

Hardwick Parish Council
Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 17 April 2024 at 7.00 pm
Held at The Cabin at St Mary's, Hardwick

Present: Councillors: A Gill (Chairman), J Armisen, B Coxall, J Dabrowski, P Joslin, C Phillips and S Rose.

In attendance: 1 member of the public and Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services)

Open public session including reports from the County and District Councillors

None.

1. To receive apologies for absence and to note resignation

Apologies were received from Cllr Rangadurai (out of parish). Cllr Cirillo's resignation had been received.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 To receive declarations of interests from Cllrs on items on the agenda and details of dispensations held

Cllr Joslin declared an interest in item 7.4 as a member of Hardwick Climate Action Group.

Cllr Gill declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7.2 as a Trustee, Guarantor and Director member of the Hardwick Community Centre Charity.

Cllr Rose declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7.2 as a Trustee, Guarantor and Director member of the Hardwick Community Centre Charity

2.2 To receive written requests for dispensation and grant any as appropriate for items on this agenda

None received.

3. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting on 20 March

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 20 March be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record. (Prop CP, 2nd BC, carried with 6 in favour and 1 abstention)

4. Matters arising or deferred from the last or previous meetings for discussion/decision

4.1 (4.1) LHI 2021-2022 village entrance features – to note breakdown of costs

RESOLVED as Cllr Joslin reported that that more detail of the cost breakdown was required so that the Parish Council could decide what it would like to see introduced for the money available that she should contact Josh Rutherford of CCC and ask for a breakdown of the cost of the gates and signage, and the markers on the ground which should be there in addition to the central island.

RESOLVED that Cllr Joslin should report back to the next meeting.

4.2 (4.2) Ruts on access road to St Mary's POS including protection of the village green – report on meeting with landowner and to consider quotation for removable bollards

RESOLVED to receive the Chairman's verbal report on his and Cllr Coxall's meeting with Caroline Chivers who had indicated a wish to widen the entrance to the track from Main Street, as there was not enough room for the farm vehicles to turn into the entrance easily especially when vehicles were coming the other way. She would be willing to widen the track for part of the way, and had also offered to fill in the gap between the edge of the track and the grass verge with hardcore covered with grass or soil, up to the edge of the track.

RESOLVED, noting that a formal process would need to be followed if any change to the use of the Parish Council's land was required to check the process and regulations

for seeking advice from the appropriate authorities, and as appropriate inform Ms Chivers of the procedure.

RESOLVED, having considered the revised quotation for the bollards, to install only the ten bollards already ordered for the time being, and not to proceed with the contractors' suggestion of installing ten more bollards or their suggested alternative of a post and rail fence, and not to go ahead with installing removable bollards at this time.

RESOLVED that the bollards should be installed right up against the edge of the track, rather than set back two metres from the track as suggested by the contractors, commencing at the western end of the play area and continuing at 8 foot intervals until all ten have been installed, in order to comply with the safety requirements raised by RoSPA and to enable people to walk to the play area safely. (Prop AG, 2nd JD, carried with 6 in favour and 1 abstention)

4.3 (4.3) To consider parking at the Church – to consider quotation for signage if received
RESOLVED, as the quotation had not yet been received, to defer this item to the next meeting.

4.4 (4.4) To consider any update on the costs for pedestrian islands (PHFI)
RESOLVED to receive Cllr Joslin's verbal report that the costs of the scheme had increased from £54,798.41 plus VAT to £76,289.55, and that a road closure was planned. Furthermore, the second £54,000 contribution from Hill had not yet been received, as CCC were still waiting for Hill to give permission to pass the funds on to the Parish Council, and costs had risen over time.

RESOLVED that the Highways Working Group should write to CCC to express the Parish Council's concerns and disappointment that despite its acceptance of the original costs and subsequently revised costs, the price of the project had again increased, and to seek an explanation of what had caused the costs to escalate. The Parish Council had accepted the costs at the quoted amount and had not budgeted for a further £20,000+ in increased costs. The Parish Council believes that it has been unfairly treated and needs to protect the village finances. The letter should ask CCC to come back with a solution as to how the shortfall should be met and also inform CCC that a road closure is not feasible due to St Neots Road being a bus route and local businesses need daily access.

4.5 (4.5) Lighting on St Neots Road – to consider survey if received
RESOLVED to note that despite chasing Balfour Beatty, the survey had not yet been received, and to defer this item to the next meeting.

4.6 (4.7) Street light maintenance – to consider revised quotations if received
RESOLVED having considered correspondence from two contractors, given that the number of lights is potentially going to increase in the future, to write to K&M Lighting Services to ask them to provide a quotation for a price per light for 1-5, 5-10 and 10-15 lights for 1 year, and to defer this item to the next meeting.
RESOLVED to ask SCDC when the £15,000 due for lighting along Main Street for the benefit of Meridian Fields is to be received.

