

# **HARTLEBURY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

## **MINUTES OF MEETING –Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017 - New Elizabethan School**

**Present:** Councillors Sheridan Tranter (Chair), Sandra Hickman (Vice-Chair) Caroline Boughton-Thomas, Lesley Cleaver, Neil Davis, Jan Hipkins, Eve Jones, Tanya Kirk and David Simons.

**In Attendance:** C/Cllr Peter Tomlinson, Neil Gulliver (Parish Clerk) and 12 members of the public.

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Wendy Abercrombie (work), Doug Ingram and Laura Meredith and D/Cllr Nigel Dowty (all holiday).

### **2. Minutes**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 were proposed by Sandra Hickman, seconded by David Simons and agreed unanimously.

### **3. Report by the Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Sheridan Tranter**

Good evening ladies, gentlemen; welcome to the Hartlebury Annual Parish Meeting for 2016-17 here in north Worcestershire. As mentioned at last year's meeting, we all agreed that April would be a better time to hold this annual meeting as this is more in line with our actual year end.

I am delighted to report that this year has seen many achievements, and some excellent work carried out by both Parish Councillors and our many volunteers, for which we should all be very proud. Yes, there have been challenges as well, but we have approached those by productive discussions and sound judgements.

The majority of the Councillors on the Parish Council have now been working together for the last 23 months and we feel that we are working exceptionally well together and making real progress. We are also delighted that we have been joined by some new Councillors who have brought even more experience to your Council.

Cllr Murcott stepped down from the Council in June of last year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his invaluable contribution whilst working with us.

We have also had a change of Clerk - Brian Gale retired in December after 2 years' service and we would like to thank him for all of his support during that time, particularly when many of us were new to the Parish Council. However, I am delighted that we have recruited a new Clerk, Neil Gulliver, who is excelling in the role and we were very pleased when he agreed to join us. He is doing a great deal behind the scenes, much of which goes unseen.

It has also been a year of loss – our County Council representative, Maurice Broomfield, sadly passed away last year. Cllr Broomfield worked tirelessly and made a significant contribution to this and the wider community over the last 49 years and we would like to extend our condolences to all of his family.

This meeting provides an opportunity to highlight some of our major milestones and achievements over the last 12 months.

I was delighted to be re-elected as Chair in May last year, with Cllr Sandra Hickman as Vice-Chair, and I would like to thank Cllr Hickman for all of her support during a very busy 12 months.

We have continued to make changes to the financial structure of the Parish Council, including financial regulations and how finances are dealt with, and to ensure that we have the correct level

of reserves at all times. Also we are looking to put in place a more robust system for when external groups request funding. Our thanks should go to Cllr Lesley Cleaver for all of her efforts in this area – she has done a wonderful job in pulling all of this together.

One of our biggest successes last year was the production of the Parish Plan, which was spearheaded with great enthusiasm by Cllr Hickman and other members of the sub-group.

A significant amount of work went into its production and I would encourage you all to take the time to read it – it is available on the Parish Council website and in print if required. It is an impressive document and goes a long way to showing the commitment and vision of the Council to improve the ‘life’ of this community. I would also like to thank all those who took the time to attend our focus groups and give us their feedback – we would not have been able to produce such an impressive document without that contribution, so thank you. It is very much ‘your’ document, and is something we will look to review and develop each year and we will continue to seek your feedback. Perhaps Cllr Hickman would like to say a few words about the Plan.

Cllr Hickman stated that when this Parish Council was formed in May 2015 one of the first tasks we set ourselves was to complete a Parish Plan. We believed that having both a Plan and Village Design Statement in place would be beneficial to the community in the future. We therefore set up a representative Steering Group, formed a plan of action, and set ourselves the ambitious target date for completion of June 2016. I reported at last year’s Annual Parish Meeting that we were on target to achieve this.

Building on the Community Survey, which had been a very comprehensive exercise carried out by the previous Council, we identified key stakeholders in the Parish and undertook a range of consultation events including:

- Public consultation event
- Young people’s questionnaire
- Interviews with local business owners
- Primary school project

After analysing all the feedback from this consultation process, key priorities for improvement in the Parish emerged. These improvements were categorised as Strategic Aims for Parish. These aims were then prioritised in order of urgency, by parishioners, at a public drop in event. The whole range of information was brought together and we are pleased to say, completed by our June target date.

