

Hampstead Norreys Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held Online via Zoom on Thursday 29th April 2021.
Commencing at 7:51pm.

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

Members Absent: Councillor Caroline Herman

Officers Present: Sarah Marshman, Clerk

In Attendance: Elizabeth Howard – Hampstead Norreys Community Shop
George Greenham – Parish Partnership
Kris Miller – Hampstead Norreys Tennis Club
Ron Howard – Hampstead Norreys Amenities Trust / Village Hall

Minutes

- 1. To receive apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Herman.
- 2. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 29th April 2019**
Those present agreed the minutes of the last meeting be accepted as a true record. The minutes will be signed at the first opportunity the Council has to meet face to face.
- 3. To receive a report from District Councillor Carolyne Culver**
CC sent her apologies and provided the report at Appendix 1.
- 4. To receive the annual report from the Chairman**
There have been a lot of planning applications recently. Despite COVID being a serious matter, it is believed that no one in the village has lost their life as a result of this virus. The Parish Council has continued to work behind the scenes, meeting on a virtual platform. It has been a constructive year and everyone has put in a lot of effort so thank you.
- 5. To receive the annual finance report from the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer**
The Clerk provided the Finance Report at Appendix 2.

6. To receive reports from Village Groups and Organisations

Kris Miller – Hampstead Norreys Tennis Club

The Tennis Club is a newly formed club, picking up the challenge from the Parish Partnership survey for a tennis club. There is a good level of interest from within the village. The Tennis Club is hoping to install two tennis courts at Dean Meadow and has created a business plan for this. The Club is discussing this with the Hampstead Norreys Amenities Trust who manage the Dean.

Ron Howard – Hampstead Norreys Amenities Trust / Village Hall

Ron provided the report on the Village Hall at Appendix 3.

Elizabeth Howard – Hampstead Norreys Community Shop

It has been an extraordinarily difficult year due to COVID. The shop has been able to stay open throughout, although this has been on reduced hours as many volunteers were shielding and has been an important lifeline for the village. It is hoped the café will reopen soon as restrictions ease. The shop is hoping to see the return of many of its volunteers, and would like to hear from new volunteers so the shop can return to its full hours. At the AGM the shop is seeking to support local groups with donations. A summer market will be held on 26th June, and it is hoped this will be something of a celebration to come together as a community. The 10 year anniversary of the shop occurred during lockdown.

David Barlow – Hampstead Norreys Cricket Club

The Cricket Club was able to hold some junior games after the first COVID lockdown in 2020. As restrictions are easing, the cricket club will be participating in the Wednesday night league – with regular sanitiser breaks! There is currently no junior cricket as the club needs someone to run this and a welfare officer.

7. To receive questions from members of the public

There were no questions.

The Chairman thanked the Council for their hard work throughout the year.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8:28pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1: Report from District Councillor Carlyne Culver

The annual Members' Community Bids scheme is open for applications. Each member of the council can apply for up to £5,000 per year in match funding for community projects. They have to be capital projects – examples below – not day to day revenue costs. These can be applications directly from parish councils, or from community groups with their parish council's backing. The deadline is 23rd June.

There are a number of public consultations open at the moment, **including** the public rights of way improvement plan, and 'active travel' (ie encouraging more people to walk and cycle). More information about these consultations can be found here: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

The public consultation on the council's environment delivery plan (how it intends to become carbon neutral by 2030) ended on Monday 26 April. I submitted a detailed response which I can share with people if they are interested.

Western Area Planning on Wednesday 25 April is not discussing anything from this ward. Some meetings have been cancelled since Christmas because of lack of business, but there might be a surge in planning applications if/when life gets back to normal after this lockdown.

Annual full council is Tuesday 4 May but it's basically formalities and nothing particularly exciting. It was brought forward a week so we could hold it virtually before the 7th May return to face-to-face meetings (assuming the government doesn't u-turn on that).

Election for a Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner is Thursday 6 May.

Appendix 2: Finance Report 2020/21

The finance report for Hampstead Norreys Parish Council for the financial year 2020/21 is presented. Please note that all figures are subject to audit.

Income

The total income received from all sources of funding was £20,844.

Significant figures included in this total are:

- Precept £15,100
- Grants £3,700
- VAT refund £1,274

Expenditure

The total expenditure for the year was £17,965.

Some of the significant figures included in this total are:

- Grounds maintenance £2,672
- Replacement lighting for the steps and adjacent car park £2,247
- Staff employment costs £3,833
- Insurance £641
- Waste disposal £1,243
- New bins £383

- VAT £1,729.

The following organisations benefited from donations:

- St Mary's Church (for grass cutting) £1,200
- West Berkshire Countryside Society £100
- Pang Valley Flood Forum £100

Looking Forward to 2021/22

The Council has increased the precept to £18,826. A Band D household will pay a total of £52.47 in the year, or just £1.01 per week.

The biggest driver in increasing the precept for this year is to obtain additional funds to carry out the installation of some new and replacement play area surfacing in Dean Meadow. The Council has sought grant funding for this project and now needs to provide the remaining funds required. The Council intends to reduce the precept in the following financial year, assuming no other large projects become apparent.

It is expected that large items of expenditure will continue to include grounds maintenance, waste disposal and employment costs. It is anticipated that donations will be made similar to those in 2020/21.

Appendix 3: Village Hall

History & Governance of Village Hall:

As a result of some confusion about the management of the Village Hall during the past few years, it has been necessary to clarify the governance of the village hall and Dean Meadow.

I will try and explain:

1. The old Memorial Hall, in Water Street, was built in 1920's to provide a community centre for the village as a memorial to all those who had served in the Great War. It was registered with the Charities Commission, as **Hampstead Norreys War Memorial Trust** (HNWMT), by a Scheme of Arrangement dated 1965.
2. In 1983, a generous donation was received from the Tompkins Foundation to erect a new village hall. A new charitable trust, the **Hampstead Norreys Amenities Trust** (HNAT), was set up to oversee the building of the new hall. A lease for Dean Meadow was arranged with Eling Estate and the new hall was opened in 1985.
3. For reasons lost in the mist of time, the old trust (HNWMT) was not closed at the same time as the old Memorial Hall was closed, and the members of the Village Hall Committee (VHC) continued to manage the day-to-day operations of the village hall on behalf of the new trust, without any conflict or complications.
4. In 2018, problems were encountered with the HM Revenue & Customs about VAT registration for the proposed refurbishment project relating to the existence of the two trusts. It was recognised that the governance of the village hall needed to be reviewed and clarified in order to reflect the realities of responsibilities.
5. With effect from 1st November 2019, the following changes were made:
 - A new **Village Hall Management Committee** (VHMC) was created as a sub-committee of the HNAT with terms of reference very similar to the earlier 'Scheme of Arrangement', and all members of the old VHC were transferred to the new VHMC.
 - The HNWMT agreed that the funds in the old 'HN Memorial Hall' should continue to meet the costs of running the village hall and that all income should be directed into the new 'HN Village Hall account'. This has been implemented.
 - The governance of the village hall has been clarified so that the Amenities Trust (HNAT), as leaseholder of the Dean Meadow and owner of the village hall, is responsible for the village hall and Dean Meadow and manages through the VHMC.

COVID Closures & Reopening:

In line with Government recommendations and requirements the hall has suffered closure at time during the past 12 months and all activities have been affected.

'Quackers', the after-school club, has been able to continue during the lockdown to support the school. It is hoped that we will slowly resume 'normal' activities as the restrictions relax. The key date (at the moment) is Monday 21st June.

'Chuckles', the Parent & Toddler Group is being restarted during the next few weeks. (It is hoped that the Youth Club can be reformed later in the year.)

A tennis group is in active negotiations with the trustees in order to install tennis courts on Dean Meadow and start a tennis club.

Smarter Entrance:

The entrance to the village hall, from Newbury Hill, has been smartened in conjunction with work carried out by Manor Farm. New signage will appear shortly.

Refurbishment/Fundraising:

The Refurbishment Project for the village hall was launched in 2018 and tenders have been received for the proposed work. In late 2019, new double-glazed doors and windows were fitted. Energy-efficient lighting has also been installed.

However, the COVID restrictions have stopped progress on the planned work and the fund-raising plans. These will be relaunched in June/July.

Community centre:

The Village Hall is registered with WBC as a potential Emergency Centre.

During September 2020, a LoRa WAN (long-range, wide area network) aerial was fitted to the hall as part of a WBC local data initiative with initial focus on community health.

At the moment, the WBC are using our carpark as a distribution point for NHS COVID Home Test kits.

Minor Vandalism, Littering and Graffiti:

Like all public, and unsupervised buildings and spaces, we suffer from low-level vandalism, littering and graffiti. The installation of CCTV equipment is under active consideration.

Ron Howard
Chairman, Village Hall Management Committee