

South Mimms Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 16th May 2019 at 7.30 p.m. at South Mimms Village Hall

Present: Councillor Yvonne Harverson
Councillor Paula Arnold
Councillor Mark Edwards
Mrs Julia Reading Locum Clerk
Mr Andrew Reading Assisting the Locum Clerk
Approx. 15 Members of the Public

After a greeting, the Locum Clerk opened the Meeting by stating the result of the South Mimms Parish Council election held in Hertsmere on 2nd May 2019, that is, that Councillors Harverson, Edwards and Binstead were returned duly elected to the Parish Council.

12/19 ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE ENSUING COUNCIL YEAR

The first business being to elect a Chairman of the Parish Council for the ensuing Council year, the Locum Clerk called for any nominations for this office.

Cllr Yvonne Harverson was proposed by Cllr Binstead and seconded by Cllr Edwards and the appointment was approved.

Cllr Harverson signed the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Locum Clerk.

13/19 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS

Through an insufficiency of nominations at the recent election for the five Parish Council seats at South Mimms, two vacancies remained to be filled through co-option. The Parish Council had advertised these vacancies and four valid applications had been received, from Ms Paula Arnold, Mrs Sandra Beadle, Mr Andrew Fowler and Mr Neil Pumfrey. The Chairman offered the applicants the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Meeting.

Cllr Edwards proposed and Cllr Binstead seconded the motion, with the Chairman in agreement, that a vote to fill the vacancies by co-option be taken, the process to be conducted by a signed ballot.

At the Chairman's request, the Locum Clerk conducted the poll, the result of which was that Ms Arnold and Mr Pumfrey were co-opted as Councillors to the Parish Council. Both signed declarations of acceptance of office witnessed by the Locum Clerk.

The Chairman accepted a question from the audience about the possibility of co-opting further Councillors. Mr Reading advised that the number of Councillors for any parish council was determined taking into account factors such as the size of the area and number of residents, and while it was theoretically possible to change the set number from, in South Mimms' circumstances, five, this would require a consultation process and a neighbourhood referendum.

The Chairman welcomed the co-opted Councillors and with them and the other Councillors wished to record thanks to Mrs Beadle and Mr Fowler for volunteering their services.

14/19 DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

All declarations of acceptance of office had been received and countersigned by the Locum Clerk.

15/19 ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE ENSUING COUNCIL YEAR

The Chairman called for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman. Cllr Paula Arnold was proposed by Cllr Edwards and seconded by Cllr Harverson and the appointment was unanimously approved.

Cllr Arnold signed the Vice Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Locum Clerk.

16/19 TO APPOINT ANY REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

None at the present time.

17/19 TO CONSIDER THE PAYMENT OF ANY SUBSCRIPTIONS FALLING TO BE PAID ANNUALLY

The Parish Council approved in principle the following payments arising annually:

- Membership subscription - Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils (HAPTC) (May 2019, £391.40 – see Minute 26/19iv. below).
- Public Liability etc. insurance premium – Zurich Municipal (September 2019; premium yet to be notified).
- Renewal of registration fee - Office of the Information Commissioner (May 2019, £35.00 – see Minute 26/19iv. below).

18/19 TO INSPECT ANY DEEDS AND TRUST INVESTMENTS IN THE CUSTODY OF THE PARISH COUNCIL AS REQUIRED

None.

19/19 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Meeting was suspended at 8.00 pm in order to conduct an Annual Parish Meeting for which separate Minutes would be taken.

The Meeting resumed at approximately 8.10 pm.

20/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

21/19 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None.

22/19 MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2019

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 10th January 2019 were unanimously AGREED as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

23/19 MATTERS ARISING PARISH CLERK VACANCY

The Chair reported that the post remained vacant despite having been advertised in a number of ways. New adverts would be prepared and it was again confirmed that for as long as possible during the course of the vacancy the Parish Council would continue to meet its statutory obligations.

The Council thanked Mrs Reading for once again supporting this Meeting and recognised that owing to her circumstances she would be unlikely to be available for any future Meeting or for any work for the Parish Council beyond delivering a skeleton service to satisfy its obligations.

In response to a question allowed by the Chairman, it was confirmed that a parish council was able to operate legally without employing a clerk. Councillors themselves were not prevented from performing the functions of a clerk, but would usually do so only in exceptional and limited circumstances. A councillor's ability to act as a clerk could be restricted by the availability of her/his time as well as potential conflicts of interest. All local government councillors were prohibited from receiving any payment for their duties which would include covering for a clerk's temporary or extended absence. Therefore, the appointment to paid employment of a clerk with the appropriate skills to administer a parish council's business was a practical necessity rather than a legal requirement.

24/19 THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2018/19

The Chairman invited the Locum Clerk to present this item. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts.

i. ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1 APRIL 2018 – 31 MARCH 2019

Draft Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 were received and considered having been prepared and circulated by the Locum Clerk prior to the meeting. These included sheets for a bank account reconciliation, summary of income and expenditure, balance sheet and an explanation of variances comparing the years ending 31 March 2018 and 2019, and had been used to prepare the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

It was noted that as expected expenditure had been lower than the previous year, due primarily to the long-term vacancy of the Parish Clerk.

It was RESOLVED that the Accounts of South Mimms Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2019 be approved.

ii. AGAR CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION 2018/19

The accounts showed that the Parish Council's gross income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2019 was each below £25,000, the upper limit for exemption from a limited assurance review under section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015. The Parish Council RESOLVED to authorise the Chairman and the Locum Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer to sign an exemption certificate for the year ending 31 March 2019. This would be returned to PKF Littlejohn LLP, the External Auditor appointed for the Parish Council.

iii. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR 2018/19

The Parish Council RESOLVED to re-appoint Mr Alex Sage as its independent Internal Auditor. It was noted with gratitude that Mr Sage once again had waived his fee for this service and in lieu the Locum Clerk was authorised to buy a gift of wine for him up to the value of £35.00.

iv. AGAR INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2018/19

The Internal Auditor's report for the year ending 31 March 2019 was received. There were no points raised either of concern or requiring action. In due course the report would be published on the Parish Council's website along with other AGAR documents as required under the Transparency Code.

v. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2018/19 AGAR SECTION 1

The Parish Council considered the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31 March 2019 and RESOLVED to approve an affirmative response to be recorded for all sections. The statement was duly signed by both the Chairman and the Locum Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer.

vi. ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2018/19 AGAR SECTION 2

The Parish Council considered and RESOLVED to approve the Annual Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2019 and the Chairman signed this document in confirmation.

It was noted that all the AGAR documents were required to be made publicly available on the Parish Council's website by 1st July 2019 and the statutory period for public rights would be properly observed, to include the first ten working days of July 2019.

25/19 TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Arising from discussion at an earlier Meeting referenced Minute 5/19, a grant application had since been received from St Giles C of E Primary School. Some funding was already committed by a local resident and the school was hoping for an additional sum, up to £54,000, towards building an extension to provide two extra classrooms.

The Parish Council was keen to support the project which appeared to satisfy the restricted spending conditions attaching to earmarked funds received under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) scheme from the collecting authority, Hertsmere Borough Council.

The Locum Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council currently held £22,568.55 in CIL earmarked funds brought forward from 2016/17 and 2017/18, and that a further amount of £1,187.60 had been received on 29th April

2019. These and future payments of CIL could not easily be predicted as they depended on surcharges collected by Hertsmere Borough Council from qualifying developments.

Cllr Edwards reminded the Meeting that the Parish Council was required to spend its CIL money only on projects directly linked to infrastructure changes resulting from increased development in the area. Other works which had been suggested by members of the public at the Meeting, such as traffic calming measures and an electric vehicle charging point, did not qualify for CIL spending, but dependent on obtaining detailed costing and feasibility reports such local improvements could be considered for future financial support from the Parish Council's other funds. The Parish Council would be glad to receive support from residents in researching such projects, particularly in the ongoing vacancy for a permanent Parish Clerk.

Subject to the proviso that final clearance be obtained from Hertsmere Borough Council on the use of the CIL monies for the project, it was RESOLVED to approve a grant of £25,000 to St Giles C of E Primary School. This would comprise £23,756.15 in accumulated CIL income and £1,243.85 from unrestricted funds.

26/19 FINANCE SCHEDULE

i. CHANGE OF BANK MANDATE

Following the changes in Parish Councillors since the last financial year, it was RESOLVED that Mr A. Brewster be removed and Mr N Pumfrey be added to the mandate at Nat West Bank. Cllrs Harverson and Pumfrey would arrange a mutually convenient time for a visit to the branch to complete the necessary forms.

ii. PRECEPT 2019/20

The receipt on 1st April 2019 of the Precept requested from Hertsmere Borough Council of £13,582 was noted.

iii. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

As referred to in Minute 25/19, it was noted that an amount of £1,187.60 had been received on 29th April 2019

iv. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

Cheque	Date	Amount	Payee	For
000310	16 /05/19	£391.40	HAPTC	Annual membership subscription
000311	16 /05/19	£40.00	HAPTC	Councillor information literature & Councillor training materials
000312	16 /05/19	£28.99	J Reading	Expenses
000313	16 /05/19	£755.19	J Reading	Salary
000314	16 /05/19	£60.00	SMVHMC	Hall Hire Jan-May 2019
000315	16 /05/19	£25,000.00	St Giles School	Grant towards extension project
direct debit	May 19	£35.00	Information Comm. Office	Annual registration fee (due by direct debit May 2019)
a/c transfer	17/05/19	£26,500.00		Transfer from deposit to current account

27/19 COUNCILLOR TRAINING

It was noted that HAPTC would be running training courses for new Councillors over the summer and Cllr Pumfrey would be offered attendance at one, which would be paid for by the Parish Council. The Locum Clerk pointed out that an electronic pack of the course materials was available from HAPTC at £20.00 and suggested that this would be a useful resource for all Councillors. A cheque to HAPTC for the training materials was authorised at Minute 26/19 iv.

28/19 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A table as appended to these Minutes and showing current planning applications under consideration by Hertsmere Borough Council, as well as a list of decisions made in the previous 6 months, was received. All the cases were noted without comment with one exception:

[Retention of existing 2m Palisade fence to front and side boundary.](#)

Land Adjacent To Romani St Albans Road South Mimms Hertfordshire

Ref. No: 19/0493/FUL | Received: Fri 29 Mar 2019 | Validated: Mon 29 Apr 2019 | Status: Awaiting decision.

The Locum Clerk was asked to write to express the Parish Council’s concern at the height of the fencing and to urge that this be reduced to 1.8m maximum.

29/19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Arnold took the opportunity to thank Mrs Beadle and Mr Fowler once again for their support for the Parish Council.

None.

31/19 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the date of the next Meeting of the Parish Council was scheduled for Thursday 13th June, *subject to the availability of a new Parish Clerk or another person being willing and able to prepare the agenda and to take minutes.*

No further dates had yet been arranged with the lettings administrator for the Village Hall. Three more meetings would need to be held before 31 March 2020 to satisfy the Parish Council’s statutory obligations.

32/19 PUBLIC QUESTION SESSION

Residents asked about progress on various ongoing matters. The Locum Clerk advised that she had attempted to follow up some items but that the amount of time required was beyond her commitment to the Parish Council for reasons already stated. Councillors advised that without a permanent Parish Clerk there was little chance of advancement, unless perhaps residents would come forward to support the Parish Council and the community by taking on the work needed. Residents were welcome to volunteer to get involved in the following mixture of examples of existing and potential concerns to be addressed:

- Defibrillator installation and training
- Inconsiderate parking issues
- Road safety measures (Hertfordshire County Council responsibility)
- Electric vehicle charging point
- Installation of disabled parking bay behind church
- Reporting/policing antisocial behaviour
- Liaison with community police
- Monitoring of planning activities, e.g. St Albans Road site, Huwaei hubs
- Blackhorse Lane roadworks
- Fly-tipping
- Possibility of extra public notice boards to display Parish Council business

The Meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

Chair Date