**Hart Parish Council**

**Minutes of meeting held at 6.45 pm on Monday 8 January 2018 at Hart Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs. T. Britcliffe, K. Brown, F. Lancaster, J. Littlefair (Chair), J. Quarmby

**In Attendance:** Ward Cllr P. Beck, M. West, Clerk

1. **Apologies:** Cllrs Geddes and Park
2. **Public Forum:** No members of public present.
3. **Declarations of Interests:** Cllr Littlefair – Item 11; Clerk – Item 8 (ii)
4. **Minutes of 11th December 2017:** Approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.
5. **Matters Arising:** ***(a)*** ***Formal Complaint to HBC:*** The Clerk informed thatthe Borough Solicitor had informed her that the request for an independent investigation had not been approved. The report, which will be produced at the conclusion of the investigation, would be available for comment, on its accuracy only, before being submitted to the Council’s Audit and Governance Committee.

***(b) White Hart Car Park Wall ownership***: The Clerk reported that Punch Taverns had confirmed their ownership of the car park, stated that it’s maintenance was within the tenancy agreement with the Landlord and that their Regional Valuation Officer would undertake to look into the issue. Councillors were pleased to have received a response, but as no further communication had been received, as promised, asked the Clerk to ask Punch Taverns for an update on the situation.

***(c) HBC Issues:*** Some, but not all of the issues raised at the December meeting had been dealt with, i.e. the ‘village walkabout’ – to show and discuss with HBC officers the various on-going problems, had yet to take place, and the Chairman was still awaiting a date/time from the relevant HBC officer, Keiron Bostock. Cllr Beck informed that the officer was on compassionate leave, that he would wish to be involved in the visit and would discuss possible dates/times with Peter Frost, HBC.

The Clerk reported that there appeared to be a difference of opinion between the school/education authority and the Parish Council in regard to who had the right to make decisions about dogs on the field. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should convene a meeting between HBC, the school and PC to resolve the issue. Cllr Britcliffe proposed that the Parish Council should itself purchase and erect high-quality signs, similar to those at the church, and include this in the budget. This was unanimously **agreed.** During a discussion on the on-going issue of dog fouling, which was sometimes caused by irresponsible dog walkers, Cllr Beck informed that it was illegal for dog-walkers in Hartlepool Borough to walk more than four dogs at once.

Cllr Beck asked that any issues for the attention of HBC officers be forwarded to him after the meeting.

**Actions:** Cllr Beck to liaise with Peter Frost; Clerk to arrange meeting between HBC, school and PC; to forward list of matters of concern to Cllr Beck and contact Punch Taverns.

1. **Chairman’s Report:** The Chairman reported that the car park had been resurfaced with road planings and thanked Cllr Brown for his help in this. He had been most impressed with the work of both the Village Hall committee and Events Group in providing the wonderful Christmas decorations around the village hall. Cllr Littlefair also wished to record his thanks to the Clerk for the considerable time and effort spent in developing the new web-site.
2. **Ward Councillors’ Report:** Cllr Beck reported that he had received no complaints on environmental issues from Hart residents since the last meeting. He stated that Mrs Aileen Kendon would be the Labour candidate for Hart Ward at the next election. Cllr Beck said that he had been most impressed with the young people at the school, who had escorted him throughout his December visit to the school, in his role as Mayor of Hartlepool, and that their conduct and knowledge were inspirational. He would remain Mayor until 24 April.
3. **Finance Report**: (i) The Clerk presented the Transactions Report and Actual against Budget Report. These were **accepted**.

**Receipts £0 Payments:** Wm McIvor (Christmas trees) **£414.00**

Councillors expressed surprise at the cost of the two trees and asked for a comparison with the previous year. (£240.00 (MW)).

Councillors again expressed their appreciation to those residents who had adopted flower tubs in 2017, saving the Parish money, and made such a lovely display in the village. The Clerk proposed that there be a competition in the summer for the best flower tub in the village, to be judged perhaps by a Ward Councillor. This proposal was unanimously **supported**. Cllr Britcliffe asked that the monies saved be spent on other high-quality items to beautify the village.

(ii) The Clerk made a formal, written request for an increase in her hours, from 17.5 to 20 per month. This was to allow for the extra time required to maintain and continue to improve the web-site. Cllr Britcliffe proposed and Cllr Quarmby seconded acceptance of the request. This was unanimously supported by all councillors.

1. **Budget/Precept proposals:** The Clerk/RFO presented two proposals for the 2018-19 budget, with a clear rationale for each item. In the light of the agreement to increase her hours, the second proposal was agreed, with one amendment, to increase the amount allocated in the year for repairs to the Chare Wall, to £2,000. The resultant planned expenditure was unanimously **approved**. The Clerk informed that HBC would only accept a 2.5% increase in concurrent costs, and she had included this in the proposals put before Councillors. The precept demand would be the balance between planned expenditure and anticipated other income, including concurrent payments, grants and VAT reclaim, and therefore in the light of the decision just made, would be £6,315.00. She reminded Councillors that the cost of the Precept would be shared across all households within the parish, and that there had been an increase in these, with The Darlings estate. The Precept demand was unanimously **agreed**.
2. **Persistent and Vexatious Complaints and Correspondence Policy:** The draft policy had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and was **approved** without amendment.
3. **Correspondence:**  ***T. M. Darling & Son*** re parking in Front Street. Cllr Littlefair declared an interest. The firm expressed concern about the safety issue caused by the parking of vehicles, especially large ones, close to the entrance to the farm, as it made it difficult for drivers, of vehicles exiting the farm, to see traffic coming up the village from the east. They asked if there was any alternative to requesting double-yellow lines; they were reluctant to do this as it would inconvenience other residents. After some discussion it was **agreed** that the situation should be monitored, but Councillors made the point that this was not really Parish Council business.

Cllr Beck eft the meeting at 8.15 pm.

1. **Website:** The Clerk reported that she had worked on the development of the web-site over the holiday and wanted to obtain the views of the PC before it went live. She had brought the laptop to the meeting, in the hope that they could all see the result, but unfortunately had been unable to obtain an internet signal. She stressed that it was only a start and that there was probably much to improve over time; the one thing still missing was photographs – of Councillors and of views around the village. Councillors Brown, Littlefair and Park had had the opportunity for a preview over the weekend, since which further development work had been done. The two Councillors present expressed their approval of what they had already seen. The Clerk explained that in order for all to be able to view the site it would need to go live, and asked that everyone make an effort to review the site and let her have comments before it was widely promoted. This was **agreed.**

**Action:** Clerk to make web-site live; ALL to review and send comments/amendments etc to the Clerk within next 7 days.

1. **Planning Application:** None

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

* Light at the top of North Hart Lane is **still** off;
* Light at end of Burns Close if off
* Light on main A179 roundabout at bottom of Hart Village has been broken for some time and is causing drivers problems.
* Light opposite The Glebe needs straightening – it is pointing directly at traffic instead of downwards.
* The Burns Close sign has now fallen off.
* The Hart signs at the top of the village, coming off the A179 have **still** not been repaired/replaced.
* There is a broken drain at the top of the village;
* Access to Milbank and The Fens over the 3rd and 4th January was restricted by flood water over 6” deep at the kerb, across the full width of the road. This is unacceptable and dangerous to both pedestrians and vehicular traffic;
* From Nine Acres on the same dates, water was running down the road into the village, by-passing blocked gullies, past Tudor Cottage, flooding South View lay-by, passing the Village Hall, before running down Butts Lane and flooding/standing at the beck crossing;
* Burns Close was badly affected by water running off the fields at 1-4 Butts Lane, as well as from further up the lane, and streaming down Butts Lane causing problems to all road users, horse riders, pedestrians and vehicles;
* Water is pooling around Jenkins’ Stables;
* A drain has collapsed in Butts Lane; this means that it runs along the road as it cannot access the drain, especially by Butts Lane cottages;
* A gully (old-fashioned one) on road down to The Fens has completely collapsed and is dangerous, as pedestrians or horses could easily break a leg.

***NB: This excessive surface water, especially when it freezes, is potentially lethal, with cars skidding all over the road.***

* The owner of the house at the corner of Burns Close has still not replanted the hedge he removed, nor has he cleared out the road gutter, causing surface water to run along the road instead of being diverted into the drains. **R**eplacing the hedge was a condition of planning permission being granted! HBC needs to enforce.

**15. Date of next meetings:** 6.45pm Monday 5th February

Meeting closed at 8.27 pm.