

HARKSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HARKSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL
Held Monday 22nd May 2023 19.30hrs

Present: Cllr Alison Looser – Chairman
Cllr Mike Crouch, Cllr Cathy Crouch, Cllr Dan Emery, Cllr Sue Cotton, Cllr Mary Jones (Co-opted at Item 23.55.9.7)

Apologies: SCC Simon Harley

In attendance: 1 Member of the Public – Roger Harward, BDC Cllr Mary McLaren, Isabelle Reece (Parish Clerk)

23.05.01 NOMINATIONS & ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Nominated by Cllr M Crouch & seconded by Cllr C Crouch: Cllr Alison Looser was re-elected Chairman

23.05.02 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN & DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILLORS

Cllr Looser signed the Declaration of Office of Chairman & newly elected Councillors signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office & the Consent to Summons Notices.

23.05.03 NOMINATIONS & ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Nominated by Cllr Looser & seconded by Cllr Cotton: Cllr C Crouch was elected Vice-Chairman

23.05.04 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from SCC Cllr Harley

23.05.05 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM & APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr Cathy Crouch for the Village Hall

23.05.06 PUBLIC FORUM

Mr Harward spoke about footpaths and the Playing Field. He expressed approval of the replaced footpath way marker posts, but concern as to the general maintenance of the footpaths and the lack of PROW Enforcement by SCC. He asked that a new Footpaths Survey be undertaken. He also mentioned that a notice board still in the grounds of the Bakers Arms does in fact belong to the Parish Council and asked that it be repaired; and a new footpath map be added to it. Mr Harward deplored the delapidated state of the play equipment, the mower and the storage contained and stated that a sum in the region of £20K would be necessary to replace the mower: considerably more than the £4K – 5K estimated by the recently retired Cllr Wrinch. He also stated that the Parish Council should consult the parish as to its wishes regarding the playing Field. (The Millennium Green) It was pointed out that the Parish Council does not own the Millennium Green.

23.05.07 MINUTES

23.05.07.1 To approve minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3rd April 2023 – proposed by Cllr C Crouch & seconded by Cllr M Crouch the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd April 2023 were approved, and signed by the Chairman

23.05.7.2 To review any outstanding actions from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda – nothing not covered elsewhere

23.05.08 TO RECEIVE COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

23.05.08.1 BDC Cllr McLaren's Report, albeit brief owing to the recent election, had been circulated and was noted. She outlined the new Coalition Administration of Babergh District Council, which had been formed by the Independent, Green and Liberal-Democrat Groups; with a system of rolling Leadership positions from all three groups over the four years

23.05.08.2 SCC Cllr Harley's Report had been circulated and was noted

23.05.09 FINANCAL & GOVERNANCE MATTERS

23.05.09.1 Clerk & RFO Report

The Clerk reported that she had found a willing replacement for the locally recruited Internal Auditor, whom the Clerk & Chairman had been unable to re-establish contact.

23.05.09.2 To Ratify Clerk's Salary to comply with Minimum Wage – proposed by Cllr Looser & seconded by Cllr C Crouch: Clerk's pay rise **RATIFIED ACTION** – SALC Payroll to be informed and the payment backdated to April.

23.05.09.3 To Approve Orders Requested for Payment – Orders totalling £210.64 were approved (Clerk's Salary £160.64 – April & May Old rate; Harkstead Village hall £50.00)

23.05.09.4 Update on Banking Arrangements

The Clerk gave an update as to the status of the Bank Account: she had sent information and documents to former Cllr Wrinch, who at the April Parish Council Meeting, had offered to take action to regularize the PC's banking arrangements with the co-operation of the previous Clerk. Mr Wrinch had phoned her about a week prior to the May Meeting to tell her that he was dealing with the matter. This highly irregular situation is of great concern: **ACTION** – Cllr Looser to draft letter to Monitoring Officer to request assistance.

23.05.09.5 To Review & Consider Adoption of New Suffolk Councils' Code of Conduct – proposed by Cllr M Crouch & seconded by Cllr C Crouch, the Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the New Suffolk Councils' Code of Conduct

23.05.09.6 To Review & Consider Updated Standing Orders – proposed by Cllr M Crouch & seconded by Cllr C Crouch, the Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the NALC Model Standing Orders, with modifications put in place by the Clerk

23.05.09.7 To Consider Co-option of a New Councillor – proposed by Cllr C Crouch & seconded by Cllr Cotton, the Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Mary Jones as Member; and she signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. **ACTION** – Clerk to send Documents inc ROI Form to Cllr Jones

23.05.09.8 Submission of Registration of Interests Forms – The Clerk collected ROI Forms from councillors to deliver by hand to BDC at Endeavour House

23.05.10. TO CONSIDER WORKING ARRANGEMENTS & TO APPOINT OFFICERS

23.05.10.1 To consider Working Arrangements including The Meetings Calendar – the Clerk recommended continuing the Scheduled Meetings on the second Monday of every other month, with the proviso of Extraordinary Meetings for Urgent Matters, including Planning. The next scheduled meeting would be in July; with an Extraordinary Meeting for Urgent Financial Matters to be arranged in June.

