end of year statement for 2017/18 by Robert Tickle

2017/2018 has been another busy year for Harrold Parish, and has seen a small change in councillors. Mike Johnston stood down after a long service as councillor due to constraints on his time. Andrew Jones also stood down as he moved away from the village and Lindsay Duggan and Lucie Hoad joined us as councillors. Robert Tickle remained as Chairman and David Brough became Vice Chair following an internal vote. Robbin Brough remained as clerk for her third year. At year end 31st March we were close to full capacity with 10 councillors. If there are no resignations then the current councillors will remain in place until the end of the four year term of office in May 2019, when elections will occur and the positions will be open for new candidates to apply.

For a fourth year running we made a tactical effort to bring down the level of cash reserves through a process of expediting projects and focusing on areas of the village that had previously been overlooked. These reserves had built up from "Section 106" payments from the developers of Roman Paddock and Harewelle Way.

Distribution of funding to local voluntary groups

One of the council's continued strategies is to distribute more funding to local voluntary groups through Section 137 Grants. These benefit parishioners by ensuring that voluntary organisations and services are able to keep functioning and to assist those that are newly formed. This year we granted the maximum allowance of £10k across the following groups:

1. £3k to The Friends of Harrold Odell Country Park. This money will be used towards constructing a new pond dipping platform. The platform will be used for school groups and others visiting the park to enable them to have a closer look at the wildlife living within the lake.
2. £3.7k to Harrold Snooker Club (based at the Harrold Centre) for new equipment and refurbishment of the snooker room
3. £500 to The Bridge magazine - an essential communication tool for the council
4. £1.5k to the United Reformed Church for a new cooker, to support their community group activities
5. £1k to the Harrold Centre (remaining £3k coming next month) to assist with their centre development loan repayments

Improving the look of the village

Another of the council's continued strategies has been to improve and smarten the look of the village. We have received quotes and chosen a contractor to build a **stone wall** to replace the unattractive metal railing on the North East riverbank by the main bridge. We would also like to landscape the area with smaller bushes and shrubs to allow the bridge and river to be more visible, but without opening up the riverbank completely for access. We are finalising contracts and the work should start imminently.

We have approved attractive **new village entrance signs**, which are currently being manufactured. They are expected to be installed at three entrance points to the village and replace the current metal "Harrold" signs (where they exist).

We completely replaced the **playground at Harewelle Way** and have taken over a lease for the land. Getting to the stage of redevelopment was a very long process and involved: Pursuing the developer to transfer the land (and monies) to the borough council. Setting up a lease agreement with the borough council to allow the PC to take long-term responsibility for the land; creating a business plan for mayoral approval to receive the monies that were transferred from the developer; going through a lengthy process of financial approvals with the borough council. The climbing frame/fort at **Saxon House End playground**, which

had reached end-of-life, has been replaced. This piece of equipment, and the soft surface underneath, was replaced with a similar style of apparatus.

Miscellaneous maintenance included: the missing bollards on the green (level with School Lane) have been replaced. We have approved the repair of the broken gate at the Harrold Centre playground and the repair of the fence next to Saxon House End playground which suffered wind damage. Two wooden bins were installed on the Lower Green in an effort to reduce the amount of littering that happens in that area, especially over the summer months.

HPFA Sports Pavilion: We are continuing to work with the playing field association (HPFA) to deliver a new (or extensively renovated) pavilion and refurbishments to the Scout hut. The council has set aside a substantial amount of funding for this project and we are hoping to continue to assist the HPFA in developing a plan and to gain further sources of grant funding.

Developing the Neighbourhood Plan

The steering group has spent the last few months evaluating the village survey results and met with all landowners who had put sites forward for development. The process can seem never-ending but it will all be worth it if we can get the plan approved by the borough council as it will mean we have control over future development. The next stage is to develop a number of potential development options. These options will be put to the village for consultation in the next few months. This is the crucial time for the village to think about where future development should take place. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is planning a series of drop-in sessions and presentations to village groups and clubs.

SpeedWatch group

The SpeedWatch group had another active year in a continued attempt to curb speeding in the village. We have purchased a portable speed sign for the village, which we hope to have in use during the coming year.

Finances for 2017/2018

Cash Balance: As at 31st March 2018 the cash balance sits at £171k, up from £141k this time last year. Despite larger items of expenditure, including £88k on the Harewelle Way playground, and transferring the remaining £43k to the Harrold Centre for their redevelopment, we received the commuted sum of £149k from the developer in relation to the transfer of ownership of Harewelle Way playground. We estimate that the overall cash balance will drop to approximately £25k once all the projects in this year's budget have been completed.

Spending: For the current year we had an overall overspend against budget of £0.4k if you adjust for VAT (which we reclaim) and if you ignore projects (which are funded by reserves) and ignore funds transferred out to the Harrold Centre (which sits outside of the budget). This gives us confidence that the precept has been set at the correct level. We were £144k underspent on projects due to work still being in progress.

Precept: This has been retained at £72,645, despite an increase in the amount of Band D properties in the village. This is because we are satisfied with the budgeting process and that the current level allows us to cover costs. Projects will continue to be financed mainly from reserves.

As I'm sure you will agree, an extremely productive year for the council, and the coming year looks no different.

Robert Tickle Chair - Harrold Parish Council

4. Matters raised by parishioners

One parishioner attended and discussed the following issues with the council:

He was concerned that the Festival of Britain sign might be being replaced by the new entrance signs (it isn't). He hadn't seen the picture of the signs in The Bridge magazine and asked for the picture to be put on Facebook/website (**Action Clerk**).

He wanted to know if the planned wall by the bridge had gone formally through planning permission (it has). He commented on the maintenance issues of a stone wall. Cllr Barrett confirmed that this design would be robust

and resilient. It will be 6 feet back from the road to protect it. Parishioner would like the area to remain a wild habitat and not be heavily landscaped – it was confirmed that it would not be heavily landscaped.

The parishioner would like some of the Lime trees on the Green to be replaced with new trees so that the current ones can be felled in time. He would also like the council to assist with the maintenance of the trees between his High St house and the school. These are on school land and the school had promised to fell every second tree. He would like ecological work done to maintain the path through the trees as it is an avenue for wildlife to go in and out of the village. He has written to the headmaster, but not had a response. Council agreed to assist, and also to consider a village-wide plan for felling/replanting trees.

Parishioner felt the new flood warning sign was too big for the area. The Council confirmed that they supported the use of a technical solution to the issue of informing road users of flooding at the bridge. However, the council were not informed of the date of installation or the look of the signs. It is agreed that the sign is larger than expected, but the council would like to see what it looks like when it's working. The importance of the function of the signs (from a safety aspect and the well-running of the village) is expected to outweigh the aesthetics, but the council will ask Highways if there is a smaller version of the sign.

Parishioner is concerned about the new portable speed warning sign that will appear next month. Council confirmed it is not the version with a large solar panel on the top. The aim is to impact driver behaviour to help improve road safety for the community. The sign can be moved around locations (between existing posts/lampposts) and will record bi-directional speed/time data. It will display approaching speeds and display a message to the driver. It's a proven method of improving driver behaviour/awareness and will assist the Speedwatch team's coverage allowing them to inform the police of hotspots (The data is acceptable to the police).

Parishioner does not like so many traffic signs in the village. Council has asked the parishioner to send through pictures of ones he feels are redundant, so we can see if they can be removed.

Date of next annual parish meeting

Wednesday 10th April 2019