 **Minutes of Meeting held at 6.45 pm on Monday 14th March 2022**

**Present:** Cllrs. J. Littlefair, T. Britcliffe, K. Brown, J. Quarmby, K. Park and D. Simmons

**In Attendance:** Ward Cllr R. Cook, M. Ireland, Clerk

1. **Public Forum:** No members of the public present
2. **Apologies:** Ward Cllrs Cassidy and Riddle (the latter had requested his apologies be recorded for the previous meeting also)
3. **Declarations of Interest**: None made
4. **Police Report:** No officers present nor report received. The Clerk noted the Ward Newsletter is available on the Cleveland Police website: www.cleveland.police.uk.

Cllr Littlefair informed that he and the Clerk had attended the Rural Crime Forum the previous week at Police Headquarters. Few members of the public had been present, however there had been a very frank exchange of comments about lack of police support for the rural community, especially in following up or attending on reported crime. Chief Inspector Jon Hagen, based in Redcar & Cleveland, had now taken on responsibility for the police handling of rural crime and gave a commitment to improving the service to rural residents, with key areas of improvement identified and agreed with those present. Kelly Close had reported on a new initiative to tackle hacking and internet fraud – Cyber Protect and Prepare; she was willing to check computers to assess vulnerability to cyber crime and could be contacted on 07525 410652. Councillors requested the local Inspector be made aware of the need for a report to every PC meeting. **Action**: Clerk to contact local Police Inspector as requested.

1. **Minutes of 14th February 2022** – Cllr Britcliffe proposed and Cllr Brown seconded the adoption of the minutes. All present being in agreement, it was **resolved** to accept the draft Minutes a true record.
2. **Matters Arising**: (a) ***School Field*** – The Clerk reported that the signed copy of the licence had now been received. Cllr Britcliffe noted that he had collected three keys from the school, which would provide access temporarily via the double gates at the top of the field, whilst a new ‘kissing gate’ was installed at the other end for public use. The keys would be held, as previously agreed, by himself, Cllr Park and Cllr Quarmby; they would liaise over a rota for the opening/closing of public access to the field. It was further agreed that a sign, to say ‘No Dogs, No Horses and No vehicles without written permission of Hart Parish Council’ be purchased and installed at the new gate once it had been installed. Cllr Britcliffe offered to write a piece for the Hart Hub. **Actions:** Clerk to purchase sign when appropriate, Cllr Britcliffe to write piece for hart Hub.

(b***) Anti-Litter Poster competition*** – The Chairman informed that Cllr Britcliffe, the Clerk and he, had attended the school the previous week to judge the entries. The children involved in the school’s Eco Club had been welcoming and keen to show off their work around the school and the competition entries, of which there were approximately 60 – the standard of the entries had been very high. After shortlisting, the final decision was to award the First Prize to Seren, an 11-year old, and a Runner-Up prize to Arabelle, a 6-year old. The Clerk had framed the 2 winning entries and these were displayed for other Councillors to see; Cllr Britcliffe would present the prizes (framed poster for both and family cinema tickets for the winner) at the school Assembly on the following Friday. Copies of the winning posters would be made for placing around the village.

(c) ***Weed-Clearing/Chare Wall Working Party –*** Cllr Simmons reported that, due to inclement weather, this had yet to be convened, however, she proposed that it take place at 10.00am on Saturday 2nd April. The date being acceptable to all, Cllr Littlefair agreed to spray the weeds beforehand with insect-friendly weed killer, and Cllr Simmons agreed to call for volunteers for the Working Party via the Hart Hub. Cllr Simmons noted she was uncomfortable with removing stones from the wall as she was unclear as to which should be photographed. After a brief discussion it was **agreed** that, only if a stone was in danger of falling, should it be removed and photographed only if it had signs of having been worked. **Actions:** Cllr Littlefair to spray weeds and Cllr Simmons to put on Hart Hub.

(d) ***Digital Map*** – the Clerk informed that she had contacted the supplier and access to the technology was to be provided to Cllr Park later that week.