Finally, following a six week public consultation period, when the draft plan was available on line and at a range of venues around the Parish, the Parish Council considered the feedback received, responded appropriately and then formally adopted Hartlebury’s Parish Plan and Village Design Statement. Wychavon District Council also adopted our plan earlier this year. The Plan is available on line on both the Hartlebury Parish and Wychavon websites, or in hard copy free of charge from the Post Office, the Clerk or any Councillor.

The Chairman then continued by stating that he would now like to reflect on some specific achievements during this year:

In June the Hartlebury Primary School gave a presentation of what they would like to see improved in the village, and this was incorporated into the Parish Plan – our thanks to them for taking the time to do this.

As mentioned earlier, in July we welcomed two new Parish Councillors, Tanya Kirk and Janice Hipkins, who have already proven their skills to the Council in a very short time both with the major projects we are working on and issues relating to policing and usage of the allotments.

I am delighted to report that a donation was agreed for the Cambian Elizabethan New School for letting us use their facilities for our Parish Council meetings - this was finalised in March of this year with the gift of a sensory chair for their sensory room.

After the sad passing of Cllr Broomfield last year, a new County Councillor was appointed, Peter Tomlinson DL, who has already helped us with his extensive knowledge and he has kindly given funds from the divisional fund to aid Hartlebury. Unfortunately all County Councillors are currently in purdah so they are unable to express a view until after the election in May, when Peter is standing again.

Last year I made the Parish Council aware of potential concerns over boundary changes and this was proven in October last year when we had a Public Meeting to relay the complex concerns over Wyre Forest District Council putting a motion to its council to change the local boundary. This meeting was well attended by the public, and we were also joined by our District Councillor and new County Councillor, Peter Tomlinson, and all agreed at that meeting that "we wish to stay with Wychavon District Council". Since that meeting, it has been shown by a national survey to be the third best place to live in Britain, so why would the Boundary Commission break them up? We are continuing to follow up this work.

In November, the Council's Scheme of Delegation was adjusted due to the completion of the Parish Plan. A Business Liaison Group has now been set up, and has held its first meeting, to look at how we can work better with local businesses in the Parish. This is an important area that has been overlooked for a number of years and we feel it is vital to recognise the contribution that they make to the area. We have to remember that this is also their community and we want to look at how we can work more effectively with them.

We have also formed a Parish Infrastructure Group to look at the best way to look after Council assets and how to fund the work needed.

You may have noticed that we have refurbished the playground area to make it a safer environment for children in the area. We worked closely with Biffa and they very generously offered the materials to get this work done. We are delighted that this work has been completed.

In February, work finally got started on the Talbot Pub – they are putting in the foundations for the building of 4 houses on the old car park. We are also keeping under review any work/degradation to the grade two listed building on that site and will keep you updated.

As you know, the incinerator is now in full testing mode and we continue to work closely with the Community Liaison Group and Mercia Waste. It has now been agreed in principle that two delegated representatives from Hartlebury will join the group and both of these individuals have particular skills and expertise of the project that will help challenge and debate some of the issues that come forward. This will be invaluable as we get closer to the operational phase and beyond.

It is with some sadness that approvals have been given for the demolition of the Old Hartlebury Garage – for those of us who have lived in this area for some considerable time will be sorry to see the historical erosion of an important Hartlebury building. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but we perhaps could have been done more a few years ago in recognising what English Heritage might have done to help us retain buildings of note. We will be mindful of this in the future.

We are delighted that major funding has now been given towards the Hartlebury Community Project and I would like to invite Cllr Hickman to provide further information on this.

Cllr Hickman informed the meeting that, in order to focus on a Strategic Aim which had been identified as a high priority by parishioners, in August 2016 a representative steering group was yet again set up. The aim of this steering group was to complete the rather grandly named Hartlebury Sport, Recreation, Leisure and Parish Hall Development Project, or Hartlebury Community Project for short. Local residents told us at a consultation event that they were very keen for the New Homes Bonus Money to be spent on this project.

