

Harpole Parish Council Newsletter



REPORT FROM HARPOLE PARISH COUNCIL Meeting held on Monday 10th December 2018

PRESENT:

Mr C Wilkinson (in the chair)	Miss S Eason	Mr S Drinkwater	Mr B Gibbins	Mrs R Gibbins
Mr J Calderwood	Mr B Justice	Mr D Lawrence	Mr M Marketis	Mr P Marlow
Mrs S Roberts	Mr. D Starmer		8 members of the Public	Clerk, G Ravine

Apologies accepted from Councillor Adam Brown.

PUBLIC:

Mr John Gibbins questioned the council's financial regulations, referring to a quote accepted at the last meeting for £500 for work in the church yard, asking why other quotes were not sourced. Mr Gibbins went on to advise that this assumed to him preferential treatment of certain people adding given the problems with the allotment quotes that he has no confidence in the council following the guidelines which are set out.

The Chairman explained to him and those present, that 'value for money' is not necessarily about the cheapest quote, a lot of other factors are taken in to consideration. Further quotes were not obtained as the cost was below the threshold. Cllr Jeremy Calderwood explained that the jobs are equaled out in the churchyard to three main people, including Mr Gibbins as felt to be a fairer way to do it – this has been a long standing verbal agreement.

Cllr Brian Gibbins advised that in the past quotes were obtained for all jobs, however small and the council were always obliged to take the cheapest quote.

Cllr David Lawrence advised that the agreed parameters are all set out in the financial regulations which were adopted by this council at a previous meeting.

VACANCY:

Eileen Connolly has been co-opted on to the council; her first meeting will be in January. Eileen has recently moved in to the village and is interested in transition and keeping the villages identity.

ACCOUNTS:

Payments made to: the Clerk / HMRC / Playing Field Association – half year grant underpaid / DNH - Dog bins / R Howey- Bus shelter cleaning / NCALC – Employment Course / Aylesbury mains – Light maint / Autela – Tax Agent / Personal Solutions Ltd.

PLANNING:

Planning – Northampton West SUE applications S/2017/2270/EIA and S/2017/2271/EIA – some

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changes to the applications.

Applications approved - 23 Manor Cl. Demolish garage & conservatory. New side & rear extensions / 2 Larkhall Way. Single storey side and rear extensions / 1 Garners Way. A two-storey side extension with attached garage and porch / 22 Upper High St. Cedar Tree, - Trim branches, overhang footpath & touch property.

Applications refused - 6 Park Lane. Demolish existing shed and proposed new garage

HIGHWAYS:

The Terms of Reference have been reviewed and along with the minutes from the Highways meeting are now on the website.

The street light on the corner of Larkhall Lane and Upper High Street has been knocked off of the corner of the building by a lorry at around 20.30pm one evening – this has been reported and will be reported to the relevant authority and will be replaced on a pole in the vicinity of this area in due course. Anyone with further information about this incident – please let us know.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The communications policy had been reviewed and adopted by the council (this can be found on the website).

Along with the newsletter, posters, internet, Facebook it is hoped that the council is communicating well with the village. It has been brought to the attention of the council that some villagers still do not know who is on the council or the various committees or what they look like. Pictures of Parish Councilors along with contact details for each one are on the Harpole website. If you are not on the website but would like to see this information, please contact the Clerk (details at the end of this report) and this will be provided for you.

FINANCE:

The report and recommendations from the Finance Committee Annual Precept setting meeting were discussed. There is a rise of 23.5% this year the precept will be £59,500 which is mainly due to the anticipated recruitment of an assistant Clerk to work on the planning for the village and the surrounding areas. Councilor Marketis advised that apart from last year, there had not been an increase in recent years. Cllr Gibbins felt that it highlighted the need for prudent budgeting.

HARPOLE IN TRANSITION:

It was reported that a job description and office requirements were being worked on. Observations

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on the Green Spaces were ongoing, as were communications with the developers. Cllr Wilkinson felt that efforts were being made to make HIT transparent.

PATHFINDER II:

The Chairman confirmed that spending of the available funds on flood prevention was allowed. This was a complex report and he felt that a working party consisting of two councilors and two members of the public could usefully examine it and report back to the Council.

Basics of Employment Course – Cllr Lowrence attended the course looking at the correct contracts, appraisals and a policy for grievances were needed and that an HR team should be formed to sort out an advert, interviews etc. preferably before Christmas.

TRAINING SESSION:

The Council will attend a training course on Code of Conduct and working practices in January.

ALLOTMENTS ISSUES:

A discussion took place on tenders for the maintenance contract and the need for the quotes to all be opened at the same time at a main meeting. This will be done at the main January meeting, however going forward quotes will be opened at the relevant committee meeting and a recommendation will be taken to the main council.

The Finance meeting decided that the rents for the allotments will be put up by £5 – rents have not been increased for around eight years and after four years of discussion there is a need for this to happen. Paperwork will be amended and will go out ready for the new allotment year in January.

Going forward the rent will be discussed annually at the Finance Precept meeting and may rise each year to bring them in line with the national average.

It is hoped that the hedge will be cut in the next few days.

ELECTIONS:

Due to the changes of the Northampton Councils there will not be an election for local councils in May these will now be May 2020. If you want to join the council please contact the Clerk

NEXT MEETINGS:

The next ordinary meeting will be on 14th January at 7.45pm / Highways will be 28th January at 7pm / Harpole in Transition is 3rd January at 7pm and allotments are 7th January at 19.45pm.

All meetings are public and are held at the Old School Hall in School Lane.

DID YOU KNOW?

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You can see all the Parish Council's reports, committee minutes, policies, procedures and diary entries on our Website: www.harpolevillage.org.uk . You can also sign up there to receive our Parish Council news email. All Neighbourhood watch and local events can be seen there too.

Residents are reminded that we have dog bins for dog waste. Please use them and clear up after your pet

Residents are reminded to brush the gravel back on to your driveways and not let it stray on to the road and pathways.

Contact details of Clerk- Guy Ravine
Old Dairy Farm,
Upper Stowe
Weedon, Northamptonshire. NN7 4SH
Tel: 01327 340410

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