(e) ***Brown Bin on footpath*** – the Clerk reported that Chris Scaife, HBC, had agreed to have the bin removed.

(f) ***Licence for grass-cutting*** – the Clerk reported that she had received the licence from HBC and had circulated it to Councillors in advance of the meeting. The licence was for one year, ending 31 March 2023 and covered the whole area within the village footprint. Councillors being **in agreement**, the Clerk signed the licence and **agreed** to deliver it to HBC for their Solicitor to countersign. She further **agreed** to write a short piece for the Hart Hub.

Cllr Simmons noted her appreciation for the work on clearing fallen trees behind Palace Row, recently undertaken by HBC; the work had been to a high standard and a small oak sapling, which had worked loose, had been securely restored.

1. **Chairman’s Report:** Cllr Littlefair reported that:

* He had attended the HBC Audit & Governance Committee. He noted the public engagement, in regard to the McKenzie Medical Practice at Hartfields, had now been delayed to late May/early June and would take 9 weeks. Cllr Cook noted that only 70 residents were actually registered with the practice and encouraged other resident s to move to that practice and use it in order to save it from closure.
* He had attended the Rural Crime Forum (covered earlier).
* He had taken part in the judging of the anti-litter poster competition at the school.
* He had received the design proposals for the A179, produced by Peter Frost and forwarded by the Clerk, and remained deeply concerned about them. The proposal to have the dual section of highway suddenly reduce to one lane was a recipe for accidents. Councillors felt strongly that the whole A179 should be duelled as far as the A19, and as soon as possible and in the meantime, traffic lights at the roundabout and speed cameras along the section of A179 beside Hart village, should be installed.

Cllr Cook noted that, once the new roundabout at Middle Warren was open (due later this week), the traffic lights would be removed, which would increase the speed of traffic; further; as soon as the roundabout was completed, the developers planned to commence work on a new main sewer, which would result in Merlin Way being closed for three weeks. This would cause considerable problems for users of private and public transport as a long detour would be required. He proposed to request that Merlin Way be closed in two phases to allow traffic movement on one side during the works. Councillors warmly support this proposal. Cllr Cook offered to request Kieran Bostock attend the next HPC meeting, in April, to discuss the proposals for the A179; this was strongly endorsed by all present. **Action:** Cllr Cook to request attendance by Kieran Bostock at April meeting of the parish council.

* He had attended the Civic Funeral of Cllr Brenda Loynes.
* He had received copies of recent correspondence between Cllr Riddle and Cllr Shane Moore and reiterated the Vote of No Confidence in HBC still stood, as the Charter had not been progressed. In response to a query from Cllr Cook, the Chairman gave a brief summary of the history behind and since the unanimous vote – viz: Vote of No Confidence taken in March 2021, meeting to discuss with Council Leader and discuss draft Charter (produced by rural PCs) in August 2021 when Leader and HBC Managing Director had agreed to pursue a Charter, forward comments on the draft by Borough Solicitor, and hold another meeting in September. ***None of these actions had taken place***. Leader had refused to allow presence of Clerks at the meetings, and had sent libellous email to EPC Clerk, who had simply been doing her job. Cllr Cook requested another copy of the draft Charter be sent to his personal email and stated he would be taking the matter up with the Leader.

The Chairman requested Councillors consider whether the Vote should be rescinded and whether he should now attend Parish Liaison Meetings. Parish Councillors agreed that the Chairman should resume attendance at Parish Liaison meetings, but the Vote of No Confidence would not be withdrawn until the matters which led to it, and the adoption of a Charter, were resolved. **Actions**: Cllr Cook to discuss the Vote of No Confidence with Leader, in attempt to break the deadlock, Chairman to attend next Parish Liaison meeting, Clerk to forward another copy of draft Charter to all three Ward Councillors.