4.7 (4.8) Review of website operations
RESOLVED, noting that Cllr Dabrowski had only received some of the passwords required to manage the website from the previous webmaster, that the provision of new email addresses, the management of email accounts and the payment of the annual subscription should be the responsibility of the Clerk, and that the Clerk

should facilitate the transfer when there is a change of Webmaster. (Prop JD, 2nd SR, unanimous)

4.8 (4.9) Neighbourhood Planning – update and to consider the next steps
RESOLVED, as nothing further had been heard, to defer this item to the next meeting.

4.9 (5.1 of 15/11/23) Archiving of old Parish Council papers – purchase of display cabinet

RESOLVED, noting the price of the display cabinet, that Cllr Rose should check with Alan Everitt whether the cabinet is the correct size.

RESOLVED to check that the School is happy to have the framed print of the map and Inclosure Award displayed in the School foyer. The items will remain in the Parish Council's ownership.

On a proposition by the Chairman, the meeting was briefly suspended to enable a resident who had recently arrived to speak.

Open public session including reports from the County and District Councillors

A resident of Capstone Fields expressed concerns about issues with cracks and potential structural damage to their property. The resident asked the Parish Council's advice as Hill had said that they wished to monitor the position for a further 5-6 months. The Chairman explained that this was not a matter within the Parish Council's remit, but suggested that the resident pursue the issue through the NHBC scheme and approach the SCDC planning department for details of the plans and building regulations.

5. Finance, risk assessment and procedural matters

5.1 To consider any quotes for urgent work required because of risk and the Clerk's use of delegated powers

None.

5.2 To receive play areas and skate park inspection reports and consider if any work is required

RESOLVED to receive the reports.

RESOLVED in response to Cllr Armisen report that there was litter placed around the bin at the skate park and in the area near the cricket nets to ask the litter picker to check these areas and ensure that the litter is removed.

5.3 To receive the financial report and approve the payment of bills

RESOLVED that the payments as listed as below in the finance report should be paid, plus James Wakeling (notice board) £380.00 and The Cabin (Room hire) £24.00, and that the payments be authorised by Cllrs Phillips and Coxall. (Prop SR, 2nd JD, unanimous)

Salaries	£1004.80
RH Landscapes (Grass cutting)	£439.50
CAPALC (Affiliation fee)	£708.67
LGS Services (Admin support)	£1391.98
Defib machines (Cabinet)	£636.00

Credits, including bank and investment interest, were noted.

The clarification of the interest payment from Cambridge and Counties Bank was noted.

RESOLVED, noting that the precept and S106 money were due to be received in the next few weeks, that the Clerk should set up a transfer to the deposit account when the funds come in and notify the Chairman that the money needs to be transferred so that this can be authorised at the bank. (Prop SR, 2nd JD, unanimous)

On a proposition by the Chairman, it was agreed to vary the order of business to take items 7.2 and 7.1 next.

7.2 Community Centre update

Cllr Rose circulated a spreadsheet showing a comparison of the costs for the project at the outset, and the costs for a reduced footprint. The Working Group had been unsuccessful in finding ways to reduce the construction costs or increase income, so had considered reducing the footprint by 40%. However, given that reducing the footprint of the building by 40% had not reduced the costs commensurately, the Working Group had concluded that the costs were still unaffordable. Possible contributory factors were briefly discussed.

Options considered by the Working Group included: re-tendering for a reduced building, which could later be extended, and might avoid a major new planning application; new plans for a lower specification building with budgeting based on the funds available rather than borrowing, and without a contingency; using a different tender mechanism such as Design and Build or two phase costing; or building a smaller hall and modifying the Pavilion.

With regard to the option for a Design and Build tender, the Clerk's advice was noted, namely that a Design and Build specification should be added to the Contracts Finder website, as the project was over the threshold requiring open tender, and it was permissible to speak to builders other than those recommended by the architects at the same time as the contract was on the Contracts Finder list, subject to the same information being provided.

Possible options were discussed and the pros and cons considered. It was noted that any new tenders might be equally costly, and that there was a danger of losing desired features of the building, or coming up against future changes in planning legislation.

RESOLVED that Cllr Rose should arrange a meeting with the architects to ask them whether it would be possible to achieve a building for £1.5M and what features it would have; whether the architects knew of any other builders to approach; and whether the Council could give an update to the village outlining the situation and the options, and asking residents to come forward with ideas.

RESOLVED that Cllrs Gill, Rose and Dabrowski should attend the meeting and that Cllr Rose and Alan West should draft and circulate a village update which could be placed on Facebook in due course.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council should consider a building cost of £1.5M without any initial borrowing, and borrowing should not be part of the contract. The Council should consider borrowing only if it became necessary to meet a contingency and changes were necessary.

RESOLVED that Cllr Armisen should approach some contacts without commitment to explore whether they would be open to considering the project, sharing only information already in the public domain.

Cllr Armisen left the meeting at 9.27 pm.

7.1 New Housing Developments and Planning Obligations

It was noted that Hill had not proposed a meeting with the public.

The Local Plan had been delayed but a public meeting will be held.

6. To consider any planning applications and decision notices and tree works applications

6.1 Planning applications and appeals

6.1.1 24/00994/LBC – 26 Main Street – Repairs to the existing garden wall running from the garage/parking area to the right hand side of the entrance doorway including the addition of weep holes along the length of the wall, re-pointing of the minor cracks.

reinforcement of the major cracks and the construction of 3 brick buttresses on independent foundations

RESOLVED to support the application. (Prop AG, 2nd CP, unanimous)

6.2 SCDC decision and appeal notices and correspondence

6.2.1 24/00492/HFUL – 2 Sudeley Grove – Retrospective two storey side extension and single storey rear extension – Permission granted by SCDC.

6.2.2 24/00157/FUL – 323 St Neots Road – Erection of a dwelling and garage – Permission granted by SCDC.

6.3 Tree works applications

6.3.1 24/0319/TTCA – St Mary’s Church, Main Street

RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objections.

7. **Members’ reports and items for information only**

7.1 New Housing Developments and Planning Obligations

Taken earlier.

7.2 Community Centre update

Taken earlier.

7.3 Highways Working Group report

Nothing further to report.

7.4 Bramley Way natural planting and surround grass area maintenance schedule request from HCAG

RESOLVED to ensure that the contractor is aware that the central part of the green area in Bramley Way should always be cut, as detailed in the contract, but the two small triangular areas should not be cut until mid-July when HCAG will gather up the hay for composting, and they should be cut by the contractor thereafter.

8. **To consider any correspondence/communications received requiring formal noting by or a decision of the Council**

8.1 Hill – Offer of Public Open Space and Maintenance sum for Capstone Fields public open spaces for both 155 houses and 23 houses

RESOLVED before responding to the offer from Hill to check whether the Parish Council is expected to take on responsibility for the attenuation pond and metal grilles where water enters and goes into a large dip in the ground in Parcel A..

RESOLVED also to check that the calculations for the amounts have been done in the same way as for Meridian Fields.

RESOLVED to note that the installation of the four lights for Millers Way will be carried out after May, as discussed at the Liaison Meeting, when the developers were reminded about this matter.

8.2 SCDC – Parish Indemnity agreement, Capstone Fields for play, sports and allotments/orchard contributions – to appoint two councillors to sign the agreement

RESOLVED that Cllrs Gill and Rose be appointed to sign the indemnity agreement on the Council’s behalf. (Prop SR, 2nd CP, carrier with 6 in favour and 1 abstention)

8.3 CCC – Comberton Greenway - invitation to meeting

RESOLVED to respond that 24 April is convenient for the Parish Council and that Cllrs Gill, Rose and Dabrowski will attend.

8.4 SCDC Zero Carbon Communities grant applications and workshop

RESOLVED to note that Cllr Joslin had forwarded the information to the Hardwick Climate Action Group.

RESOLVED that a proposal^(JD) that the Council considers whether solar panels on the Pavilion might be of benefit to HSSC should be an agenda item for the next meeting, along with consideration of the arrangements for dealing with any excess electricity generated.

8.6 SCDC – Consultation on changes to Street Trading Policy 2024

RESOLVED that the Parish Council had no comments.

8.7 SCDC – Consultation on review of Gambling Act Policy

RESOLVED that the Parish Council had no comments.

8.8 Hardwick Scouts – Request for support for Community Chest application

RESOLVED to support the application, subject to the cladding being of an appropriate standard. ^(Prop SR, 2nd CP, unanimous)

8.5 Resident – request that the Council trims hedge and disposes of the arisings

RESOLVED to confirm the Clerk’s previous response, that the Parish Council is not responsible for cutting the hedge on the residents’ side and the Parish Council will not grant permission for the arisings to be placed on the Public Open Space for safety reasons.

RESOLVED to amend the Tree Policy to add a statement that “In this policy references to Trees will also include Hedges”. ^(Prop SR, 2nd JD, unanimous)

9. Closure of meeting and items for the next agenda

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 15 May 2024.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.54 pm.

SignedChairmandate