



## Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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

**In Attendance:** M. Ireland, Clerk, Ward Cllrs. Cassidy, Cook and Riddle, 2 members of the public

**1. Apologies:** None

**2. Declarations of Interest:** J. Littlefair declared an interest in Items 5a and 5e; Cllr Britcliffe in Item 14.

**3. Public Forum:** A member of the public raised concern about the lack of consultation before the Parish Council declared the vote of 'No Confidence' in HBC. The Chairman explained the background to the vote, and that due to Covid and the death of the Duke of Edinburgh, the issuing of the letter to the Borough Council had been delayed. The resident responded that he fully endorsed the vote itself, it had been long overdue, litter picking, grass cutting and other Borough Council responsibilities were not being done properly, however he felt that before suggesting a return to Co. Durham, the matter should have been discussed with villagers first. Cllr Britcliffe provided further information, and agreed that, if it hadn't been for Covid, there would have been a public meeting. The resident asked why the money promised by a Ward Councillor, at a PC meeting he had attended last year, had never been forthcoming. The Chairman stated that was not something the PC could comment on. (The Ward Cllr in question did not respond). It was agreed that the letter of 'No Confidence' should now be posted on the village notice boards and PC website. **Action:** Clerk to enact this ASAP.

**4. Police Report:** The Clerk read out an email from PCSO Geoffrey Hestor, in which he explained that he would not be on duty at the time of the meeting and gave the following report:  
"Regarding Hart village there has been nothing recent to report for crime or ASB. I have checked repeatedly for the reported drug dealing in the Raby Arms car park and nothing has been seen, and there have been no issues around parking at Hart Primary School". Councillors responded immediately that this was incorrect - smoking of dope was often seen in the car park and cannisters were often picked up from there, as well as from the fields off Worset Lane. A resident who lives in Magdalene Drive stated that inconsiderate parents were constantly parking across drives or blocking the road, and that police had not been seen in the vicinity at school opening or closing times. Cllrs also remarked on the increased speeding within the village over the past months and the continuing parking of vehicles on the pavement outside the former post office, forcing pedestrians with pushchairs or wheelchairs to use the road. The Chairman noted that PC Andy Hampton was now the lead contact for the rural community.  
The Clerk informed that the Police were now producing an official newsletter for each Ward, and tabled the February issue. The request for information from the public was noted, however several of those present gave recent examples of lack of follow-up, or even specific disregard by the police, for criminal activities reported. The Chairman noted these and stated that he and the Clerk would raise them at the next Rural Crime Forum.

The Chairman asked that Items 6 and 7 be taken next, to as not to keep the residents overlong at the meeting This was agreed.

**6. Access to Village Field/Licence to use:** Cllr Britcliffe gave a brief overview of progress to date, followed by the Clerk who read out a letter from the Chairman of the Northern Lights Trust, written on 15<sup>th</sup> March but not received until 13<sup>th</sup> May (the original presumed lost in the post). The Trust offered to progress the Licence, but asked that the PC pay the fees for the legal advice required, some £4-500. She then read an email from Julie Reed, HBC, received at 15.44 that afternoon, that informed the inner fence installation

was to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> June. She noted that she had immediately emailed the Managing Director of HBC, reminding that a formal request for a Committee Review of the decision to install an inner fence had been made, and requesting an update. No response had been received at this time. The Ward Councillors were appraised by Cllr Britcliffe of the deep feelings of villagers about this inner fence. Cllr Cassidy noted that he had been at the meeting of the Children's Services Committee where it had been agreed but felt the decision had been an emotional reaction to a 'scaremongering' statement from the Headteacher that the walls could fall down; insufficient notice had been taken of the surveyor's report on the walls, which was very thorough and confirmed their safety. Ward Cllrs agreed to take this up with Borough Council Officers and relevant Members, which offer was very much appreciated by Parish Councillors. Parish Councillors then considered the proposal from the Trust – it was felt that each party should contribute equally to the legal costs, and therefore HPC would agree to pay 50%. **Action:** Clerk to respond accordingly. Cllr Brown raised concerns about the potential damage that could be caused to the field drainage system, installed by his father in 1953, by contractors putting in the posts for the fence. A resident noted that the top corner of the field was still full of rubble left by the contractors who rebuilt the wall and stated the area could not be used in its current state. Cllr Simmons noted that, with an inner fence, the annual village fete could no longer be held on the field.

7. **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Report:** John Riddle spoke to his report which had been produced for the cancelled April meeting. CCTV cameras in the village have resulted in several arrests and prosecutions. More than 169 residents/families have joined the scheme. At present there is an on-going concern regarding the NW Scheme in West Park, which has implications for every other scheme; the West Park scheme organisers have undergone training and obtained the appropriate licences, yet have been informed by HBC that CCTV cameras are not allowed to record any activity outside the boundary of the individual household, e.g on the pavement. He noted with regret that he had had to return the vehicle provided by Martin Smith as, due to Covid, the vehicle was not being utilised as much and it was not cost-effective to keep it idle. The Chairman thanked him and agreed to take the issue of the CCTV to the Rural Crime Forum
  
5. **Minutes of Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> March and Extraordinary Meeting held 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021:** Cllr Park proposed, seconded by Cllr Britcliffe, that the minutes be accepted as a true record; this was unanimously agreed and it was therefore **RESOLVED** to accept them without amendment.
  
6. **Matters Arising:**
  - (a) **Solar Farm application progress** – no information available;
  - (b) **Parking issues in Magdalene Drive** – the PCSO had reported no problems, but this report was challenged by the resident who lives there.
  - (c) - (e) **Roads** – Kieran Bostock, HBC, has reported that the flood work in Butts Lane will be out to tender this week and on site in early summer, and that HBC has allocated £40,000 this year and next year to undertake resurfacing of the worst areas of Hart Back Lane & Worset Lane.
  - (f) **Digital Mapping** – The Clerk informed that Pear Technology would be offering a refresher session in early July; in order for this to be really useful, they requested that each PC plot at least some of the types of data they wished to record onto a physical map of the Parish which they have provided. The data could include buildings, land, trees, benches, bins, play areas, signs and so forth. Cllr Park agreed to undertake this and return the map to the Clerk before the end of the month. **Action:** Cllr Park to add data to the map and return it to the Clerk by the end of May.
  
8. **Chairman's Report:** The Chairman welcomed the new Ward Councillors and congratulated them on their election; he was pleased to see all three in attendance and he hoped this would continue, for the benefit of the parish. He noted the Vote of 'No Confidence' was an-ongoing issue.
  
9. **Ward Councillors' Reports:** Cllr Cassidy stated that his items had already been covered in the meeting i.e. CCTV and the school wall. Cllr Cook stated that the three Ward Councillors had agreed to work together for Hart Ward, irrespective of political party. Cllr Riddle that he was required to attend the Borough's Induction programme for new Councillors, which he understood was to take place on Monday evenings, therefore he may not be in attendance at every PC meeting.

**10. Maintenance Committee Report:** Cllr Park spoke to the 'To Do' report circulated in advance of the meeting; issues included:

- (i) **Butts Lane Near Miss** - 3 Cars speeding up Butts Lane near missing two groups of people
- (ii) **Butts Lane Near Burns Close** - Quad Bike driving without due care & attention around walker with children and horse riders
- (iii) **Magdalene Drive** - Residents concerned by indiscriminate parking by parents parking on paths and blocking driveways
- (iv) **Butts Lane Foot Paths** - Footpath from Front street to Magdalene Drive uneven and out of level beyond acceptable limits, Utility trench covering within the footpath is a trip hazard and higher than the footpath surface
- (v) **Hart Lane Roundabout - A.** Exit on to A179 at roundabout - surface water standing after moderate rain fall. **B.** Four collisions with the roundabout have occurred this year. **C.** Ponding across footpath needs resolving
- (vi) **Butts Lane** - Recent drainage works have been ineffective and made the problem worse, water now floods down the lane with large areas of deep standing water at various locations, also ditches east of 1 to 4 Butts Lane are causing serious surface flooding
- (vii) **Hart Village entrance sign** - badly located and road markings not visible at the west entrance into the village from the A179 are inadequate and unsafe.

