

Minutes of the Hardwick Annual Parish Meeting
held on 4 May 2021 at 7.00 pm
held remotely via Zoom due to the current pandemic

Present: 16 parishioners including Parish Council members

In attendance: Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services)

Cllr Tony Gill presided.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from District Cllr Grenville Chamberlain, Mia Cassey, Carolyn Purser (WI) and Chris Fuller (Cricket Club)

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting on 21 May 2019

The minutes were approved as a true record and signed by Cllr Gill as Chairman. (Prop Pauline Joslin, 2nd Ashley Shepherd, unopposed)

3. Matters arising

None.

4. East-West Rail proposals

The Chairman reported on the consultation on the East-West Rail proposals which runs until 9 June. All residents had received a summary from EWR inviting comments. Two very active groups, CamBed RailRoad and Cambridge Approaches, were campaigning for EWR to consider the northern route into the north of Cambridge via Cambourne and Northstowe. Anthony Browne MP had held a series of meetings and was putting questions to Transport Minister Grant Shapps. The groups were campaigning for pressure to be put on EWR to give full consideration to both the northern and southern routes before reaching a decision. Comments were requested.

A resident reported that there was a great deal of activity in Caldecote to raise awareness and suggested approaching Caldecote Parish Council to see if there was any scope to work together on the response. Rev Alison Myers emphasised the importance of connections and travel between villages, such as doctors' surgeries, schools, and community groups, and urged that these links be taken into consideration to avoid villages becoming severed from each other. The resident referred to the system, used in Belgium and the Netherlands, which carries the railway in trenches, rather than on ugly embankments and flyovers. As none of the villages would want the line cutting through the middle of their village, it would be necessary to find the route that affected the minimum number of people. Another resident added that the trench system was proven technology but the cost was very high, and if excessive, the project might not proceed. It was suggested that the Parish Council should contact Caldecote Parish Council regarding the direction to take and look into the benefits of a joint approach.

5. Reports:

5.1 The Parish Council (Cllr Tony Gill, Chairman)¹

Cllr Gill's report is appended in full to these minutes. He reported that it had been a very difficult year for all groups, and extended thanks to all the Parish Councillors who had managed to meet remotely via Zoom and had dealt with remote meetings, closing play areas at short notice to comply with Government regulations. Thanks were expressed to Dean Wellbelove for erecting signage. It was concerning that the Egremont Road play area had to have its lock replaced several times as three locks had been vandalised.

The report highlighted:

- Consultations during the year

These included

1. The Local Plan Call for Sites for which several sites had been put forward in Hardwick.
2. The Cambourne to Cambridge busway and the current independent audit of the preferred route. Thanks were expressed to Alan Everitt for his hard work putting the Council's case.

3. The presentation by Countryside Properties on the Bourn Airfield development. The outline planning application had been submitted and approved by the Planning Committee.
4. The ongoing EWR consultation.
5. Two planning applications for the burnt out site had been withdrawn but another had just been submitted for two 1 bed and 3 2 bed flats with amended access and parking.

- Millers Way

The transfer of Millers Way from the developers, Persimmon, was currently at the Land Registry. The Parish Council is looking at resurfacing and installing lighting to improve the land once transferred.

- Meridian Fields

The development is nearing completion and the builders will be offsite by July. S106 money was coming through as trigger points were reached.

- St Neots Road

Development was under way. The entrance was completed and some roads had been put in. It was hoped the first houses would be built by the end of the year or early 2022. Councillors had been speaking to Hill regarding the Condition 28 obligations and had succeeded in getting more lights installed and some of the path extended. Alan Everitt was thanked for his efforts.

- Bus shelter lighting

Automatic solar powered lighting had been installed in the four bus shelters in St Neots Road.

- Community Centre

Cllr Rose was thanked for representing the Parish Council on the Working Group. The pre-planning consultations are taking place and a planning application will follow.

- Parish Council membership

Two councillors had joined during the year. Cllr Joolia was thanked for taking on the role of Webmaster, upgrading the website, and introducing new dedicated emails for the Councillors and Clerk, which contributed to better communications between the Parish Council and the village.

- Highways Working Group

Cllr Everitt had joined Cllr Joslin on the Highways Working Group, dealing with CCC Highways, traffic calming, and speed reduction measures. MVAS equipment had been purchased to collect speed data which is published on the website.

- The Parish Council had undertaken a great deal of activity, involving lengthy and split meetings, during the year.

5.2 Presentation of the last audited accounts²

Inspection of the last audited accounts, (year ending 31 March 2020) was invited. These are on the website and can be found via the following link: <http://www.hardwick-cambs.org.uk/documents/parishcouncil/finance/FY2020%20AGAR%20AUDITED%20ACCOUNTS%20HPC.pdf>. The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 would be considered at the next meeting and dates for public inspection would be published on the notice board and website in due course.

