

## **Minutes of Haydon Wick Parish Council Annual Assembly held 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors L Brown (Chairman), S McDermott (Vice-Chair), P Booth, S Callen, P Eagle, J Fuller, E Gerrard, R Hailstone, S Heyes, J Jackson, A Roupelis, D Smith and R Worman

**WARD COUNCILLORS:** Councillor D Renard

**CLERK:** Georgina Morgan-Denn

**STAFF:** Laura Cutter, Sandra Kelly, Andy Morris, Andy Nickols, Lisa Weaving, Mark Weaving

**PUBLIC:** There were (7) residents present

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Ellen Baker-Lee and Phil Martin.

Councillors Roy Worman and Dave Smith advised prior to the meeting they may be late arriving.

### **2. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Councillor L Brown welcomed all those present at the meeting and started with a minutes silence to commemorate the recent tragic events in New Zealand and Holland. Also the Commonwealth speech was read out and the flag was displayed at the meeting as it had not been flown on the nominated day.

Councillor L Brown explained that this is a statutory meeting that should be held annually between the 1st March - 1st June. The purpose of the meeting is to update parishioners on what the Council have achieved in the last 12 months and what it hopes to achieve in 2019/2020.

### **3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Annual Assembly held 16<sup>th</sup> April 2018 were proposed to be accepted.

**Proposed: Councillor S Callen      Seconded: Councillor S Heyes**

**Vote: All those present agreed with (2) abstentions**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved as a correct record with the amendment that Councillor D Rodgers had given apologies.**

#### **4. REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS**

Reverend Gerald England from Emmanuel Church gave a short presentation on the Haydon Wick Festival and explained how the Council kindly supported the event 2 years ago. This year's festival will be held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and all welcome to join to help make the event a success.

Iain Liddon from 5<sup>th</sup> Swindon Guides explained his role in fundraising for the unit and some background information about the group. Currently the girls are working towards their support and breaking barrier badges. Their first educational abroad trip is planned for October 2019 to visit Disneyland Paris and the war memorials in France to commemorate the centenary year. The cost of the trip will be £7,000.00 and so far the group have managed to raise £4,500.00 with the support of the Council and other surrounding parish councils. The group have agreed to come back next year with photos and an update of the trip.

Paul Humphrey from Britannia Majorettes and Miniettes of Swindon thanked the Council for inviting him to the meeting and gave some background information about the troupe being an award winning pom-poms and flags troupe consisting of Miniettes aged 4 – 7 years and Majorettes 7 – 17 years old. The troupe perform most weekends between May – September at local events. Paul thanked the Council for their kind donation of £640.00 towards the cost of the new Miniettes uniform explaining that the previous uniform was outdated and in need of replacement. Sample dresses have been received and will be ready for their May Fair which will be held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019 on the land adjacent to the Council.

Bill Poling from Swindon & Cricklade Railway gave a brief presentation on the railway carriage adaption to accommodate disabled users. The carriage has been adapted to include windows and a wider space. Bill explained donations have been greatly received as the cost of the repairs is £5600 but the transportation of the carriage will cost £4400. Swindon & Cricklade Railway have also received grants from other parish councils and local groups. There has been lots of press releases for which he is very grateful.

Annamaria Beswick from The Tuesday Art Group explained that their group meet at the Council Offices every Tuesday morning between 10am – 12pm. The group have displayed some pictures created during the sessions, to create a visual presentation for all to enjoy at the meeting.

Annamaria explained last year the group held their first exhibition as a separated group from their mother group and 112 members of the public attended. The Council kindly gave them a grant from the cost of the room hire last year also. The intention this year is to advertise further to invite more people to enjoy their artwork. Annamaria thanked the Council for their generous grant this year for the cost of the room hire and some additional money towards sundries for the preview evening.

## **5. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**

Although this is not a formal Parish Council meeting, I expect attendees to continue to act as though our Standing Orders still apply.

This is one of the meetings each year that we are legally required to hold between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June. For the newcomers, it is best described as the annual shareholders meeting where the Directors (us the Councillors) tell the shareholders (you the residents) what we've done, what we want to do and to give a brief financial overview. As this is an election year for all the HW Councillors, this meeting needs to be held before 2nd May this year, just in case the people sat up here aren't re-elected, especially as this meeting has to be called by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

If any votes are taken at this meeting, they are not binding on the Parish Council although we should consider them at the next relevant meeting of the Council. Only registered electors can vote on an issue.

