



## Minutes of Meeting held at 6.45 pm on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021

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

**In Attendance:** M. Ireland, Clerk

1. **Public Forum:** No members of the public present.
2. **Apologies:** Ward Cllrs. Cassidy, Cook and Riddle, PCSO Hestor
3. **Declarations of Interest:** J. Littlefair, Item 14
4. **Police Report** – PCSO Hestor had submitted the following data, via e-mail: in the month of November there had been 6 thefts and 6 incidents of criminal damage reported within the parish, 7 instances of anti-social behaviour causing a nuisance and one against a person. Two speed checks resulted in 15 offences recorded on 22 October, and 8 on 12 December.
5. **Minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021** – Cllr Park noted that Item 11 should read detailed drawings were *not yet* completed. With this amendment, the minutes were deemed accurate and it was **resolved** to approve them.
6. **Matters Arising:** (a) **Co-options** – the Clerk reported that HBC had informed her that as it was now less than 6 months to the elections, it was not necessary to make a co-option unless Councillors wished to do so. It was **agreed** the seat be left vacant.  
(b) **School Field** – Cllr Britcliffe reported that the draft lease had not yet arrived. The Academy had apologised for the delay but promised it would be with us before the end of the term, this Friday.  
(c) **School Anti-litter campaign** – The Clerk reported that she had still not received any response, despite several emails requesting one.  
(d) **Meeting with Scott Parkes**, HBC – The Chairman reported that he had a useful meeting with Mr Parkes to discuss the drains/gullies near Burns Close. Mr. Parkes wanted to delay digging out the gutter until there is evidence that surface water is not getting through, i.e. until a heavy rainfall occurs, though he believed the water was actually draining successfully through the next gutter in the road. He has asked to be contacted should it overflow again.  
(e) **Meeting with Kieran Bostock & Chris Wenlock**, HBC – The Chairman reported on a meeting he and the Clerk had held with the two officers, to discuss the cutting of grass in the village. The officers noted that, due to budget constraints, only £1300 per annum was available to cover the cost of grass cutting, which meant that it was cut less frequently than villagers wanted, and not to the standard officers would wish. After some discussion, it was agreed that, provided the Parish Council had appropriate and adequate insurance cover and that any contractor undertaking grass-cutting, weed spraying etc, was appropriately qualified and insured, and subject to the approval of the HBC Legal Department, the Parish Council could trial for one year, in the first instance, the maintenance of all green land in the village in the ownership of the Brough Council. Councillors were very pleased at this news. The Clerk noted that a copy of the insurance policy had been forwarded as requested, together with an email from the insurer confirming that grass cutting etc was covered. Cllr Park noted that every activity should have a risk assessment completed in advance and appropriate equipment provided. Cllr Littlefair undertook to spray the weeds on the pavements as he was personally qualified to do this. Cllr Simmons agreed to organise a working party to clear the weeds and stone from the

Chare Wall in the new year. Cllr Littlefair also noted that he had asked Mr. Bostock about the weight limit on the bridge in the Chare, but had yet to receive a response.

**Actions:** Cllr Littlefair to undertake weed spraying to keep pavements clear; Cllr Simmons to organise a working party in the new year, to remove the weeds and reduce the level of the Chare wall to a safe height; Clerk to contact Kieran regarding the weight limit.

7. **Chairman's Report:** Cllr Littlefair reported that:

- some criminal elements had been seen in the village but no incidents had been reported;
- there have been several vehicle crashes on the A179 recently due to speeding, and there is an urgent need for fixed speed cameras to help reduce the number of such incidents.
- He had been delighted to be invited to switch on the Village Hall Christmas Tree lights this year and thanked the Village Hall Committee for making the village look so festive.
- He reported that the church had had to close due to tree damage caused by Storm Arwen, but Cllr Brown noted that it had reopened that day.

Finally, he informed that there had been little progress on the vote of No Confidence, but rural parish Chairs continued to press for the Charter to be adopted, so that Parish Liaison meetings could resume.

8. **Ward Councillors' Reports:** None received.

9. **Platinum Jubilee:** The Clerk informed that the Jubilee mugs had arrived and were now in the care of the Chairman. It was **agreed** these be delivered by Councillors and the Clerk to every household on Coronation Day.