1. **Ward Councillors’ Reports:** Cllr Cook reported that he had already covered the Hartfields Medical practice engagement process and the debacle of the A179 traffic lights. He was becoming very concerned about the number of large development applications being received for this area, and the ability of the inadequate road infrastructure to support the level of traffic that would ensue. In response to a query about HBC plans for the Jubilee, Cllr Cook reported that he had yet to be advised on what was being planned, however, he was aware that, between 7.00 and 9.00pm on Wednesday 16th March, Victoria Square was to be lit in support of Ukraine and that residents were invited to bring along their own lights in support.

1. **Queen’s Platinum Jubilee:** Cllr Simmons reported that plans were almost complete for four days of celebration, including a beacon lighting, ‘Dance through the Decades’, exhibition of memorabilia, service of thanksgiving and procession through the village to a ‘Big Jubilee Lunch’. These would be finalised at the next meeting on Monday 21st March. Fundraising activities were taking place including a ‘Race Night’ on 26th March at the Village Hall, tickets £5 each to include Pie & peas.
2. **Maintenance Committee Report**: Cllr Park had circulated a report in advance of the meeting. Key items to note were: continuing flooding opposite The Raby Arms and at the roundabout; the lack of a clear, ‘Left-hand turn’ signs at the junctions of Hart Back Lane and School Lane on the A179, and speeding traffic in Butts Lane. This latter could be addressed by placing horizontal red lines across the road to slow traffic. It was **agreed** to remove the HPC action from Point 7 – Hart school, as this had been done already, and remove altogether Point 13 – Village Grass Cutting not value for money, in future reports.
3. **Financial Reports:** The Clerk presented the financial reports, which were approved.

**Receipts: £ Payments: £**

Transfer of Traveller Fund 1,748.50 D.M. Ireland (repayment of postage, prizes) 41.09

Interest on Business Account 0.03 Bank charges 5.40

**Total 1,748.53** D.M. Ireland (salary Jan-March

including back pay to April 2021) 616.00

HMRC (PAYE) 154.00

**Total 816.49**

The Clerk noted that ALL the High Street banks had now introduced bank charges for charities and parish councils, and that other banks such as Starling would not allow double authorisation as was required for a parish council. There was no longer a Credit Union in Hartlepool and enquiries with the national Credit Union Association had elicited the response that Credit Unions did not provide banking services. It was therefore **resolved** to remain with the current bank.

1. **Correspondence**: (i) HBC- information on the election timetable – noted; (ii) NALC – new NJC agreed salary rates for 2021-22 including 1.75% pay increase, to be implemented immediately – implemented; (iii) Historic England – email regarding delayed application for permission to install gate to car park - **agreed** to not pursue at present due to costs.
2. **Planning Applications:**

H/2022/0024 – White Hart Inn - No comment

H/2022/0040 – Kirkefields Stable site - Support

H/2022/0043 – Land south of A179 - No comment

H/2022/0045 – Land north of A179 and west of Tremaine Close - **Objection** – this application is for land within the strategic gap and therefore contravenes both the Rural Plan and Local Plan.

H/2022/0052 – 6, Burns Close - No Objection

H/2022/0055 – Land beside White Cottage, Hart - This application will create a problem with vehicle access to White Cottage; currently vehicles can access a turning circle, this will be removed if this application is approved, requiring vehicles at White Cottage to reverse out over a public footpath onto the main road a danger for both pedestrian and oncoming vehicles. If approved, to be subject to rear wall being constructed of stone to match the walls on either side.

1. **Matters of Concern to Councillors**:

Cllr Brown concerned that no action has been taken about a fallen tree branch, on the land in Butts Lane beside the school, which needs removing. Agreed Clerk to again request Derek Wardle undertake an inspection of the trees along the section of the road between the school and North Hart Farm as these could fall and damage the new school wall. Cllr Littlefair – fly tipping in Hart Back Lane – mattresses and tyres.

**Actions:** Clerk to remind Derek Wardle HBC of earlier request and report fly tipping.

The Clerk requested Councillors to agree the date for the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting. It was agreed this should be held in May, ideally the week commencing 16th. **Action:** Clerk to book Village Hall ASAP.

1. **Date of Next Meeting:** 6.45pm Monday 11th April 2022 at Hart Village Hall.

*Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55pm*