The Clerk drew Council's attention to a parish consultation which had proved very successful in her own parish; and which she would circulate to the new councillors and clarified some of the opportunities for working arrangements: non-committee working groups to work in specific areas or on specific projects, with findings brought to and decisions made in Council, do not require the presence of the Clerk. Correspondence can be drafted by individual councillors (but all correspondence sent on behalf of the Council as a body must be 'approved' and submitted by the Clerk as Proper Officer.)

23.05.10.2 To Appoint a Planning Officer – proposed by Cllr Looser & seconded by Cllr Emery the Council **APPOINTED** Cllr M Crouch as Planning Officer

23.05.10.3 To Appoint a Tree Warden – Cllr Looser volunteered to continue in her role as Tree Warden and consideration will be given to engaging assistance from the wider parish

23.05.10.4 To Appoint a Footpaths Officer – a suitable parishioner is to be approached & offered this position **ACTION** – Cllr Emery to approach parishioner identified

23.05.10.5 To Appoint a Foreshore Officer – proposed by Cllr Looser & seconded by Cllr C Crouch: the Council **APPOINTED** Cllr M Crouch as Foreshore Officer

23.05.10.6 To Appoint Any Other Officers considered necessary – Cllr M Crouch suggested a Communications Officer: Proposed by Cllr M Crouch & seconded by Cllr C Crouch, Cllr Cotton was appointed Communications Officer. *AC message on grapevine for parishioners to email council if they wish to participate/help.*

'Job profiles' & working arrangements will need to be formulated for the above-mentioned roles

23.05.11 TO APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

23.05.11.1 Village Hall Committee & Note any Updates – Cllr C Crouch. *No updates.*

23.05.11.2 Millennium Green Trust & Note Any Updates – Currently the Parish Council is not represented on the Millennium Green Board of Trustees. The Clerk's attempts to elicit any constructive response from the Trust's Chairman; or to access the Trust's Governing Document; in order to make progress on regularizing the Council's role in management of the Millennium Green, had proved futile. Cllr C Crouch was able to report that she had recently managed to inspect a copy of the Governing Document and discovered that it is stipulated therein that it is the prerogative of the Parish Council to appoint one (or possibly more) of the Trustees. Concern was expressed as to the validity of the RoSPA Inspections, given the recent incidents on the play area equipment; and to the Insurance status. The Play equipment is covered by the Parish Council's Insurance: the Clerk has never been provided with evidence to corroborate Council Member's assertions that the Millennium Green Trust also has 'some insurance cover' for the amenity **ACTION** Cllrs Looser, Crouch & Emery – **Urgent attention to reported potentially dangerous play equipment** **ACTION** – since there is clearly serious breach of Charity Commission requirements, Clerk to send final email to Chairman of Millennium Green Trust informing him that the Parish Council is considering further action. Cllr C Crouch also reported that a parishioner had expressed interest in becoming involved in the Millennium Green, when appropriate. **ACTION** – Cllr Crouch to contact

parishioner concerned. Cllr C Crouch requested a copy of the most recent RoSPA Inspection **ACTION** – Clerk to forward via email

23.05.12 PLANNING

23.05.12.1 To agree any comments on applications received since the issue of this agenda- none had been received

23.05.12.2 To review & note any decision notices received since issue of this agenda – none had been received

23.05.12.3 Joint Local Plan – the Clerk had submitted & received acknowledgement from Babergh District Council of Cllr Crouch’s comments; Planning along the Stour Estuary – informal contact had been made with

* ~~Woolverstone~~ A letter concerning Parking Enforcement in a local field had been circulated. **ACTION** – Clerk to send to Planning Enforcement

23.05.13. CORRESPONDENCE

To Consider any Action necessary – the Chairman had received notice of the Clerk’s resignation. **ACTION** – Chairman & Councillors to draft advertisement of the position for the SALC website

23.05.14 MATTERS TO BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL/OUTSTANDING ISSUES/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS –

Repairs &/or Location of Village Notice Boards; Parking Enforcement; the Future of the Bakers Arms

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 22.06hrs.

Signed Aloose (Chairman)

Dated 26/06/23

* ~~Wattleswick~~ . Wrabness .