MINUTES OF HARTLIP ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL 2024** AT 18:00PM IN HARTLIP VILLAGE HALL, MEETING ROOM

Present:	Cllr T Daley (Chair)
Officer:	Mr C Henley (Clerk)
External Attendees:	Cllr R Palmer Cllr C Palmer
Apologies:	Cllr M Baldock
Members of the public:	Seven residents

Minutes

1.APM/04/24 **Welcome to the Meeting**
The meeting was opened by a welcome by the chair of the Parish Council Cllr Daley

2.APM/04/24 **Approval of Minutes from 2023 Parish Meeting**
There are none

3.APM/04/24 **Annual Report**
Cllr Daley delivered his annual report, attached to minutes.

4.APM/04/24 **Community Police Report**
PC Philip Clemens was present at the meeting to deliver PC Jez Chittims local police report in his place, attached to minutes.

5.APM/04/24 **Borough Council**
Cllrs Chris & Richard Palmer were present at the meeting. Cllr C Palmer reported that there was an increase of funding for camera equipment to combat fly tipping in Swale through the year. Cllr C Palmer also mentioned that she had applied to represent Swale for the Health Trust at Medway Maritime Hospital. Both Cllr C Palmer and Cllr R Palmer spoke regarding the issues surrounding the refuse collection following the change of contractor from Biffa to Suez. The councillors anticipated some weeks of disruption before the issues are resolved. The councillors urged residents with problems to report the issues to them for collating back to the council.

6.APM/04/24 **County Council**
Cllr M Baldock was absent due to a prior council meeting.

7.APM/04/24 **Local Community Groups**
There were none

8.APM/04/24 **Open Forum Questions and Statements**
There were none

9.APM/04/24 **Close of Meeting**
18:51

Hartlip Parish Council
Chairmans Annual Report 2023/2024

Summary
Firstly I want to thank all the Councillors and the Clerk for their hard work, commitment and time since the new council was formed in June 2023.

There have been many challenges through the reformation and transition to a mainly new council, many with no previous council experience. But with help and guidance from the new Clerk, existing Parish Councillors, the outgoing Chairman, County Council and Borough Councillors I think we have re-established and gone on to maintain the effective operation of Hartlip Parish Council following a significant event of mass resignation which for a short period saw the village with no operational Parish Council.

As we move into our second year we now have a good foundation and are in a good financial position - so it's now down to the Parish Council to demonstrate its worth to the residents of Hartlip as we move into the 2024/2025 period.

Purpose of the Parish Council
A Parish Council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people and in our case in the village of Hartlip. The Council and its unpaid volunteer councillors welcomes the support, views and input of the local community. Your local council is the first stop for concerns and ideas to improve your village as a place to live, work and play. We will help by escalating issues to the principal authorities, Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council.

Residents can ask questions and raise issues or concerns at any time by emailing or writing to the Parish Clerk – full details are shown on the website.

2023 Reformation of Hartlip Parish Council
Hartlip Parish Council went through great change in 2023, firstly 2 new councillor's, Melanie Rose and Sharon Black joined the council by co-option in February. Then followed a number of resignations with only Sharon Black and John Davies remaining and therefore rendering the Parish Council inquorate (minimum number of councillor's not met for the council to operate) at the May elections. The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer also resigned their position.

Following application, the following persons stood validly nominated at the latest time for the delivery of notices of withdrawal of candidature, namely 4 p.m. on Friday, 02 June 2023, and were duly elected Parish Councillors for the said Parish without contest.

1. Daley, Tobias James Alexander (Known as Toby Daley)
2. Davies, John Newman
3. Harper, Deborah Marie (Known as Debbie Harper)
4. Maleed, Gaye Elizabeth
5. Rose, Melanie Joanne

They joined John K Davies and Sharon Black making a Parish Council of 7 councillors.

The June full council meeting was lead by the outgoing Chair and a locum was appointed following the resignation of the previous clerk. The outgoing Chair read out his annual report for 2022/2023 period which had been delayed from May due to the council being inquorate.

A new Chair (myself) and Vice Chair (Sharon Black) were voted in by members of the new Parish Council.

The July meeting saw the introduction of Clive Henley as the potential new Clerk for Hartlip Parish Council following discussions with Cllr Daley and then a F2F interview with Cllr Daley and Cllr Maleed. Cllr Daley detailed the urgency and importance of appointing a replacement Clerk/RFO and proposed that the Council offer the position of Clerk/RFO to Mr Henley which was resolved unanimously.

As the Parish Council was a new team, it was agreed to elect members to the various Parish responsibilities and village amenities and the following was resolved:

1. The Recreation Ground – Cllr Debbie Harper
2. The Parkland – Cllr Melanie Rose
3. Allotments – Cllr John N Davies
4. Hartlip Village Hall – Cllr Melanie Rose
5. Highways, Footpaths and Environment – Cllr Sharon Black
6. The War Memorial – Cllr Toby Daley
7. The Village Pond – Cllr Gaye Maleed
8. Planning coordination and submissions – Cllr Gaye Maleed
9. Parish Council Website – The Clerk

Transition
The outgoing council had largely been in place for many years, Graham Addicott OBE had served 31 years and 18 years as Chairman. So there was lots of knowledge, history and expertise for the new Councillors to follow and get to grips with.

The new Parish Council members are mainly beginners in the world of local council matters and there has been and still is, lots to learn.

Graham Addicott OBE provided me, the new chair with various handover documents and notes to help me and made himself available to the new council for help and guidance and that was appreciated.

Hartlip Parish Council and the Hartlip Village Hall
The relationship between HPC and the village hall is often misunderstood and with a largely new Parish Council team it was important to get a understanding how the entities fit together.

The current Hartlip Village Hall Management Committee (HVHMC) took over the management of the charity circa 9 years ago and much work has been done over those years to resolve the problems inherited including poor financial position, poor maintenance, health and safety matters and even subsidence damage.

There is clearly a lot of history with the Village Hall and Parish Council and it was difficult to understand how the entities fitted together, so the following is how it is seen by HPC:

Hartlip Parish Council (HPC) as a corporate body is the 'Custodian Trustee' of the Village Hall on the following basis:

- *'Custodian Trustee'* of the Village Hall – the Parish Council holds the property but takes no decisions on its use
- The role of the '*Custodian Trustee'* is very limited
- The Village Hall (charity property) should be listed in the Parish Council's assets register but with nil value
- Responsibility for insurance of the charity property falls on the '*Managing Trustees'* of the Village Hall charity
- *'Managing Trustees'* of the Village Hall charity have to be quorate i.e. majority constitutes quorum
- The *'Custodian Trustee'* (the Parish Council) has no power to manage the property and no role in the administration of the Village Hall charity
- It is convenient to have the Parish Council as '*Custodian Trustee*' because the Parish Council has a perpetual legal status and identity and thus is capable of holding charity property forever. The situation may be contrasted with other individual trustees who change and consequently new trustees are required and the charity property has to be transferred into the name of the new trustees.
- *'Custodian Trustees'* (the Parish Council) can only assist the *'Managing Trustees'* - The 'Custodian Trustees' cannot have any management responsibilities itself.

Source: LTN 28 Basic Charity Law, National Association of Local Councils (24/12/2020)

HPC is currently working with Hartlip Village Hall Management Committee (HVHMC) to ensure everything is present and correct between the two teams.

2024/2025 Precept
The new council inherited the previous council precept of £8,000 for 2023/2024 which was agreed and set in January 2023.

A working group was formed to set the 2024/2025 budget in October 2023.

It was quickly established that due to increasing costs the precept could not remain at £8,000 for the forthcoming year, furthermore the new councils drive to make tangible differences in the village meant there needed to be further investment and that meant a substantial increase in the precept.

New unbudgeted costs also came in such as the web host no longer offering a free service, fly tipping on HPC land which cost £450 to clear.

The full statement and justification is held on the Parish website but with maintenance of Parkland, Recreation Ground and Play Equipment a precept of £20,000 per year was agreed and set for 2024/2025.

Your individual property cost will depend on your council tax band but as an example, an individual property cost for an average **Band D** property for the annual precept of £20,000 equates to £54.15 per year or £1.04 per week less than the annual cost of a Swale Borough Council garden rubbish brown bin.

Along with Bobbing Parish Council, Hartlip, hit the headlines in Kent Online on 28th March 2024 due to the increase, some online comments to the news item demonstrated that there was a lack of understanding on how Parish Councils operate - the Parish Councillors were not off to buy a new car! As many of you do know, the Parish Councillors are all volunteers and give their time generously to maintain Parish interests for all residents in a village they live in and love.

Only the Clerk is paid and that is in accordance with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) pay scales.

Any expenses incurred by Councillors such as travel expenses have been personally absorbed.

Full Council Meetings
These have continued to be held in the Meeting Room at the Village Hall on the second Wednesday of the month. The start time has changed to 7pm and the meetings usually run for around 2 hours.

Every month there is a public participation section. The council is keen to encourage public attendance at meetings and will therefore provide an opportunity to parish registered electors, to participate in meetings. Residents are permitted 3 minutes to speak and the public session is restricted to 15 minutes, unless extended by the Chair. The Council recommends that you email the Clerk if you want to attend/speak prior to the meeting.

External visitors have included County Councillor Mike Baldock, Ward Councillors Richard Palmer and Chris Palmer and Stockbury Parish Councillor Geoff Moody.

Their reports, contributions, help and support are very much appreciated and particularly helpful for such a new council with many of the councillors having a lot to learn.

Communication with Residents
The new council continues to update residents via the HPC website, the Parish Notice Board on The Street and the Hartlip and Stockbury Forum magazine.

The website continues to be regularly updated and now includes the monthly HPC Forum submission. Constructive feedback is welcomed good and bad and we want to ensure that the website provides the information that the residents want and need.

'Today in Hartlip' Facebook page and the **'Hartlip Residents Chat**' WhatsApp group are not run by Hartlip Parish Council and have no affiliation with the two social media channels.

Early into the new councils tenure a message was put out on WhatsApp that the council would not engage in debate on the messaging app and if residents had any questions or require any assistance they should be directed to the Clerk via email.

Very occasionally, the council may use either channels to let residents know of something of particular interest such as a public consultation or event, but will not engage in debate recognising that social media can sometimes lack boundaries and control.

The Council encourages residents to sign up to the Councils email alerts via the website and we believe this is the best way for the council to communicate to residents electronically.

Planning Matters
Cllr Gaye Maleed manages all the planning matters and communication with Swale Borough Council having discussed and agreed response with councillors at the monthly full council meetings.

The new council will continue the work of the previous council in considering detrimental effects on the conservation area, its heritage assets and also on the village as a whole.

The number of planning applications in the period are in the 30's which is a similar amount to the previous year albeit we may be seeing a uptick in 2024.

The HPC website now has a simple to use Planning Tracker which you can view by list or map and you can view the full details of the application with a simple click of a button.

Police Liaison
We are lucky in that Hartlip has a very low crime rate. Other than fly tipping and speeding - burglary and anti-social behaviour is low.

The Parish Council has established a close working relationship with PC Jez Chittim who is now producing a monthly newsletter on Policing matters.

Jez has also run some surgeries where residents can come and meet him and his colleagues . Last month the surgery was run in conjunction with the Church coffee morning and was very successful.

We are very fortunate to have such an engaged police officer for our community. As reported in the Hartlip and Stockbury Forum this month PC Chittim has been incredibly helpful in liaising with KCC Environmental Response Team (ERT) and we are pleased to report that they have agreed the use of covert cameras within the parish. So HPC will be working with the ERT team to agree locations and arrange site visits and get things installed soon.

Highways
A highway improvement plan is maintained by the Council continuing the previous councils hard work particularly around reding speeding in the village which is a long running issue dating back many years.

Parish Council Defibrillator
The HPC owned defibrillator inside the village hall is due for replacement. Cllr Sharon Black was successful in obtaining a grant to help with the replacement costs. The Parish Council was keen for the new Diffibrilator to be located externally for easy access. Through discussion with Hartlip Village Hall Management Committee (HVHMC) the Village Hall decided that

they would purchase and install their own defib, so the Parish Council considered other locations for the new HPC purchased defibrillator. The Parish Council was delighted when the Tuck Inn agreed to be a location for the new Parish defibrillator and this is due to be installed very soon and will complement the existing one at the Rose & Crown pub.

Speeding
Speeding continues to be an issue in the village and is perhaps exacerbated by the recent local road closures and Stockbury M2/A249 junction improvements with drivers cutting through the lanes and village to avoid the congestion brought on by these activities. That said this is not a new issue. Back in 2009 it hit the news with Kent Online that there were worries about Hartlip Road safety with Lower Hartlip Road being used as a rat run. The previous Parish Council had long lobbied for speed reductions and were successful in reducing limits around the village.
The new Council has continued this lobbying and Kent Highways have visited the village and further speed surveys have been carried out. Mike Baldock has also been very supportive to the Parish Council and has also joined meetings with the Parish Council and Kent Highways towards the end of 2023.

A public consultation on the issue closed on 31/3/2024 and the results are currently being collated. The Parish Council will then present the results to Kent Highways with the expectation that we will obtain a reduction in speed limit or other measures to protect residents and pedestrians in the village.

The Parkland
Cllr Melanie Rose is the council member who has responsibility for the Parkland.

The history and the background to the Parkland can be found on the Parish Council website it was purchased by the Parish Council in 1983 so that it could be preserved as a tranquil and unspoilt green space for present and future generations to enjoy and value.

Access is gained from either the main gate off of Lower Hartlip Road or from the footpath that runs down from The Street.

The Parish Council receives income from the fees paid for grazing horses on the Parkland.

Having such an amenity is wonderful for the village but it comes with a cost for maintenance of fencing, trees and regular spraying for weed control and this year will run cost circa £4,000 alone just for replacement fencing and spraying.

The outgoing Chairman had recommended in his 2022/2023 report that the grazing fees needed reviewing and this was done by the new council at the beginning of 2024 with an increase effected which still gave value for money relative to other local options.

Peter Blandon is conducting a review of the condition of the trees in the Parkland and Cllr Rose will report back to the Council once this has been completed.

The Queen's Green Canopy was a nationwide initiative created to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022 and the Parish Council planted 7 oak trees. Cllr Rose reported that not all the oak saplings had taken so we need to decide whether further saplings should be planted.

The Recreation Ground
Cllr Debbie Harper is the council member who has responsibility for the Recreation Ground.

The history and the background of the Recreation Ground can be found on the Parish Council website but the land was originally gifted to the Parish in 1929.

The children's play area requires annual inspection and maintenance and with ageing play equipment this requires regular maintenance which comes at a cost.

Some residents had commented about the possibility of new equipment being installed, the costs relative to the current precept were explained. A public consultation then ran until 31st March 2024, the results are being collated but we were pleased with the response volume. Furthermore we are extremely grateful to one Hartlip resident for a large donation to the Parish Council which is earmarked for essential restoration/refurbishment of the equipment in the play area. Also a big thank you to another Hartlip resident who's excellent 2024 calendar of Hartlip views and sold in the village over Christmas raised circa £500 for the play equipment too.

Additional maintenance work was also required in the recreation ground. The existing grounds maintenance firm employed simply cut the grass and the boarders had kept growing inward without control. Hedgerows are important for wildlife, soil and climate, however some maintenance is required to ensure footpaths, the playing field and play equipment does not get overgrown and some catching up work was completed in February this year.

As part of the budget process we reviewed and obtained new quotes from grounds maintenance firms resulting in the Parish Council moving the contract to The Eco Gardner who also happens to be a resident of Hartlip and provided better value.

During last summer an accident occurred when an adult fell off the swings. An ambulance was called but there were access problems because the keyholder was not around. The padlock was cut off to gain access to the injured person with

a stretcher. Since then a working group was established to consider if any improvements to the recreation ground are needed. The main one being for a change of locking device to a combination lock with signage with a Parish Council mobile phone number which enables anyone needing legitimate emergency access to call for the code, the code is then immediately changed. The mobile phone will be rotated around the council members.

Finally, following a review last summer access is being considered and whilst it is understood from the previous Vice Chairman that there had been previous issues with motorcycles accessing the Rec we do need to think about access for people with disabilities and limited mobility both in the Rec and the Parkland, but of course this comes at further cost.

Hartlip Conservation Area
The previous Parish Council had pressed Swale Borough Council hard for an audit of the conservation area and this resulted in the conservation area being extended in 2023.

Allotments
Cllr John N Davies is the council member who has responsibility for the Allotments.

An updated allotment contract was introduced last year and there have been teething problems with the contract that are still being resolved. We hope to have these sorted very soon.

At the end of last year a delivery of over 100 saplings arrived which had been arranged by the previous Chair and 3 volunteers including myself spent a Saturday morning planting them.

The saplings were all native varieties from the Woodland Trust and will form a pleasant hedgerow along the boundary of the village hall car park and the allotments.

The War Memorial
Myself Cllr Toby Daley is the council member who has responsibility for the War Memorial.

The war memorial was listed Grade 2 in 2022. It requires extensive restoration and it has been confirmed a grant will be available but not how much. A quote has been obtained for just over £8,000 by a local stonemason and the next step is to obtain 2 further quotes and submit for consideration of the grant available.

HPC also is holding £1,500 which is earmarked for the war memorial which was raised at the Kings Coronation event in May 2023 at Popes Hall.

Annual Litter Pick
Thanks for Cllr John K Davies for making the arrangements for this year's litter pick on the morning of Saturday 13th April.

I will be heading to pick up all the kit from SBC's Sittingbourne office on Friday morning.

The 80th anniversary of the Normandy Landings
On 5 and 6 June this year, a series of major commemorations in the UK and France will honour the brave personnel who risked their lives for freedom and peace.

A working group is currently planning an event the details of which will be released very soon.

Cllr Toby Daley
Chair of Hartlip Parish Council
10/04/2024

Hartlip newsletter

Kent Police

Get the latest crime statistics by visiting: www.kent.police.uk/yourarea

April 2024

Drop-in surgery

- Wednesday 1st May – 10:30 to 12:00
- St Michaels and All Angels Church, Hartlip

Your local officer is Police Officer

Jez Chittim

Fly tipping update

- I conducted a joint visit with the Environmental Response Team (ERT) from Swale Borough Council to assess the fly tipping and future evidence capture and enforcement action. They recorded fly tipping along Warren Lane (Disappointingly I have been back there today following a period of annual leave and it is still there, if not worse). I will chase this, however the greater number of contributions residents can provide in reporting this and chasing, the greater the response will be.

  In terms of enforcement action, they need more resident reports of fly tipping, however are still looking at covert CCTV.

- There is a volunteer clean up team within Swale Borough Council. I have spoken with them, and they are going to come as a team and carry out litter picking activities and general clear up in Hartlip on Saturday 13th April between 09:30 and 12:30. Unfortunately I am not working that day, otherwise I'd have supported their efforts.

- ERT can provide high visibility tabards, litter pickers and strong rubbish bags for volunteers from the community wishing to conduct local litter pick events moving forward.

- Please also raise for discussion at the Parish Council meeting the scheme in existence in Borden of which I emailed about on 29/03/24 and if there is interest, I will try to arrange someone from ERT attends a Parish Council meeting soon or at least make contact.

Hartlip newsletter

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April 2024

Calls of note

- Nuisance motorbike/quadbike on 24/03/2024 throughout Hartlip. There have been no further reports of this call type, however as the weather improves, I suspect this will increase. It is quite difficult to catch quad bikers/off road motorbikes; however if anyone can provide me with CCTV footage (SAFELY) of which allows identification of the offender(s) and the offence being committed, I will retrospectively deal with it. This may include the seizing of vehicle and the perpetrator issued with a Traffic Offence Report or summonsed to Court which could land them points/fine and or disqualification from driving. If there is a lack of evidence but residents are aware of anyone who owns such a bike, I am happy to be given those names and pay home visits to hopefully prevent these types of incidents in the first place.

Hartlip Endowed C of E Primary School

- A resident raised concerns regarding idling engines from parents vehicles of pupils from the school when dropping them off before school and waiting to collect them after school. I have spoken with Mrs Jerome (Headteacher) and she will be reminding parents to switch their engines off when waiting. I can obtain signage from Swale Borough Council advising motorists to switch off their engines when parked. Is this something the Parish Council feel the community would like and benefit from? (It would be series of small signs attached to a pre-existing fence or post).
- A date has not yet been set, however following a positive meeting with Mrs Jerome, moving into the new term, I will be conducting a meet and greet at the school gate to parents and children, followed by a joint police surgery with SATEDA (Domestic Abuse charity) at the school. The idea behind this, is to offer support to anyone who is or may know of someone suffering from domestic abuse. The school

run may be the only time of day they have of which they do not need to account for.