This ambitious, landmark project aims to improve the Parish Hall and transform the surrounding area.

To date we have been successful in raising just over £200,000 of funding, with the promise of another significant amount. Without doubt, having the Parish Plan in place helped support our funding applications.

The next step in our project is to appoint a Landscape Architect.

We already know a great deal about how local residents, of all ages, would like to see this area developed and everyone will have a further opportunity in the very near future to give us any further ideas they may have.

The Chairman continued by reporting that Cllr Neil Davis has met with Sam Fletcher, Drainage Engineer at Worcestershire County Council, and Barry Bennett, the Parish Lengthsman, to review the drainage arrangements across the parish. As a result it has been agreed that the following areas will be subject to drainage surveys – junction of Chadwick Lane and Titton Lane, north of the junction of Titton Lane and the A4025 and Quarry Bank. In addition two gully drains had been added to the monthly jetting schedule in Norchard. This will mean that our Lengthsman will have more time to deal with more pressing duties to help Hartlebury function better. Barry is most grateful for support in this area.

We also continue to provide support for the church by helping with funding for the cutting of the grass and maintenance of the clock.

So, we have achieved a great deal in this last year, but there is always still much more we want to do.

There are many issues that we will still need to address such as traffic issues (which I know concern many of you here), dog bins walkways, planning etc.

As you are aware the Council has been working on a number of projects:

- We may look at the possibility of developing a Neighbourhood Plan which could potentially provide additional funds for the Parish and also stipulate where new housing can be built.
- Smartwater is now close to fruition thanks to the work currently being done by our new Clerk. We need to carry out a final check on all the financial aspects to enable us to endorse the scheme and we will also use this scheme to engage more with you, our parishioners. We are keen to encourage more residents to become volunteers – again, if this is something you would like to do, please do come and talk to one of the Councillors or contact the Clerk.
- We may also set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme similar to that which operates in Ombersley which has proved to be very effective. Crime continues to be a key concern for all of us and we continue to work very closely with local police. They now regularly provide updates to us at our Parish Council meetings.
- There is also concern in Summerfield that Wyre Forest District Council want to allow building on the land that borders Hartlebury Parish. I want to reassure you that we intend fully engaging with residents in Summerfield to discuss this further.

We also undertook last year to carry out an informal review as to how your Parish Council is operating and to look at changes that might be beneficial to ensure it is as effective as possible.

We will soon look at how this review should be undertaken and who should be involved and lead such a review.

We continue to recognise the important work carried out by our many volunteers the tree wardens, the footpath officer, John Denby, who is unable to be with this evening (he is enjoying a well-

deserved break on a yacht in Antigua!). I also wish to thank those involved with the allotments, and to thank our Lengthsman, Barry, for all of his invaluable work.

I would like to finish this report with a few more thank-you's – first of all to Cllr Dowty, our District Councillor, for all of his work on behalf of the Parish Council. It is very much appreciated and finally I would like to thank you - all of my fellow Parish Councillors - for your support. I am confident that we have an excellent team and we can make a real difference to our community. We should be proud of what we have achieved so far, but I know we can achieve so much more.

#### **4. Manninge Charity Report by Mr Peter Holden, Chairman of Trustees**

Peter Holden reported that the Manninge Charity Trustees in post at the time of last year's report – Cllr Meredith, Mrs Greatbatch and himself - were joined by Cllr E Jones in April 2016, so this year we have been able to work with a full complement of four Trustees.

The Trustees met in April and August 2016, considering applications and making a grant during August to a parishioner in financial need.

There was a trustee meeting in January this year and the charity's usual process of advertising and plan for grant-making has been arranged, with the aim of receiving any applications before the end of June 2017. The Trustees aim to make another annual grant to a parishioner this summer.

The Trustees are grateful to Brian Gale for his able assistance with managing the charity's business during the year until he stepped down as Parish Council Clerk in December 2016.

#### **5. Any Other Business**

The following issues were raised by residents:

- Need for additional Tree Wardens to cover the parish.
- Concern about the parking problems at the primary school at the start and end of each school day.
- Need to encourage dog owners to clean up after their dogs. Possibly introduction of dog bag dispensers.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm

Signed.....(Chairman) Dated.....