**11. Financial Reports:** The Financial reports to 31<sup>st</sup> March, and from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 17<sup>th</sup> May were presented by the Clerk. It was **resolved** to accept the reports.

**Transactions 4-31 March 2021:**

<b>Receipts:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Payments:</b>	<b>£</b>
Interest on Business Account	<u>0.03</u>	D.M. Ireland (repayment for stationery)	25.19
		DM. Ireland (salary 1 Jan – 31 March)	576.00
		HMRC (PAYE)	144.00
		D.M. Ireland (contribution to tel/broadband 19/20)	<u>240.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>985.19</b>

**Transactions 1 April – 17 May 2121:**

<b>Receipts:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Payments:</b>	<b>£</b>
Interest on Business Account	0.03	Affordable Landscapes	<u>218.40</u>
HBC (precept, concurrent & LCTSS)	<u>10,725.00</u>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,725.03</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>218.40</b>

The Clerk reported that the VAT reclaim for 2019/20 had been submitted and that she was submitting applications that week to The Red Gap Community Fund for the Car Park gate previously discussed, and also for a new laptop for the Clerk's use.

Cllr Britcliffe noted that he had recently visited Dalton Piercy, where a new play area had been installed on village land; he asked that all Parish Councillors look at this and at the Elwick Play area, as both were fully funded by their respective Parish Councils, with grant aid; he felt that such a provision would be welcomed in Hart as currently there was no play provision for village children. If Councillors believed this to be appropriate, then the PC would need to request the Borough Council to provide the land required.

**Actions:** All Cllrs to visit other village play areas, Clerk to submit grant applications.

**12. Chare Wall:** Cllr Park, (a Civil Engineer), spoke to the paper he had circulated, outlining the costs of the various aspects of the work required to secure the future of the Chare wall, the Chare and the Car Park/site of the Great House scheduled monument - these amounted to some £305,000 + VAT. The full restoration of the east Chare Wall alone, would cost in the region of £118,000 + VAT. After some discussion, it was agreed that, for the time being, and in the light of the very difficult funding environment, it was highly unlikely that these sorts of sums could be raised. It was agreed therefore the only work that could be undertaken in the near future would be minimal, even perhaps limited to the removal and storing of the stones until resources could be obtained for its full restoration. Cllr Park was

requested to produce a plan for simply demolishing the wall in accordance with conservation requirements.

**Action:** Cllr Park to produce plan and costings for demolishing the wall in accordance with conservation requirements.

**13. Correspondence:** Letter from the Norther Lights Learning Trust – discussed earlier in the meeting.

**14. Planning Applications:** (Cllr Britcliffe left the meeting for this item)

**H/2020/0384** – Kirkefields Stable site – **No Objection**

**H/2020/0422** – 18 The Darlings – **No Objection**

**15. Annual Parish Meeting:** It was agreed to postpone a decision on the date until more clarity about Covid restrictions was available.

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

Cllr Simmons raised concern about the insufficiency of brown bin collections. She noted that a resident in Palace Row had a large amount of stone available, she wondered if this might be useful in the restoration of the Chare Wall. Cllr Littlefair agreed to collect and store the stone.

Cllr Simmons asked if her colleagues would consider making a donation to the Hartlepool Litter Pickers for the purchase of gloves; the request was warmly supported by the Chairman who noted with appreciation, the work of volunteers in keeping the roads surrounding the village relatively clear of rubbish. Cllr Britcliffe proposed a donation of £50 be made, seconded by Cllr Littlefair and unanimously agreed. Cllr Simmons agreed to forward details to the Clerk.

Cllr Brown raised concern about the flooding opposite the entrance to The Darlings – recorded in the maintenance report.

**Actions:** Cllr Littlefair to collect stone from Palace Row, Cllr Simmons to send details of Hartlepool Litter Pickers to the Clerk.

**17. Date of next meeting:** 7.00 pm Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at Hart Village Hall

*Meeting closed at 9.19 pm.*