Cllr Simmons reported that a preliminary meeting had been held, though more members were needed for the planning group. The option to have beacons was discussed – and a query was raised as to whether HBC still had the ones from the last Jubilee? She was acting as Secretary to the group, with David Barker as Chair; it was planned to become an organisation and open a bank account, with several organisations (Parish Council, Village Hall, the church) asked to contribute seed money (£500) was mentioned. Several Councillors expressed concern about this, when there was no information on how the monies were to be spent. Cllr Simmons noted that there were to be a number of fund-raising events throughout late winter and the spring. Suggestions had included a Dance through the Decades of the Queen's reign, a street party/picnic at the Village Hall and so on. The next meeting was to be held at 7.00pm at the Village Hall on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January.

The Chairman informed that Andrew Dixon was intending to transfer the balances of the Gypsy/Traveller Fund to the Parish Council (£1,753.50) and that perhaps some of this could be used to support the Jubilee. **Action:** Clerk to attend the next meeting of the planning group.

10. **Maintenance Committee Report:** Cllr Park had circulated his report in advance, for which Councillors thanked him. Of particular concern was the path from the car park to the church, which is very uneven as the paving slabs have moved over the years, and is now a trip hazard. Cllr Park noted the Parish Council has a duty of care to residents, and the footpath needed immediate attention; he felt it should be extended further and drainage provided. Cllr Brown and Littlefair noted the original drain had been stopped up by Bob Johnstone and that Cllr Brown and his father had installed the original path 30 years ago. The Clerk was asked to obtain formal notification of ownership of the land from the Land Registry as soon as possible. Cllr Park believed the work would cost in the region of £500, however Cllr Littlefair felt this was excessive. The Clerk was tasked with obtaining quotes, liaising with the church and informed the work had to be undertaken on weekdays only. The Clerk noted that Historic England would also need to authorise the work as the car park was on a Scheduled Monument. **Actions:** Clerk to ascertain ownership, liaise with the church and obtain quotes for the restoration of the footpath.

**11. Financial Reports:** The Clerk presented the financial reports, which were approved.

<b>Receipts:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Payments:</b>	<b>£</b>
Interest on Business Account	0.03	Pear Technology (Digital Mapping support)	120.00
		D.M. Ireland (salary Oct-Dec)	576.00
		HMRC (PAYE)	144.00
		D.M. Ireland (Contribution to tel/broadband)	<u>240.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,080.00</b>

The Clerk then presented a forecast of expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 which provided Councillors with information to inform their decisions on the Budget for 2022-2023.

**12. Annual Budget and Precept Demand:** The Clerk presented several options which included: a 'do nothing new' budget, allowing an increase of 2% in costs; a budget to allow for the installation of a gate on the car park – to be mostly financed by grant aid, and a budget allowing for the installation of flower tubs in the car park. She noted that other requests from villagers had not been included for the following reasons:

- Village orchard – the Parish Council owns no land on which an orchard could be planted
- Play Park – ditto
- Trees behind Millbank Terrace – land is owned by Hartlepool Borough Council
- Lighting of the footpath in the Chare – Public footpath therefore the responsibility of HBC
- Chevrons on the highway at east entrance to the village – HBC deal with Highways.

It was clear that, even a 'do nothing new' budget would require an increase in the precept. The Clerk noted that the previous year the Council had agreed a deficit budget on the basis that the expected costs had not been incurred due to Covid, and to some extent that also applied to the current year, although much of the saving was due to having costed in an increase in the amount of grass-cutting we would be doing in the village, which HBC had, in the end, not allowed. She noted however, it was not acceptable to keep setting a deficit budget as eventually there would be no reserves to call on and also, the precept would be spread across more households, as some of those currently being built on the other side of the A179 would be within the parish. After much discussion, with Councillors wishing to keep the precept as low as possible, it was **resolved** to remove any expenditure relating to Chare wall maintenance in order to bring in a balanced budget, with only a small, 3% rise in the precept. Precept demand to be £7.500 and a 2% increase in the Concurrent payment to be requested.

1. **Correspondence:** Letter from HSBC requesting confirmation of details about the Parish Council. – noted.
2. **Planning Applications:**  
**H/2021/0311** – Amended plans - Construction of underground electricity cables, substation and associated infrastructure to connect Hart Moor Substation – the only change appears to be a slight improvement to the screening of the substation, which Councillors were please to see but would have preferred thicker, higher screening with native species.
3. **Matters of Concern to Councillors:** Cllr Britcliffe informed that residents of South View have asked for increased capacity for car parking; he noted that some time ago Peter Frost had been asked to provide a design, but none had yet been received. **Action:** Clerk to contact Peter Frost to request design.
4. **Date of Next Meeting:** 6.45pm Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at Hart Village Hall.

*Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm*