

Hampstead Norreys Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Thursday 27th April 2023. Held in the Memorial Room, Hampstead Norreys Village Hall. Commencing at 7:33 pm

Members Present: Councillor David Barlow, Chairman
Councillor Ros Maskell, Vice-Chairman
Councillor Fiona Bennett
Councillor Colin Layton
Councillor Harriet McCalmont
Councillor Gwenan Paul

Members Absent: Councillor Caroline Herman

Officers Present: Sarah Marshman, Clerk

In Attendance: District Councillor Carolyne Culver
2 Members of the Public

Minutes

1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Caroline Herman and from representatives of Hampstead Norreys Village Hall, Hampstead Norreys Community Shop and the Hampstead Norreys Parish Partnership.

2 To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28th April 2022

Those present agreed the minutes of the last meeting be accepted as a true record. The Minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

3 To receive a report from District Councillor Carolyne Culver

Over the past four years, CC has obtained around £22,000 in funding for the villages in the Ridgeway Ward, including funds towards the speed indicator device and the play area safety surface in Hampstead Norreys.

The 'report a problem' page on the West Berkshire Council (WBC) website has been improved and photos and what three words references can now be added

WBC has provided hardship grants to help with the cost of living crisis.

There has recently been a petition to create hedgehog highways on new developments – this is where holes are cut in the bottom of fences to allow movement.

4 To receive the Annual Report from the Chairman

WHAT DO WE DO?

Whilst a Parish Councillor is an elected representative, it should be noted that the role is unpaid. However, as an officer of the council, the Clerk is a paid employee. We meet bi-monthly when we review various aspects of the village including; Planning - Dog bins - Playing Area & Lighting to name a few.

SPEEDING

The SID (Speed Indicator Device) was purchased by the PC in 2022, jointly with Yattendon PC. We obtained approval from WBC for the SID equipment to be installed in ten sites in the village in July 2022.

The equipment has been moved around the village in the last six months and has shown some very interesting data. The details from each location have been posted on our Facebook Page.

The equipment is now with Yattendon PC and will revert to us in October 2023. We will then from the data we have already collected set up the equipment in what has proved to be the sites with the biggest problem, so we can reassess.

Once this has been completed, we will, through the Community Speed Watch Programme, look at recording specific details of those speeding. We will be looking for volunteers to help with this part of the process.

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

We have now installed new safety surfaces around the remainder of the play equipment. This was at a significant cost, however, for the improved safety of our youth, we felt this was a price worth paying.

It was unfortunate that the facility was out of use during the February half term. The works had been scheduled for earlier but a combination of weather and staffing issues by the contractor lead to the delays. The Council was sorry it was out of use but who would have expected such good weather in February?

PHONE BOX

The physical telephone service ended early March 2023. The phone had been used only 5 times in the previous 12-month period.

The Parish Council still owns the phone box and will be re-purposing it as a book exchange, Tourist Information so details of walks in the parish, local history documents, as well as window art for the village youth (this will be monitored)

FAREWELLS...

It is always sad to say goodbye.

Colin Layton – served since 2002

Caroline Herman – served since 2015 (Previously Clerk to the council for many years on top of this)

Gwenan Paul – served since 2011

Can I please pass my thanks to you all for your individual commitments to our parish? Losing 40 years of experience is quite a loss! We do, however, welcome the two new members joining and look forward to the year ahead.

5 To receive the Annual Finance Report from the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer

The Clerk presented her report which is in Appendix 1.

6 To receive reports from Village Groups and Organisations

Flood Warden

The Flood Warden and the Chairman of the Parish Council are both members of the Pang Valley Flood Forum (PVFF). The PVFF exists to forewarn, forewarn and help people plan for flooding events. The PVFF also ensures the Environment Agency, Thames Water, and WBC are held to account – these organisations also attend the meetings.

The PVFF is party to actions being taken by Thames Water – this year Thames Water pumped some of the local water in the chalk to put in the river to alleviate a drought in London.

The PVFF website scrapes data from all the major organisations and provides a full overview of the local situation. This can be viewed at floodalleviation.uk.

Cricket Club

A representative of the Hampstead Norreys Cricket Club gave a report which is in Appendix 2.

Reports from other organisations were read out and can be viewed as follows:

Hampstead Norreys Village Hall – Appendix 3

Hampstead Norreys Parish Partnership – Appendix 4

7 To receive questions from members of the public

There were no questions.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8:19 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1: Annual Finance Report

The finance report for Hampstead Norreys Parish Council for the financial year 2022/23 is presented. Please note that all figures are subject to audit.

Income

The total income received from all sources of funding was £43,661.

Significant figures included in this total are:

- Precept £25,908
- Grants towards the safety surface in the play area:
 - The National Lottery £10,000
 - Gerald Palmer Trust £2,000
- Grant from West Berkshire Council towards the speed indicator device £808
- Grant towards the goalposts from The Football Foundation £938
- VAT refund £3,336
- Interest £281
- Allotment rent £189.

Expenditure

The total expenditure for the year was £53,604.

Significant figures included in this total are:

- New surfacing in the play area £21,980
- Play area repairs £1,957
- Grounds maintenance £3,170
- Staff employment costs £4,519
- Insurance £805
- Audit £403
- Refuse disposal £2,015
- Electricity for streetlights £798
- VAT £6,917 (reclaimable)
- Speed indicator device (SID) £1,617
- Community noticeboard £2,150.

The following organisations benefited from donations:

- St Mary's Church (for grass cutting) £1,200

- West Berkshire Countryside Society £100
- Downland Volunteer Group £100
- Pang Valley Flood Forum £100
- Greenfest £200
- Citizens Advice West Berkshire £100
- Swings and Smiles £100

The council had also been holding funds for the Chuckles Toddlers Group. As this has now been successfully restarted, these funds, of £2,891, were transferred to the new group.

Looking Forward to 2023/24

The Council has increased the precept to £25,912. We have been fortunate in that we have only needed to increase the precept by £4 to meet our predicted expenditure in 23/24. A Band D household will pay a total of £72.45 in the year, or just £1.39 per week.

The council was fortunate to raise enough funding last year to meet the full costs of the installation of the safety surface in the play area. Therefore, the project has not needed to continue into the current year as previously expected and has resulted in some savings in the overall expected costs. The council has therefore been able to look at other projects and has agreed to install a sunshade in the play area at a cost of £2,550.

The council has also budgeted £5,000 to assist with the installation costs of LED bollards near the Village Hall and to possibly replace the two streetlights in the village that the council owns. These items will be dependent on agreement by the council before they can go ahead, and the council is attempting to contact Sovereign regarding ongoing maintenance of the streetlights.

It is expected that large items of expenditure will continue to include grounds maintenance, refuse disposal and employment costs.

Appendix 2: Hampstead Norreys Cricket Club

Another season and another round of Cheese & Cucumber Sandwiches to come.

Want to play cricket? We are a small friendly club that play adult cricket Matches Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons. There is no requirement to play every week or in both teams.

Rollerthon

We repeated our 24-hour rollerthon on Saturday 18th March, a continual rolling of the cricket square in preparation for the season ahead. Everyone paid £20 to do a shift and donate £20 if they couldn't...We raised £320 Bizarrely nobody was prepared to roll from 2am-6am

Net Refurbishment

At the back end of last season we hatched a plan to refurb our two practice nets. Invested in a new set of nets, many hands making light work over a 2-3 week period, and voila...cricket nets to be proud of again.

New Scoreboard

With the proceeds of our rollerthon, we have upgraded our scoreboard. We have leapt into the 21st Century with an LED board. So, when HNCC are slogging it out for a win on a gloomy evening down the rabbit bowl of Hampstead Norreys at least we will be able to see the score even if we can't see the ball!

Indoor Winter Cricket

Played in Dummer near Basingstoke, Indoor Cricket is a very different discipline to any form of cricket you may understand. This winter was a distinct learning curve as we entered the leagues.

Wednesday Evening T20

Again we find ourselves in the Downes League, Division 3 South. 10 Games to come through the season.

Sunday Cricket

2023 sees a new Sunday Captain 'Aadeesh' taking on the roll. Sunday cricket is the longer 35+ over style of matches. The traditional cricket tea with the sound of leather on willow. We have 16 Fixtures for the summer ahead.

Net training sessions are planned for Monday nights from 3rd April 6.00-7.30pm so come and chat with us!

Want to support the club, but don't want to play?

Other ways to get involved: Sunday cricket teas — once per season & costs paid.
Pitch preparation / Umpiring / Scoring / Spectating.

We would love to hear from you, please get in touch: www.hampsteadnorreys.play-cricket.com / www.facebook.com/HampsteadnorreysCC / E: hnccommittee@gmail.com

Appendix 3: Hampstead Norreys Village Hall

Bookings

Following the removal of all Covid-related restrictions during 2021 & '22, regular users of the village hall are resuming their regular meetings and usage of the village hall is returning to pre-Covid levels.

Activities

The Parent & Toddler group ('Chuckles') continues to meet on a regular basis.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to reopen the Youth Club. Taster sessions were organised during the second half of 2022 and proved very popular with local children (of primary school age). However, insufficient parents/adults have volunteered to assist with the club evenings to enable the club activities to safely recommence.

Football training on Dean Meadow has resumed for youth teams – including girls. The Parish Council facilitated a significant grant from the Football Foundation to provide mobile goals.

The costs of providing two tennis courts on Dean Meadow has proved too high and discussions have not progressed.

We are also reminding members of the community that the Village Hall and Dean Meadow are a valuable community asset which is available for use.

Refurbishment of Village Hall

Discussions with builders for the planned extension were suspended during the pandemic and have not yet recommenced.

So far, the building has benefitted from new doors and windows and low-energy lighting. Low-energy heating units are planned for installation this year plus a general redecoration.

CCTV equipment has been installed to deter vandalism of the hall, car park and play equipment.

Repairs to the roof during the year have included replacing damaged tiles and refixing ridges.

The displays of the 'regulations for use' for the Dean Meadow have been simplified and replaced.

A hedge has been planted along the southern boundary marking the extension to the burial ground.

A commemorative tree has been planted on Dean Meadow to mark the late Queen's 70th anniversary.

Governance

In order to clarify the governance of the Village Hall, a number of changes have been implemented over the past two years:

- The Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) was formalised as a sub-committee of the Hampstead Norreys Amenities Trust (HNAT) - who are the leaseholders for Dean Meadow and owners of the Village Hall,
- A new set of bank accounts have been opened with Unity Bank to replace NatWest Bank,
- The reporting arrangements for the original HN War Memorial Trust are being incorporated into the Annual Report & Accounts of the Amenities Trust to the Charities Commission.

Chairman, Village Hall Management Committee
April 2023

Appendix 4: Parish Partnership

1. The Hampstead Norreys Parish Partnership successfully applied for a Grant from Greenham Trust to cover the costs associated with Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee celebrations in our village.

Greenham Trust granted us a Matched Funding grant as a result of which a total of £2,235 was raised to cover the cost of all the activities that were planned by the village's Jubilee Committee to celebrate this one in a lifetime event.

2. As of last October, the responsibility for running and maintaining the Community Website has passed from the HN Parish Partnership to the Village Hall Committee.