 **Minutes of Meeting held at 6.45 pm on Monday 26th September 2022**

**at Hart Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs. K. Brown, T. Britcliffe (in the chair), K. Park, J. Quarmby

**In Attendance:** M. Ireland, Clerk; Mark Christensen, Reliance Energy

1. **Presentation by Reliance Energy:** Mr. Christensen was accompanied by 2 colleagues on-line. He gave a slide presentation about the project to build a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) on land off Worset Lane, near the gas-powered sub-station, explaining the need for storage of the energy generated by both solar and wind, to even out supply. Cllr Britcliffe noted the complete lack of consultation before the gas-powered sub-station was installed, despite there being more than sufficient brown-field sites within the urban area; he expressed appreciation, on behalf of the PC for Reliance coming to talk in advance of submitting an application. He explained that the main concern was the visual impact on the area and the village, with the site being beside the A179, the main route into Hartlepool town, and thus would need considerable natural landscaping to both disguise it and increase bio-diversity.

Mr. Christensen received several questions from Councillors following his presentation, including:

* why their site was so much smaller than that of Clearstone’s (1.1 hectares: 10 hectares) - down to the use of different technology.
* Why not build a mound along the edge of the A179 to hide the site – insufficient land available.
* What community benefit will accrue from the development? For example, the repair to the Chare wall, a gate for the car park – to be discussed at a later stage.

He informed that Reliance Energy was to hold a public meeting on Tuesday 18th October at the Village Hall, 2.00 -7.00pm and all households would receive a flier in advance. Their aim was to submit a planning application in early November.

Mr. Christensen was thanked for his attendance, as were his on-line colleagues, and left the meeting.

1. **Public Forum:** No members of the public were present, but the Clerk informed of receipt of a letter from a resident requesting support for regular meetings to keep people informed of the rapidly changing energy situation. She also informed Councillors of an opportunity to work with Hartlepower, to organise an event that would cover more than just energy costs, and was asked to keep the resident informed of these plans.
2. **Apologies**: Apologies had been received from Cllrs Littlefair and Parker – both accepted. The Clerk informed of the resignation of Cllr Simmons, with immediate effect. Cllr Britcliffe expressed, on behalf of colleagues, both his sadness and understanding of her reasons, and wished to put on record the Council’s appreciation for all the work she had undertaken since joining the Parish Council. This expression was warmly endorsed by all present. Ward Cllrs Cassidy, Cook and Leedham had also submitted apologies. **Action:** Clerk to send Mrs. Simmons flowers and Thankyou card from PC, and inform HBC of her resignation.
3. **Declarations of Interest**: None made
4. **Police Report**: No police in attendance nor report received.The Clerk was requested to inform Inspector, and also the Police & Crime Commissioner.
5. **Minutes of Meeting held on 11th July 2022:** Cllr Britcliffe proposed and Cllr Park seconded the adoption of the minutes. All present being in agreement, it was r**esolved** to accept the draft Minutes a true record.
6. **Matters Arising**: (a) ***Car Park gate-*** Cllr Park had consulted residents of Magdalene Drive as requested; all approved of the gate suggestion, although only 3 written responses had been received, however, concerns had been expressed about residents being responsible for opening and closing a manual gate. Whilst Councillors present agreed a planning application should be made for a gate, it was **agreed to defer** this until after the October meeting, when the matter could be discussed more fully, as it will need commitment from residents. (b) ***Access to field from car park*** – Cllr Littlefair had approached the school about this; the school were not hopeful but had agreed to submit the request to the Trustees - no formal response as yet. (c) ***Quote for*** ***Chare Wall works specification*** – the Clerk reported receipt of a quote from RNJ, of just under £7,000. This was felt to be acceptable, but the contract could not yet be issued as only 45% of the funding had as yet been secured. (d***) Charter*** – the Clerk reported that progress was slow, the last scheduled meeting had been cancelled due to the death of the Queen. The Parish representatives had been asked to collate a wish list for the Charter and HBC were to do the same; as yet, nothing had been received from HBC although the Parish list had been submitted over 2 weeks ago. Councillors expressed the need to move things on yet were still adamant that a Charter was needed. **Actions:** Clerk to add car park gate to next agenda, to respond to RNJ accordingly and forward quote to Cllr Park.
7. **Civility and Respect Project:** The Clerk had circulated information on this issue in advance of the meeting. She informedthat for some years now there had been growing concern across England that many Clerks and even some Councillors were being bullied or harassed by Councillors, with many becoming ill, or even leaving the profession as a result; the situation had become so serious that both NALC and SLCC had carried out surveys into this escalating issue. They had set up a joint Project which had led to them to request that Councils pledge to commit to standing up for civility and respect in their councils. They were now asking Councils across England to sign a pledge which would commit them to the following:

* Undertaking recommended training for Clerks, Chairpersons and Councillors
* Having a Dignity at Work Policy
* Following good practice in employment
* Having good governance
* Continuing to lobby for change in legislation (including sanctions)
* Calling out bullying and harassment when it happens
* Seeking professional help at early stages of a problem
* Learning from best practice.

