

HARDWICK PARISH COUNCIL
CLERK TO THE COUNCIL MRS ANN-MARIE DAVIES

Minutes of the Meeting of Hardwick Parish Council on Tuesday 9 January 2024 at 7pm in the John Bridles Hall.

Present: Chairman Richard Blacklock
Vice Chairman Garth Bickerton
Councillor Amanda Tofield
Councillor Tim Hannon

Buckinghamshire Councillor Diana Blamires
Buckinghamshire Councillor Peter Cooper
Buckinghamshire Councillor Ashley Bond

One resident

24/01 To receive apologies for absence – Apologies were received from Councillor Carol Wright.

24/02 Declaration of interest in items on the agenda: None received.

24/03 Open Forum: The resident in attendance asked if the Parish Council would consider installing a road widening scheme opposite the pub as it had become increasingly more congested since the reopening of the pub.

He also reported badly overgrown footpaths between the north and south entrances to the village on the A413 which needed siding out as the soil has spilled into the path. It was felt traffic management would be needed to do this. Councillor Amanda Tofield suggested taking some photographs so that they could be sent through to Buckinghamshire Council.

ACTION: RB

The resident noted that potholes had been reported and marked out for repair.

He lastly raised concerns about the proposed bug boxes on the small village green and hoped they wouldn't be unsightly like others he had seen. Councillor Tofield assured him that they would be orderly and mounted onto a fence.

24/04 To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 20 November 2023 – The minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record.

24/05 To receive updates from Buckinghamshire Councillors – A fairly joint report was issued by those present which told the group of the impending dire budget position at Buckinghamshire Council. We were told that as there was to be extra financial support from central government, cutbacks in services should be expected. Buckinghamshire Council Precept would be increasing to their maximum rise of 4.99% with the focus being to protect vital services such as Adult Social Care and Children Services – with both services having seen increased running costs. We were told this situation was very much not unique to Buckinghamshire and that this situation would be replicated right across the country. This budget position was expected to continue for the next couple of years. At the present time they could confirm that Local Community Board still had money and we were urged to think about any more needed projects in village, and particularly for those items totalling up to £1000.

24/06 To note the Clerks Report – previously circulated

24/07 To consider and agree:

- a) Whether we submit an expression of interest to Buckinghamshire Council to continue our Devolution agreement. Closing date is Monday 15 January 2024 – Councillors voted unanimously for the Clerk to send our expression of interest through in order to continue our Devolved Services arrangement with Buckinghamshire Council. **ACTION: AMD**

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24/08 Planning: To discuss planning applications and make recommendation, and to include those planning applications received after this agenda is published, if urgent:

- a) **APPEAL - 23/01288/APP – Land at Poplars Farm, Lower Road, Hardwick, Bucks –** Erection of one and half storey dwelling – To consider whether to add/amend our former position on this planning application and forward online to www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate by 24 January 2024. – The Clerk was asked to email the planning inspectorate in support of the report written by Dipanwita Chatterjee and signed off by Steve Bambrick dated 20 June 2023. **ACTION: AMD**

The following planning applications were received and considered between meetings. Decisions are shown below: -

23/03786/APP – 1 The Close, Hardwick, Bucks, HP22 4DY – Householder application for proposed single storey rear and first floor rear extension, internal alterations and fenestration changes – Councillors considered this application and resolved to offer NO OBJECTIONS. The Clerk posted our response on 8.12.23.

23/03786/ALB – 1 The Close, Hardwick, Bucks, HP22 4DY – Householder application for proposed single storey rear and first floor rear extension, internal alterations and fenestration changes – Councillors considered this application and resolved to offer NO OBJECTIONS. The Clerk posted our response on 12.12.23.

23/03606/ALB – Teachers House, Lower Road, Hardwick, Bucks, HP22 4DY – Listed building application for installation of electric vehicle charging point – Councillors considered this application and resolved to SUPPORT. The Clerk posted our response on 20.12.23.

24/09 Highways, Footpaths and Footways

- a) To report and update on issues and repairs – Councillors noted the increase in our Grass cutting charges but confirmed we had received a good and very responsive service so were happy with the charge going forward.
Discussion around tidying up the village in regards to siding out and cleaning was had and the Clerk was asked to contact the lead for the Community gang to try and arrange a visit. The Clerk would make contact. **ACTION: AMD**

The Chairman raised the issue of an overgrown hedge near to Parrish's Piece which was in need of trimming. This could possibly be another job for the Community Gang or MRA Garden Services.

Councillor Wright had advised Councillors that the trees and bushes on the path just before you reach Whitchurch have been hacked back, and asked for Councillors to continue to push for the path to be sided out to restore its original width. In light of the budget update from Buckinghamshire Councillors this was felt to be doubtful as to whether we would be successful in our 'ask' however the Clerk would contact Paul Foot with the request. **ACTION: AMD**

In relation to the item about widening the road by the pub raised in the Open Forum, the Clerk was asked to write a short excerpt that could be put into the Village Newsletter which asked residents if this was something they would support before placing on the March agenda for further discussion. **ACTION: AMD**

24/10 Street lighting -

- a) To report and update on issues and repairs – Nothing to report.

24/11 Finance

- a) To agree accounts for October & November 2023 – The accounts were accepted and agreed as a correct record.
b) To receive an update on our bid into the Local Community Board for seating and bird/bug boxes in the village – The Clerk reported that all we could now do was wait for the outcome from the funding panel. She would keep Councillors informed.

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- c) To consider whether to increase or keep our Parish Precept 'as is' for 2024/25 – Councillors voted unanimously to keep our Parish Precept at the current level with no increase. The Clerk would advise Buckinghamshire Council. **ACTION: AMD**
Councillor Hannon asked when our contract with our energy supplier was due for renewal. The Clerk would find out and report back. **ACTION: AMD**
- d) To agree to renew the Clerks annual subscription to the SLCC for £80 – Councillors agreed to renew this subscription.

24/12 To report on meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council

- a) Wing & Ivinghoe LCB – last meeting 21 November – Councillor Tofield had attended this meeting which was held in Cublington. It was a somewhat interesting event with speakers of varying skills sets.
- b) Parish Liaison Group – Wednesday 24 January 2024 6.30-8.30pm (will update on venue).

The Chairman had attended the Luton Airport Expansion meeting online. He spoke and repeated our objection arguments. Luton Town Council are very 'for' this project. In attendance there was also a number of representatives of colleges of further education who supported it and who had also submitted information electronically. A small number of Voluntary groups were also there praising the scheme however the majority of speakers were opposed to the proposed development. The Chairmans 'take way' from the event was that there was indeed a conflict element whereby whilst Government policy is to reduce air pollution, they were clearly being pushed for this further development. He said an Act of Parliament was being considered in relation to pollution as they have a target to hit. He was not sure if this was likely to be done before the election. He told the group the St Albans MP was exceptionally good in her opposition to the project. Next steps were for the Action group to still collect further evidence, then look to collate it and then produce a response. He agreed to keep the group updated but reluctantly felt it was two thirds already there as a fait accompli.

24/13 To receive the health & safety risk assessment for the play area – Councillor Hannon had undertaken a risk assessment for the play area and had highlighted no issues.

24/14 Website updates – The Clerk would forward our minutes and agendas to our website administrator.

24/15 To agree the date of the next meeting – Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 12 March 2024

Signed:

Date: