

**DRAFT****Minutes of Halling Parish Council held on 9th February 2016 at the Jubilee Hall**

Present: Chair George Wenham (Upper Ward) GW; Vice-Chair Mark Joy (North Ward) MJ  
 Chris Herbert (Lower Ward) CH; Les Hitchcock (Lower Ward) LH;  
 Kelly Talbot (Lower Ward) KT; Richard Thorne (Lower Ward) RT;  
 Trevor Reynolds (Upper Ward) TR and Matt Fearn (Upper Ward) MF  
 Bill Swan – Clerk (WS) and 29 members of the public.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Mike Chattington and Andy Simpson – reasons accepted.

**2. Disclosure of any other Business**

RT – 1 item

**3. Declaration of Pecuniary and Prejudicial Interests - none****4. Adjourn meeting for Parishioners' Questions**

Among the points raised were the following:

Retaining Fire Station; Loss caused by Fire Station; Complaint against MC and MJ;  
 results of May elections – decisions should be made in Villagers' interest ; can Parish  
 Councils be disbanded; Vote on future of Fire Station; why was earlier decision of  
 HPC to sell Fire Station overturned; gambling with Village money; HPC standards;  
 setting of budget. Minutes of Halling Association meeting.  
 Electric fencing on Ticker path.

**5. Reconvene meeting and approve minutes of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016 meeting.**

RT said that he had sent in apologies for this meeting which had not been recorded. It  
 was proposed by LH, seconded by KT, that the minutes as amended are approved .  
 All those Members at the 13<sup>th</sup> January meeting agreed.

**6. Matters arising from the minutes - none****Item 14 brought forward****14. Halling Fire Station**

The Chair of the Fire Station read out her report as follows:

The Fire Station Committee was set up to consider options for the future of the old  
 fire station site and has had one meeting held 16th December 2015., the meeting was  
 a shambles and one Parish Councillor resigned as a direct result of this. A  
 replacement for him on our committee was sought at the last full Parish meeting,  
 however no one volunteered at that time. As a courtesy Councillor Joy has advised me  
 that he will be putting himself forward to fill this vacancy on the committee.

I myself have also thought of abandoning the committee but I have rejected that idea  
 and I am determined to lead it in carrying on the task which the Paris Council set it.  
 I will be scheduling a meeting for next week, but only on the basis that at least 4 of  
 the councillors and our co-opted member can attend. I am already aware that one of  
 the councillors will be unavailable for the next 2 weeks.

The options open to us are fairly straightforward in that we either sell the fire station  
 or keep it for community use. However, the suggestion that Medway council is  
 examining the details of our purchase of the fire station has muddied the waters  
 considerably, and I am hoping that our Clerk will be able to update us on the situation  
 at the next meeting.

We are in receipt of an offer from the Halling Baptist Chapel, there are also other  
 options for selling the site and I have invited our agent Mr Robert Beswarwick from

Hicks and Co to address the meeting and explain in more detail what these options are. To help the deliberation of the FSC, I am hoping that the Parish Council will look at the options and decide, which, if any, they wish to examine further.

I request from the Parish Council instructions and that they appoint a new member to serve on the FSC.

GW then welcomed Robert Beswarwick of Hicks and Co, HPC's appointed Estate Agents, who then addressed the meeting. He has only received one offer, that from Halling Baptist Church for £175,000 which HPC has not accepted. There has been a lot of interest from Commercial undertakings but because of the Covenant saying it must be used for Community use, if HPC sold the Fire Station for such use, it would have to make a payment to Kent Fire and Rescue Service under the overage clause. This could amount to £16,750 on a sale figure of say £200,000. There is a possibility of renting it to commercial people but again the clause would still apply.

It was then proposed by KT, seconded by RT that MJ be appointed to the Committee. This was carried by 5 votes with 3 abstentions.

The Clerk has raised the querying of the Section 106 payment to HPC by Medway Council with the Monitoring Officer but has had no reply as yet.

It was proposed by TR, seconded by RT that HPC should delegate authority to Hicks and Co to sell the building on a wider basis. 5 were in favour with 3 against. CH pointed out that the building must be for community use and that HPC should honour its agreement under which it bought the property. The Clerk is to clarify this with HPC's solicitor.

**7. Finance Committee - proposal to accept the recommendations of the Finance Committee with regards to precept and Budget for 2016/2107.**

MJ introduced the recommendations of the Finance Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February to increase the budget from £41,500 to £59,500 an increase of 43%. The overspend of £7,000 was mainly due to the Fire Station. The Precept has to be in to Medway Council by the end of February and as the Fire Station Committee will not have reported by then, HPC had to take a view now. The conservative estimate of £65,000 to bring the Fire Station up to the required standard for a public building could not be put on the precept. A mortgage for this amount would have an annual repayment of around £7,000 at exiting interest rates.

MJ went on to explain the proposed budget.

The overspend on wages is caused by extra tasks for the Office Staff on a reduced budget for 2015/2016.

Funds of about £28,000 have been put aside for new play equipment whatever happens to the Fire Station.

CH said that MJ's figures are not strictly accurate and that in the past increases have been kept to 10% or less as against 43% this time. He said that the total overspend for 2015/2016 will indeed be in the order of £7,000 on a budget of £41,500 however this is before taking into consideration the income earned by HPC outside the Precept and associated grants. HPC did not budget for the Fire Station and wages were a bit higher.

He put forward a counter proposal that HPC increase its budget in line with the increase in the number of additional properties in Halling basically because of the St Andrews development. The increase in the number of properties was accepted to be approximately 24% and that this would increase the precept from £41,500 to £51,500 which would not cause any increase to households in view of the additional number of properties from which Council tax was to be collected

CH said that any thoughts of a loan of £65,000 should be left until the Village has had its say on the Fire Station.

This counter proposal was seconded by MJ and was agreed unanimously.

**8 a. Proposal to set up a full and permanent Standards Committee, to comprise of six councillors (which shall include the Chair & Vice Chair of the Parish Council).**

**8 b. (Only to proceed if 8a approved). Appoint three additional councillors to standards committee in addition to George Wenham. (Current members Mark Joy (Chair), Richard Thorne).**

**8 c. (Only to proceed if 8a approved). Proposal to discuss Terms of Reference of Standards Committee (and adjust if required) and vote to adopt said terms.**

**9 a. Proposal to set up a Personnel Committee, to comprise of five councillors.**

**9 b. (Only to proceed if 9a approved) Appoint Chairman of committee and four other councillors to the committee.**

**9 c. (Only to proceed if 9a approved) Proposal to discuss Terms of Reference of Standards Committee (and adjust if required) and vote to adopt said terms.**

**10a. Proposal to set up a Events Committee, to comprise five councillors.**

**10 b. (Only to proceed if 10a approved) Appoint Chairman of committee and four other councillors to the committee.**

**10 c. (Only to proceed if 10a approved) Proposal to discuss Terms of Reference of Events Committee (and adjust if required) and vote to adopt said terms.**

**11 a. Proposal to set up a full Estates Committee, to comprise six councillors.**

**11 b. (Only to proceed if 11a approved) Appoint five other councillors to the committee (Cllr Hitchcock current chair).**

**11 c. (Only to proceed if 11a approved) Proposal to discuss Terms of Reference of Events Committee (and adjust if required) and vote to adopt said terms.**

The proposer of items 8a to 11c , Mark Joy, said that items 8a, 9a, 10a and 11a should be dealt with at the same time. He felt that jobs have been done by too few Councillors as portfolio holders. Responsibility for the functions of HPC lies with all Councillors. He then proposed to set up these committees.

CH said that members of the Standards Committee could well be those involved in complaints. This committee. should be set up as required.

Committees should not be given powers of expenditure. The quorums of 3 as suggested are less than the 4 required at full council meetings. MJ said that

Committee expenditure must be agreed by the whole council. CH said that HPC votes on all expenditure and proposed that this is taken out of Committee responsibility.

TR said that decisions said in this event, decisions might have to be taken twice.

CH said that a pre agreed budget for each committee would be get round this. RT

asked if committees should be set a budget limit and TR said that HPC should set out the financial powers of each committee.

TR seconded MJ's proposal – 5 were in favour with 2 against and 1 abstention.

MJ adjourned the appointment of members to committees until the next meeting.

**12. Report on Marsh and footpaths by the Chairman.**

GW said that he, Chris Herbert and Les Hitchcock in company with Barry Barnes visited the marsh on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January and found it to be in a very poor state with one footpath in particular trampled down by cattle. They also found a sinkhole caused by the collapse of a Storm Water drain. This has been reported to Southern Water and a temporary fence has been put round it by Total Property to protect the public as a matter of urgency.

**13. Planning**

MF reported that an application had been received in respect of a side extension at 23 Scholey Close, Lower Halling – HPC had no problem with this. There has been an application for the Filling Station in Rochester Road, Cuxton – demolition and erection of 4 houses.

**15. Halling Funday – to set a date**

RT said that 16<sup>th</sup> July 2016 had been mentioned with a possible medieval theme and the date was agreed.

**16. Play equipment in recs. and funding for them – report**

Maria Cook reported that HPC needs to work with her on this. MJ said that there is £30,000 available now. It was agreed to set up a working group and GW, KW, MJ and CH said that they would be prepared to help on this.

GW apologised to Maria on behalf of HPC for not appreciating her efforts on its behalf.

**ITEM 17 RECEIPTS**

			<u>Budget Head</u>	
04/01/2016	UK Power and Nat Grid	Wayleaves	EST	176.46
13/01/2016	Halling YC	Photocopying	G/A	21.50
				197.96

**ITEM 18 PAYMENTS****Needing ratification**

				<u>Net</u>	<u>Vat</u>	<u>Gross Total</u>
<u>Date</u>						
04/01/2016	Total Property	Repairs to bollard and new lamp	EST	120.00		120.00
06/01/2016	Halling C/C	Hire of hall	G/A	48.00		48.00
11/01/2016	Beanys	Refreshments at Xmas	Section 137	100.00		100.00
18/01/2016	Total Property	Fencing in rec	EST	120.00		120.00
18/01/2016	Total Property	Pat testing	G/A	137.50		137.50
18/01/2016	Total Property	Dehumidifier hire	FS	60.00		60.00
18/01/2016	JHMC	Hall hire	G/A	36.00		36.00
20/01/2016	CPRE	Annual subs	Section 137	36.00		36.00
22/01/2016	Ben Cook	Work on recs.	EST	50.00		50.00
27/01/2016	Tom Bailey	Work on Upper rec	EST	71.50		71.50
Total				779.00	0.00	779.00

It was proposed by GW, seconded by CH, that above payments be ratified. All agreed  
The Clerk was asked to raise an invoice to Costain Contractors who were using the car park at the rear of the Fire Station and that he should research dehumidifiers with a view to an outright purchase for the fire station.

**19. Dates of forthcoming meetings**

9th March 2016 – full meeting at the Community Centre at 7.30 pm.

**20. Any Other Business** – there being none (already covered), the meeting closed at 9.40 pm.