Due to the informality of the meeting, registered electors, including Councillors, may ask questions of the Council, which we will try to answer here. If we can't, please make sure the Clerk has your name and contact details so that we can get back to you directly. Electors may also make suggestions and comment on anything pertinent to the people of Haydon Wick Parish, this is the whole purpose of the meeting. I will take questions pertinent to the subject that we are discussing at the time. There will also be an opportunity for more questions at the end of the meeting.

Normally just the Chairman of the Parish holds the meeting but, as in the past, I'm sharing the responsibility with the Vice-chair, Cllr McDermott and the Chair of Policy and Finance, Cllr Callen. Sarah will be covering Community Engagement and future aspirations, Sue will be dealing with the precept.

### **Final Months in Office**

As we approach Election Day, I am keenly aware of this may be, for some, their last few months in office. I know that some of us will not be standing again for election. For many years this Council has been justifiably proud of being apolitical. Yes, some of our Councillors are card-carrying members of various political parties. But on the whole, those party affiliations remain outside the door. Most Councillors are here for the benefit of their communities not their political parties.

The elections put some tacit constraints on the workings of the Parish Council and especially the Councillors. It is frowned upon to use our position to promote ourselves during this period over possible candidates who do not share this platform and thereby disadvantaging them.

### **Staff changes in 2018**

Last year, our Clerk, Terry Powell took early retirement due to ill health. His extensive knowledge is sorely missed. But we have been fortunate to get a very capable replacement in Georgina. Georgina initially came to us as a locum clerk, as it was planned that Terry's health would improve such that he would have been able to return to his role. But when it became evident that Terry would not be able to continue, the Parish Council took the decision to formalise Georgina's position and she accepted the role full time in December.

Georgina is a fully qualified clerk with a diploma in Community Governance (the advanced level of qualification that underpins our sector. She has worked as Parish Clerk for a variety of small, medium and large-sized parish councils in Ogbourne St George, Swindon and in Oxfordshire. We are also fortunate in that she brings with her an extensive set of business skills, gained most recently from the Financial Services sector. George also lived in Oakhurst a few years ago, so knows the area pretty well and now lives just a few miles away... close to the County Ground...so she should be cycling in daily...eh George! And I know that we all wish Terry a full recovery and a long and healthy retirement. It's truly well deserved.

Just after last year's Annual Meeting our newest member of office staff took up her position. Sandra Kelly has shown herself to be a competent member of staff. Having worked in local government for over 30 years including working for another Parish Council prior to joining Haydon Wick, she brings a wealth of experience (especially financial) to the role. Sandra is also a resident in the Parish so has a knowledge of the area, an understanding of the issues facing the Council and a commitment to ensuring that matters are passed on to be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Our outdoor gang, better known in-house as POST – the Parks and Open Spaces Team, has had two new members, Mark Weaving and Martin Smith, since this time last year. Martin's position was just for a year initially, but we soon decided that we have enough ongoing work to offer him a permanent position. They've both settled into the team really well and the whole team has worked incredibly hard this year to keep the parish looking tidy despite some huge challenges (more from that later from Richard)...

One final staff change is the retirement, again, of the parish handy man, Dave Hyde. He has been keeping the doors from squeaking, fences from falling down, lights burning and bus stops spick and span for 15 years. Not to mention maintaining our huge suite of play areas! But this evening's meeting isn't long enough to list the things that carry his thumb print. Another big pair of boots to fill.

So, our thanks to Dave for his service to the Parish Council. Have a good retirement and, if you get bored, you know where we are!

### **War Memorial**

2018 saw the Centenary of the end of World War I. The fates aligned so that Remembrance Sunday fell on Armistice Day, 11 Nov. We felt that we should acknowledge the sacrifice of our parishioners by erecting a memorial. The Tommy statue and bench that has been installed by the obelisk near Havisham Drive have been well received. The comments about art installation outside the parish office were equally positive. We still have one more bench to install once the Doctors' extension is complete and we can see the effect that it has on our front garden.

Our thanks to the children of HW primary school for their poems and poppies; Homeground Doctors' Surgery and their contractors Donovan Construction (SW) Ltd for allowing us to have the hoardings painted by Marilyn & Chris Trew who kindly provided their service and materials for free; and AWBS for subsidising the materials around the tree. And thanks to our team for tidying up the area and installing the statue and bench.

## 6. COMMITTEE REPORTS FROM CHAIRS OF THE COMMITTEES

### Amenities & Leisure – Councillor R Hailstone

The committee has had a busy year initiating new projects and overseeing the continuing assimilation of grounds maintenance transferred from the Borough Council.

March saw the start of grass cutting using our own work force for the first time. Unfortunately, the weather was not kind and we had two snow episodes during the month which delayed the start and made it difficult to catch up. A decision was made at the end of June to employ contractors to cut the larger open spaces as our own smaller machines were finding it difficult to keep to the planned schedule. This decision coincided with the start of a prolonged dry spell – such is the vagaries of the British weather!

The wet spring and warm summer produced rampant growth of hedgerows and brambles so we had to fund an emergency cut ahead of the hard autumn cutback. Unfortunately, the maps that were given to us by the Borough Council did not identify all the hedges but most of the smaller areas have now been identified and added to the list.

May saw the official opening of the newly refurbished Heaton Close playground by local celebrity, Maisie Sly. This fun event was attended by children and their parents from Catherine Wayte School. The Wick Farm orchard play ground was also overhauled and the orchard has been replanted with apple and pear trees – which seem to have survived the dry summer thanks to regular watering by the Parks and Open Spaces Team.

Part of this year's playground budget has been spent on overhauling the Heaton Close MUGA which, being over 20 years old, was dilapidated and listing a lot to patch up! We had intended to spend the money on updating Haydonleigh Skate Park but this project was put back due to delays in transfer of the land and the erection of a fence between the MUGA (to be retained by Haydonleigh School) and the Skate Park. This upgrade will be our own major project for 2019/20. We also have places for an outdoor gym in Priory Vale and we will be consulting on this in the near future.

Leisure gardens continue to be popular and we have improved the car park at Ventnor Close and planted apple trees on a spare plot which we hope to develop for local charities, this will be named "Apple Tree Allotment".

The Parks and Open Spaces Team have recently uncovered "Haydon Henge" as part of the winter shrub clearance at Purton Road.

## **Policy & Finance – Councillor S Callen**

In 2018/2019 the following grants have been awarded:

- £250.00 for Shine Swindon for running support groups for new mothers who are suffering from postnatal depression
- £500.00 for Swindon 105.5 to provide a community-led radio
- £1000.00 to North Swindon Community Group for the running of the North Swindon Fun Day
- £640.00 to Britannia Majorettes and Miniettes of Swindon to purchase new dresses for their Miniettes troupe for the new display season
- £500.00 to Emmanuel URC Church for the running of Haydon Wick Festival
- £1000.00 to Haydon Wick Guides & Rangers to help with the costs of their trip to France
- £250.00 to 7<sup>th</sup> Swindon Scouts for the purchase of a new water boiler
- £1000.00 to Swindon & Cricklade Railway for the conversion of a train carriage to accommodate wheelchair users and carers

Councillor S Callen explained that various policies have been created in 2018/19 include CCTV, Recording of meetings, Reserves policy and a number of policies have been reviewed which include Staff handbook, Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Investment Policy. The Emergency Plan has been reviewed and a group will shortly be created to include residents of the Parish that would be part of the plan ensuring the community is led to safety in an emergency situation.

Price comparison exercises were carried out for all of the Council's income streams such as advertising, leisure garden rates, hire of premises and the community bus. The cost of the room hire was remarkably low and has been increased to cover the costs.

The Council set the precept and whilst there has been an increase the overall amount is still fairly low in comparison to other councils, the amount payable for 19/20 is £83.60 for the average Band D property.

## **Planning & Highways – Councillor J Fuller**

The Haydon Wick Parish Council Planning Committee carries out the preliminary review of all planning applications affecting the properties or land within the parish.

Applications may range from something as small as the addition of a front porch, through extensions to an existing house and commercial signage. The planning committee tries to protect the built environment from what it considers as unsuitable or overbearing development. Any objection raised must be based on the formal planning guidelines. In the case of an objection by the parish council, it is sometimes possible to advise the applicant as to remedial measures which may address the issues which led to the objection.

The parish council submits its decision to the borough council planning committee who are the final arbiters as to acceptance or rejection of any individual application.

The committee is also involved in looking at highway issues on behalf of the parish council.

Some examples of our work from the past year:

- 118 planning applications examined
- Tadpole Lane field access in process of design
- Signage at the Lady Lane junction on Thamesdown Drive now shows directions to Haydon Wick
- SBC planning training attended by members of the committee
- Question time meeting with Councillor Maureen Penny, SBC cabinet member for Highways and Environment to discuss traffic related matters as they affect Haydon Wick
- Successfully pressed for a Toucan crossing on Westfield Way adjacent to the Manor pub.

## **Community Engagement & Shaping the future – Councillor S McDermott**

### **Looking to the Future**

For those who didn't already know our parish elections take place on May 2<sup>nd</sup> which will see all eighteen Haydon Wick Councillors stand-down and who knows who will replace them. So for those current Councillors present tonight, our future could be somewhat curtailed!

But this doesn't mean the current Councillors have stopped working. We have for the past few months and for the forthcoming few weeks continue to make decisions about the services we provided. Some decisions have been "kicked into the long grass", these are mainly ones that present long term financial commitment, for example, at present we as a Council hold 6 months General Reserves, this is seen as good practice, during Budget considerations we discuss the possibility of reducing that General Reserve to 4 months – still an acceptable amount – , freeing capital to ease the impact on the precept, however it was felt that this reduction in Reserves would impact any incoming Council unfairly. Similar, decisions about the Short, Medium and Long Term investment of Reserves, have been delayed as we didn't want to tie up the money, therefore hampering the incoming Councils spending wishes.

Richard has also talked about the play area refurbishment projects at Heaton Close and how the Council has committed in next year's budget to make the Haydonleigh skate park refurbishment our next big project. As a Council we commit each year to investing £70,000 into the budget for this purpose. We cannot tell you what the new Council will do post-election; we hope they feel we have left the Council in a strong financial position – no letters with "all the money's gone" from us. And that they will look at the work we have done over the past years and follow in our footsteps and continue to invest and enhance in area we live in.

## Community Engagement

We continue to communicate with our residents through our website, our social media channels such as Facebook and through the Haydon Living magazine which is published by the Council three times a year.

In the past year we have also undertaken some activities that have generated much interest in the Parish. As Linda has already discussed, the installation of the "Tommy" Figure, the installation of a memorial bench, the Temporary Mural and Poppy Display, for the Centenary of the End of WW1 all generated very positive feedback.

Another first occurred in Christmas 2018, for the first time in the thirty year history of the Christmas Parcel Scheme we worked with two third parties, Metro Bank & The Redeemed Christian Church of God to provide our parcels. This proved a very successful piece of teamwork, and hopefully in the future we can work with other groups to provide for our elderly residents.

As said previously, we need local groups and individuals to let us know their ideas in ways we can engage with residents through activities and events. So if you have an idea as to how Haydon Wick Parish Council can become more engaged with the community.

## 7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A number of questions were raised.

Councillor R Hailstone – Had a request from a local resident to raise the fly tipping issues that have happened recently in Woodhall Park and Bryony Way. The Parks & Open Spaces Team have reacted quickly on each occurrence and the fly tipping has now been removed. This will be added to their work lists to monitor.

Mrs Bez Suter – Noted that there is nowhere to sit when walking the length of Pond Street and from her house to Morrisons is approx. 1 mile each way. This often becomes a challenge on the way back when carrying the shopping and there are some large tree trunks that could be renovated in to seating to give pedestrians a rest break. The request will be considered by the Council and suitable sites will be identified.

Mr Iain Liddon – Raised queries about parking outside schools advising that he has been told it is both a police issue and a borough highways issue, the parking is only relieved at times an enforcement officer is present. The Councillors agreed this is an ongoing issue and requested Councillor D Renard answer this question as a member of Swindon Borough Council.

Councillor D Renard explained that parking issues are hard to enforce if there are no double-yellow lines present to begin with. Once double-yellow lines are implemented the traffic is then spread over various adjoining streets so does not solve the issue but creates a wider span. Councillor D Renard explained that there are vacancies for 2 new enforcement officers which may be able to help tackle some of these issues but dangerous parking is in the remit of the local police.

Councillor L Brown ended the meeting by thanking grant applicants, residents and grant applicants for coming to the meeting and welcomed them to stay for refreshments. Councillor L Brown thanked the staff for their hard work throughout the year and for organising the Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.14pm

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