**20LHPC09b Little Horkesley Parish Council**

**MINUTES**

of meeting held in Little Horkesley Village Hall on Wednesday 16 September 2020

Present: Maria Oats (Chair)

 Hannah Taylor

 Susie Goldring

 Jo Petersen (Clerk)

# Apologies

There were apologies from: Chris Exley (Vice-chair)

Chris Jacobs

Cllr Nigel Chapman (CBC Rural North)

Hannah Taylor declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 Footpaths & Hedges

**1. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July were agreed as an accurate record.

**2. Presentation from Tracy Le Grys**

The Parish Council were happy to hear a presentation from Tracy Le Grys, a coordinator for the Nayland Community First Responders.

Tracy was keen to hear how the Parish Council could promote the First Responders and help to recruit volunteers within the village.

The Parish Council agreed to put an article in the Parish Magazine explaining how the service works and providing contact details for any residents wishing to volunteer. A poster will also be placed on the village notice board in the bus shelter, and on the website. The content for the article will be provided by Tracy Le Grys.

**3. Coronavirus (Covid 19) update**

1. It was agreed that the clerk would produce a “thank you” poster to be displayed in the bus shelter and on the website, to acknowledge the effort made by the village in response to the coronavirus situation.

The clerk will also send an email to all the volunteers to ask if they are willing to carry on into the winter.

1. The NALC has confirmed that Parish Councils are exempt from the “Rule of 6” regulations, provided they meet in COVID secure premises and carry out a risk assessment. Nevertheless, the NALC guidance remains that Parish Councils should meet remotely unless they have a real need to hold in-person meetings. As a result of the poor broadband service in the village, and the demonstrable difficulties experienced during the one attempt at a remote meeting, the Council clearly can demonstrate a need to hold in-person meetings.

The Chair had completed the NALC Checklist and conducted a risk assessment on behalf of the council and was satisfied that in-person meetings could be carried out safely, by ensuring social distancing, pre-meeting cleaning, and all councillors and attendees wearing masks.

Nevertheless, if any member of the council does not wish to attend in person then the parish council will review the decision and look into the options for them to attend remotely.

The Chair and the clerk will review the risk assessment before each meeting and ensure that all surfaces in the village hall have been sanitised before use.

Masks will be mandatory for all those attending the parish council meetings.

This issue will be readdressed if there are any changes to Government guidelines and legislation.

**4. Superfast Broadband**

Susie Goldring confirmed that Jonathan Goldring has offered to become the Superfast Champion for Little Horkesley. Mr Goldring has a good understanding of the issues and is happy to communicate with Gigaclear to monitor the situation.

The Parish Council gladly accepted his offer and will continue to represent the interests of the residents of Little Horkesley with regards to Superfast Broadband.

**5. Playground**

1. It was agreed that the clerk would instruct Chris Mortimer of Mortimer Contracts to replace the bushes and shackles on the junior swing.
2. Adrian Jacobs has been making regular inspections of the playground and has noted that the seats on the swings are beginning to degrade.
3. It was agreed that the clerk would arrange the purchase of the bench, but purchase of the two picnic benches would be delayed until the spring.
4. It was also agreed that the current benches in the village would be assessed to see if they require repair as they are frequently used by walkers and visitors to the village
5. After discussion with Bill Watson, who oversaw planting of the wildflower patch in the village green space, it was confirmed that September is the ideal time to cut this back. The clerk agreed to strim the wildflower area and dispose of the grass responsibly.

**6. Bus Shelter**

1. The condition of the bus shelter was discussed, and it was noted that there appear to be a few nails missing which has resulted in some of the boards slipping.
2. Hannah Taylor agreed to inspect the bus shelter and arrange repairs if possible.
3. It was noted that there is not usually funding available for maintenance of assets. The clerk will investigate whether there is grant funding available for a replacement bus shelter.
4. The clerk confirmed that she will clean the notice board and replace the cork tile.

**7. Flooding**

1. The Parish Council acknowledged the hard work of Councillor Anne Brown and offered their thanks, for the funding she arranged for the replacement of the floor in the Village Hall, which was admired by all councillors during the meeting.
2. All councillors were aware of the new pipe that had been laid across the field as a measure to prevent further flooding at the junction of School Road and School Lane.
3. It was noted that it was admirable that the involved parties had agreed to contribute to the cost of laying the pipe to resolve the issue.
4. Chris Jacobs (by email in her absence) expressed her thanks to Christopher Orme for his continued work in dealing with the flooding issues.

**8. Footpaths & Hedges**

1. It was noted that a number of cross field paths have not been maintained this summer. It was agreed that an email will be drafted and sent to all local farmers reminding them to ensure that the cross field paths are maintained in the future.
2. The trimming of the hedge on Water Lane was discussed. Hannah Taylor explained that as the hedges are within the AONB and an area of special interest, cutting is managed to ensure safety and biodiversity, one of the fundamental aims of the area’s inclusion within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A stretch of the hedges on Water Lane are the responsibility of Colchester Borough Council in agreement with the landowner. There is also a badger sett which will have a direct impact on cutting.

Hannah Taylor confirmed the hedges will be trimmed later in the year, once the berries and hips (an essential food source for birds) are no longer there.

1. It was agreed that the clerk will speak with Highways about having “children playing” signs erected at all entrance points in the village given the recent increase in the number of children resident within the village.

The clerk will also speak with Highways about replacing the existing “children playing” sign at the School Lane entrance to the village and it has faded and is barely visible from the road.

**9. Planning**

The decisions on Planning Applications 201420 and 201341 were noted.

Chris Exley (by email in his absence) noted that the proposed extension to Old Hall Cottage was approved by CBC, with tight conditions on approval of materials under the Listed Building Consent requirements.

**10. Meeting Dates**

It was agreed that meetings of Little Horkesley Parish Council would continue to be held on the third Wednesday of every month during 2021.

The clerk will ensure that the Village Hall has been booked accordingly and that confirmed future dates will be circulated to council members.

**11. Finance**

1. Chris Exley (by email in his absence) approved the Q1 Quarterly Report and will sign on his return.
2. The clerk confirmed that she has now received the equipment required to register with Barclays for internet banking, and will ensure that this is done before the next meeting.

Hannah Taylor is still waiting to receive the required equipment.

1. The clerk explained that after further discussion with HMRC it was agreed that Little Horkesley Parish Council did not meet the criteria which requires registration with HMRC. As a result, the scheme was closed. The Pensions Regulator were also informed of this decision.
2. The clerk will continue to record salary payments in the financial spreadsheet for audit purposes.
3. The Parish Council’s second bank account (Cheltenham & Gloucester was discussed.) After speaking with former members of the Parish Council it was concluded that no one could remember why there was a second bank account. The clerk confirmed that there is no legislation that requires a parish council to hold two bank accounts.

It was therefore agreed that the clerk would have the C&G account closed and the monies transferred to the Barclays account used by the council.

***Invoice Approval***

There were no invoices to approve

**12. Correspondence**

It was agreed that the Parish Council would make a donation of £50.00 to the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance, as they have assisted in many emergencies in and nearby the village. This will be an annual donation and will be factored into the 2021/22 budget.

**13. Items for the Next Agenda**

* Q2 Quarterly Report
* Payment to Adrian Jacobs for Playground Inspection
* Discuss wreath for Remembrance Service and who will represent the Parish Council.

**…………………………………………………………………………….. (Maria Oats - Chair)**

# ……………………………………………………………………………… (Date)

**Date of the next Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 21 October (Village Hall)**