Whilst the Clerk recognised that there was not a problem with this issue within Hart Parish Council, but as we were asking the Borough Council to sign up to the pledge, as part of the move towards a Charter, she felt it only right that the parish councils do the same. All present concurred with the request and Cllr Britcliffe proposed, with Cllr Quarmby seconding, that Hart Parish Council sign the Pledge; this was unanimously supported and it was **resolved** that Hart Parish Council would sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge. **Action:** Clerk to sign up immediately on behalf of the Parish Council.

1. **Chairman’s Report:** Cllr Britcliffe reported that he had spoken with Cllr Littlefair in advance of the meeting and could report on his behalf, as follows:

* The keys to the main gate to the field will also open the car park gate but must not be used for this.
* There were still a couple of boxes of Jubilee mugs remaining, Cllr Littlefair proposed these be given to the children who attend the Hart Toddler Group. **All concurred**.
* He had, on behalf of the Parish Council, signed the Civic Book of Condolence for the Queen, attended the proclamation of the new King and had attended the Civic Church Service held in Hart.

Cllr Britcliffe thanked the Clerk for organising the framed photograph of the Queen, Book of Condolence and flowers placed in the church for residents to sign, and the photographs and words of condolence on the parish notice boards, which several residents had commended.

1. **Ward Councillors’ Report:** No report received.
2. **Maintenance Committee Report**: Cllr Park had circulated the report before the meeting. Key points to note –
3. Traffic calming measures – nothing yet
4. Flooding – road to the Fens and at the roundabout on the A170, Burns Close and Butts Lane.
5. The steps off the public footpath between Clevecoat Walk and Front Street
6. Lamp post on A179, that came down in November, still not replaced and thus there is no lighting at the crossroads.
7. Hedges from Nine Acres into the village, and on the road to The Fens were badly overgrown, forcing pedestrians into the road.

**Action:** Clerk to forward to Kieran Bostock.

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

**Receipts: £ Payments: £**

Interest 0.79 Bank charges (June, July & August) 19.00 Affordable Landscapes (grass cutting) 1,713.60

D.M. Ireland (repayment for toner, photos, flowers for Queen) 117.00

D.M. Ireland (repayment of website hosting & domain name) 193.27

D.M. Ireland (salary July – September) 607.28

HMRC (PAYE) 151.82

**Total 0.79 2,836.97**

The Clerk informed that she had received a letter from HMRC fining the Parish Council £100 for non-payment of PAYE as at July. Fortunately, she always kept a receipt of PAYE submissions made via PAYE Tools, and had informed HMRC by letter that not only had the payment had been made before the end of June and cleared through the bank, but she enclosed a copy of the PAYE submission showing receipt by HMRC.

1. **Correspondence**: (i) HBC- Parish Councillor Induction Training, 5.30pm, Wednesday 28th September at Civic Centre – Cllr Parker now unable to attend due to Covid. (II) Statkraft – deferring attendance at October meeting until later date – Councillors noted strong opposition to this development was already being heard.
2. **Planning Applications:**

**H/2022/0219 – 12, Manor Park Gardens, Hart –** No objection

**H/2022/0265 – Thorpe Bulmer Farm, Butts Lane, Hart –** No objection

**H/2021/0312 – Land near Sheraton Hall Farm, Sheraton – Appeal against planning refusal –** Fully support HBC’s refusal – refreshing to see their stance on development in this rural location.

**H/2022/0316 - 4, Buckingham Avenue, Hart** – No comment

**H/2022/0247** – **4, The Darlings, Hart -** No objection.

1. **Matters of Concern to Councillors**: None raised. All encouraged to seek a replacement for Cllr Simmons.
2. **Date of next Meeting of the Parish Council:** 6.45pm Monday 10th October 2022 at Hart Village Hall.

*Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45 pm*