5.3 The District Councillor (Cllr Grenville Chamberlain)³

Cllr Chamberlain's report (appended in full) is also available on the website. This included:

- The Covid-19 pandemic.
- The burnt out building in St Neots Road.
- The East West Rail consultation.
- The Cambourne to Cambridge Transport Corridor.
- The Girton Interchange.

- The Bourn Airfield development.

5.4 The County Councillor

No report received. The Chairman explained that County Cllr Lina Nieto was not present as she was a candidate for re-election on Thursday and purdah applied.

5.5 Police

No report available.

5.6 Hardwick Sports and Social Club⁴

The report from the Hardwick Sports and Social Club, (appended in full), was read by Chris Cracknell. The Club operates on a not for profit basis as a co-operative for the benefit of its members. The report covered: the background and legal status of the Club, including the lease, licences held, and management committee and sub-committee and the membership, fees, and activities. Membership has increased over the years but closure due to Covid has had an impact on income.

The Club supports sports and other community activities and charities. Details of the clubs and teams normally meeting at HSSC were outlined but they had not been able to meet during the pandemic.

Improvements had taken place during the year including the refurbishment of both bars. A survey in November identified work needed on the roof and damp ingress, which is pending, and three external doors were replaced, improving the appearance.

Lindsey Haynes took over as Club Manager in November 2018. The Club offers a warm welcome to its members and all who attend. The Club is used by diverse age groups.

The past 15 months have been very challenging due to closure because of Covid, which has had an effect on income. The Parish Council was thanked for its support and for suspending the rent payments until business returned to normal and District Cllr Chamberlain was thanked for his help in accessing grant support for the hospitality industry.

The Club reopened on 16 April, just serving members outside, but it has only opened on a limited basis on Friday to Sunday afternoons, and subject to the weather it can be necessary to cancel opening at short notice. It was hoped that from 17 May members would be able to meet indoors again, albeit subject to limited numbers and social distancing.

5.7 Hardwick Community Association⁵

Anne Jones read the report of the Community Association (appended in full). This has been in existence since 1979 but has not been very active during the year due to Covid. There have been three meetings, two of which were held via Zoom. Two groups had received financial support, namely the Dragon Fencing Group for kit and the Cabin at St Mary's for the first year's subscription to the online booking system. The Parent and Toddler group had disbanded due to lack of a Committee and the funds have been transferred to the Community Association in the hope that a new group will form. The affiliation fees have been waived since April 2020 as the school facilities have not been available for use. Details of the officers and the 15 affiliated groups were provided. The next meeting will be on 16 September at 7 pm.

A suggestion was made that the Cabin at St Mary's might be an alternative venue for a future Parish Council meeting; the Council will consider this in due course.

Mrs Jones also explained that the Community Association would only continue while community activities were held at the School, as when the new Community Centre was open there would be a new Community Centre Management Committee.

5.8 Hardwick Happenings⁶

Jeff Jones's report (appended in full) outlined changes to the timing of the issues in summer. There continue to be eight issues per year but now there will be one issue for June/July and one for August/September. The magazine aims for independence, balance and quality, reflecting the liveliness and variety of the community. Thanks were expressed for the huge input and content received and to the distributors. Due to increased printing costs and delivery to additional houses, along with Covid concerns, an application for financial support was made to the Parish Council which approved a grant of £1000 in November and £2000 in April. The print run had to be increased twice during the year and it will also be necessary to increase advertising charges from the October 2021 issue. The Parish Council was thanked for its continued support.

5.9 Webmaster

Cllr Joolia had taken on the role of Webmaster and gave a verbal report. He had focused on keeping the site regularly updated and improving the visual appearance of the site. There is a Parish Council section but the rest of the site is for the whole village. An upgrade to a new web platform was under way. The content will be migrated to the new site which will then go live. It was hoped that more groups would become involved in providing more visual content, especially photographs. Hardwick Happenings was added to the website regularly. A resident congratulated Cllr Joolia for informing the community what the Parish Council was doing and for comments from the Parish Council on Facebook. Cllr Joolia thanked Cllr Everitt for his input as part of the Communications Working Group.

5.10 Village Plan Committee

Mia Cassey's apologies, and report that the group had not formally met or discharged any business since publication of the Plan report, were noted.

5.11 Neighbourhood Plan report

Cllr Gill explained that the production of a Neighbourhood Plan had not gone any further and was held in abeyance while the Village Plan was being produced, and also due to the considerable amount of work needed to progress this matter.

5.12 Hardwick Community Centre Working Group⁷

The report from Alan West, Chairman of the HCCWG, which is appended in full to these minutes, was read by the Minutes Secretary in his absence. The group had progressed the project to pre-application discussions prior to submitting a full planning application. Public meetings had been held and information shared with the village. The Centre will be built on the Multi-use Games Area. Plans and elevations had been produced. Ongoing discussions have been focused on rising costs and seeking grants for energy efficiency; discussions going forward will also cover landscaping options; parking options; CCTV and public meetings to discuss how the Centre should best be run for the benefit of all residents. The Centre would offer multi-use spaces of various sizes, a café, library IT area, multi-use medical room and officials' changing rooms for sports matches, reflecting the range of the most popular facilities highlighted by residents at village open evenings.

The Chairman added that the architect had attended a recent Parish Council meeting and answered questions.

5.13 Hardwick Scouts and Guides⁸

Jane Muncey reported that it had been a difficult year due to Covid. The Guides and Rainbows had continued to meet via Zoom and some outdoor meetings, completing challenges and badges. Activities and games had to be adapted so they could be carried out via Zoom. Girlguiding had recently allowed open air and indoor meetings subject to risk assessments. Mrs Muncey also expressed thanks to the Parish Council on behalf of the Scouts for the grant made towards fencing. The Scout leaders had also carried out work behind the hut to create a good safe open area for outdoor meetings.

5.14 St Mary's Church⁹

Rev Alison Myers read the report from St Mary's Church which is appended in full to these minutes. She paid tribute to the village community for its creativity during Covid. The report covered the registration of St Mary's Church with the Charity Commissioners in 2020 as it was no longer exempt; a copy of the annual report and accounts was available from the Charity Commission. Details of the organisation and governance, including the executive team and teams of working groups and volunteers, and the meetings held were outlined.

The greatest achievement last year was the completion of the Cabin at St Mary's. Thanks were expressed to all those who assisted and donated to the project. The Cabin was already enhancing village life and the surrounding site, attracting walkers and enabling people to meet outside in the churchyard. The Cabin is currently being used for various support groups alongside more general use and will open up a bit more when restrictions allow. The Church is now open every day and was open as much as possible during lockdown, subject to risk assessments and cleaning. A plant stall and book swap had been introduced.

The Church community had supported older and shielding members of the community during the year and through Hardwick Network had helped with meal deliveries and telephone calls.

Pippins the Community Café had distributed treat boxes at Christmas. There is a Foodbank drop-off point in the Church porch for contributions to the school's food hampers and the Cambridge Foodbank.

Emotional and spiritual support was continued and faith based resources were distributed, both printed materials and also online through You Tube and podcasts being available on the website. Funerals had been difficult during the last year but were hosted at the Church or the Crematorium.

Details of the financial position were outlined although fundraising had not been possible. Some money had been spent on repairs to the building.

The Chairman expressed appreciation to the Church for providing a focal point and being a great support to the village during the year.

5.15 Hardwick Evangelical Church including Hardwick Youth club¹⁰

Steve Gaze reported on behalf of the Hardwick Evangelical Church. He clarified that the Youth Club did not run any more following the departure of the Youth Worker, and it was still not possible to meet in person for Church services. Services have continued on Zoom and have been live streamed on You Tube and later Facebook. Numbers have remained consistent or even increased. The Church helped to set up Hardwick Network, which had been co-ordinated by Ruth Enge (not part of the Church) – a hero of the village during the lockdown. Christmas activities included building the outdoor Nativity scene, small groups of carol singers and recordings of a Christmas carol and a Nativity video narrated by children. Christmas hampers were provided for families. An Easter Garden was built near the School. Pastoral support has been given for residents during this difficult period.

5.16 Hardwick Network

No report received.

5.17 Hardwick WI¹¹

Carolyn Purser's report (appended in full) was read by the Chairman. Meetings had continued via Zoom and there had been a wide variety of speakers. Details of the meetings were outlined. Carolyn Purser had taken over from Anne Jones who had stood down as president. Planned social activities and fundraising activities were unable to proceed, but some smaller gatherings were possible within the restrictions when permitted. Numbers have remained consistent and have provided a social network. Thanks were expressed to Anne Jones for her encouragement. It is hoped in person meetings will resume by September.

5.18 Hardwick Play Parks

Clare McGowan reported that the final stage of the Play Park was completed in 2020. Benches were installed in March. She asked whether the residual funds at the bank should be returned to the Parish Council for maintenance costs or whether they should be used for the refurbishment of the skate park or improving the Church play area. This will be an agenda item for the May Parish Council meeting. Ms McGowan thanked the Council for the opportunity to work on the project which had very enjoyable and it was a pleasure to see the equipment so well used. She and her group were thanked for all their hard work.

5.19 3rd Hardwick Brownies

No report received. Jane Muncey reported that new leaders had taken over the Brownies and Rainbows.

5.20 Hardwick School

No report received.

5.21 Hardwick Pre-School

No report received.

5.22 Hardwick Mothers and Toddlers Group

The group had disbanded.

5.23 Hardwick Litter Picking Volunteers¹²

Pat Portlock reported and her written report is appended. The group has not done a litter pick for over a year but a resident of St Neots Road regularly carried out litter picking independently in St Neots Road and Ms Portlock had given her some equipment provided by

SCDC. The Chairman expressed appreciation to her for her hard work on behalf of the Parish Council and requested that thanks be conveyed to her. Ms Portlock had approached the Guides to see if they and the Scouts would like to become involved in litter picking to earn badges. Parents had also approached her and if interested, residents should contact her for the loan of litter picks, hi-vis jackets, gloves and bin bags. SCDC kindly collected the rubbish left by the red dog bin in St Neots Road.

5.24 Speedwatch¹³

Alan Everitt as Speedwatch Co-ordinator reported that Speedwatch works on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Police, who had asked them not to carry out speed checks after March 2020 and those instructions have only recently been lifted. There are 10 volunteers. Thanks were expressed to the Parish Council for funding the new Speedwatch equipment, which had been erected on a post. These “flashers” are moved around the village every month and the data has shown that there is a great deal of disrespect for the village and the law as all the locations are recording high speeds above the limit, particularly St Neots Road and Cambridge Road. Details of the speed statistics were given. The Parish Council was also thanked for supporting the application for Local Highways Initiative funding for speed reducing measures. He thanked Cllr Joslin for her support. Speedwatch can resume from 1 May, but the “flashers” are in place continuously. Thanks were also expressed to Paul Crinson for moving the “flashers” from one location to another. The report is appended in full to these minutes.

5.25 Neighbourhood Watch¹⁴

Ashley Shepherd, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, gave the report which is appended in full to these minutes. There are now just over 60 members. The group is often contacted for advice, which is available to all, and not confined to crime. Thanks were expressed to Hardwick Happenings for printing the articles and giving the contact details for the Police. The group has continued to pass on any information to the Police and has received information and monthly reports which are passed to the street co-ordinators and members. The aim is to ensure the village is a safe and caring place. Thanks were expressed to everyone for their community spirit over the last year.

5.26 Hardwick Climate Action Group

No report received.

5.27 Other

Hardwick Cricket Club¹⁵

Chris Fuller’s report (appended) was read by the Minutes Secretary in his absence. He thanked the Parish Council for its financial support enabling the Club to get the cricket nets in operation. Bookings were high. The numbers of juniors were increasing with two teams running. Finances were boosted by parental support, the ECB and grants. The club intends to keep a presence in Hardwick and it is hoped that the recreation ground could again be used for cricket, juniors or lower teams, subject to sufficient volunteers.

6. **Applications for awards of small grants to projects for improvements to the village**

None. The Chairman highlighted that the grants scheme was still open to groups to apply by completing an application form and submitting it to the parish Council.

7. **Any other Parish Matters including any resolutions**

A resident asked whether the speed device could be set up along Limes Road. It was suggested that Speedwatch could cover this area with a device on a tripod.

Another resident thanked the Chairman for chairing the meeting and all the work he does for the village in the role, of which residents were perhaps unaware.

The Chairman commented that even though this had been a very difficult year for many, the village had pulled together to help each other where they could and had volunteered for a great deal of work to make the best of the last 12 months. There was now light at the end of the tunnel and it was hoped that the Hardwick Party would take place in September where everyone could get together.

8. **Closure of meeting**

Residents were thanked for attending.

There was no further business and the meeting was declared closed at 9.10 pm.

Signed _____(Chairman) _____(Date)

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- ¹ Parish Council Chairman's report from Cllr Tony Gill
 - ² Audited accounts FY 2020
 - ³ Report of the District Councillor – Cllr Grenville Chamberlain
 - ⁴ Report from Hardwick Sports and Social Club – Chris Cracknell
 - ⁵ Report of the Community Association – Anne Jones
 - ⁶ Report from Hardwick Happenings – Jeff Jones
 - ⁷ Report from Hardwick Community Centre Working Group – Alan West
 - ⁸ Reports of Hardwick Scouts and Guides – Jane Muncey
 - ⁹ Report from St Mary's Church – Rev Alison Myers
 - ¹⁰ Report from Hardwick Evangelical Church – Steve Gaze
 - ¹¹ Report of the WI – Anne Jones
 - ¹² Report of Hardwick Litter Picking Volunteers – Pat Portlock
 - ¹³ Speedwatch report – Alan Everitt
 - ¹⁴ Report of Hardwick Neighbourhood Watch – Ashley Shepherd
 - ¹⁵ Report from the Cricket Club – Chris Fuller

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