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|  | Great Horwood Parish Council |
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| **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 29th April 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall** |

Present: Cllr John Gilbey (JWG) Chairman, Cllr Caroline Cousin (CC) Vice Chairman, Cllr Jonathan Evans (JE), Cllr Thomas Lee (TL), Buckinghamshire Councillor Sir Beville Stanier, Buckinghamshire Councillor John Chilver, Mandy Cliffe (MC), Sarah Biswell (Clerk).

Representatives from the various clubs within the Village as well those recipients of the Worthy Causes Grants were in attendance as well as residents of the Village, making a total attendance of 49.

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|  | **To receive apologies for absence**  Tony Pearson – Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee, John Thrower, Cllr Jackie Goss (JG) |
|  | **Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting held on**  The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment and signed by the Chairman. |
| 3. | **Chairman’s Report**  Before starting his Report, the Chairman made the audience aware of the Fire Exits within the Hall.  He went on to say that the Annual Parish Meeting is usually held between 1st March and 1st June every year – is it not a formal Parish Council meeting but an opportunity to report on the activities of the Council for the previous year and to hear from representatives of local organisations.    It has been a very difficult and sad year, as you will all be aware that our previous Parish Clerk, Sue Brazier, died unexpectedly last April, after a short illness. Sue was a great asset to this community, not just for the Parish Council but also for St. James Church, and she is still very much missed a year on. Not having a Clerk left us with quite a few issues, one being the banking situation, but more of that later. We were very lucky to appoint Mandy Cliffe – the Parish Clerk for Little Horwood - as the interim Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to see us successfully through the internal and external audits, and we would like to personally thank Mandy for all her hard work, it was very much appreciated.  Whilst the Council was without a Clerk, Councillor Evans provided an excellent service in recording the minutes of the meeting using a very special skill by touch typing them into a draft as the meeting progressed.  The Chairman would like to thank Councillor Cousin for her invaluable service to the Parish Council, her determination and thoroughness in all that she does is greatly appreciated. During the year Councillor Andy Waller stood down from the Parish Council and we were extremely pleased to co-opt Thomas Lee to be a new Councillor. We have 2 further roles to fill (we have capacity for 7 Councillors) so if anyone was interested, please get in touch.  Eventually the role of the Parish Clerk was filled by Sarah Biswell who has taken on the role of Clerk and RFO. Sarah started in September 2023 and has had mountains to climb but has nearly conquered them all. Banking continued to be a problem going forward and on 2nd April 2024 the Parish Council moved their accounts to Unity Trust Bank and so far, all is going well.  **Planning Committee – Chaired by Councillor Cousin**  The Parish Council has considered 37 Planning Applications in the last year – some of these include: -   * Conversion of the Service Station to 4 dwellings * The Crown * Eastfield Farm * Sunnyhill Farm * Rear of Vine Cottages   **Footpaths**  Alan Biggins is our Footpath monitor who regularly walks the paths around the village and reports into the Parish Council meetings with anything that needs to be attended to.    **Volunteers**  Other groups that have been in place or have been restarted in the last 12 months are as follows: -   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Defibrillator Team** | |  |  | **Speedwatch Team** | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Ann Biggins | |  |  | Elizabeth Metheringham | | | | Rob Davies | |  |  | Jackie Goss | |  | | John and Sally Ahern | |  |  | Geraldine Bullimore | |  | | Sandra Birrell | |  |  | David and Mary Saunders | | | | John Gilbey | |  |  | John Gilbey | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | **Floral Displays** | |  |  | **Horwede Pece Inspection Team** | | | | **5 Planters** | |  |  | Mark Owen | |  | | Frances Rayman | |  |  | Liz and John Nicholls | |  | | Anna Stachowiak | |  |  | Steve Brigden | |  | |  |  |  |  | Pat and Keith Mould | |  | |  |  |  |  | Karen Wilkinson | |  | |  |  |  |  | Mike Hobday | |  | |  |  |  |  | Steven da Norbrega | |  | |  |  |  |  | John Gilbey | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   **Finance**  During the year the Parish Council have supported Horwode Pece with an annual contribution from the overall budget of £4,000, contributed to 2 editions of Focus newsletter, Churchyard grass cutting and the annual Worthy Causes Grants to village organisations.  **Worthy Causes**  The Parish Council continues to invite village organisations to apply for the Worthy Causes funding and £3,000 in total was made available. Grants are invited in from the end of October each year – and the organisations that have benefitted over the last year include Great Horwood School, the Scout and Guides, The Guides and Rainbows, the Football Club, and Winslow Community Bus.  **Challenges**  There have been quite a few challenges this year, not only with the banking situation but also with some of the services that are not currently available. Buckinghamshire Council were unable to provide and install dog waste bins as they currently have no appointed Contractor, so the responsibility for this was left with the Parish Council to source, fund and arrange installation.  The Crown – there have been a few planning applications and delays in getting the work completed but this situation is something that the Parish Council are regularly monitoring.  Nook Park – as you may all be aware from both information on social media and in the Press a lot of activity has taken place over the last 12 months  **Village Hall Refurbishment**  The Village Hall has undergone a complete refurbishment in 2023/2024 and was officially opened to the community at this meeting. The funding for this project came from the following sources: -   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Source of funds** | **Amount** | |  |  | | Section 106 funding | £112,000.00 | | Community Grant - Fox Covert Solar Power Farm | £22,000.00 | | Parish Council Reserves | £20,000.00 | | Winslow Community Board Grant for Disabled toilet | £15,000.00 | | ACRE | £40,000.00 | | Village Hall Reserves | £40,000.00 | |  |  | | **Total** | **£249,000.00** | |  |  |   Tony Pearson, the Treasurer for the Village Hall was unable to attend this meeting but wanted to say a few words and asked if the Chairman could read this out.  *I would like to express my thanks to the 52 volunteers who made this all possible. The Village Hall six weeks ago was in need of a vast amount of work to complete its refurbishment and with funds tight it was all hands-on deck and what a result. The communities of Great Horwood and Singleborough pitched in and it was such great fun. A huge pat on the back to everyone involved, well done and a massive thank you. Every single person’s contribution, every single hour given every single skill from cleaning, painting sanding, drilling and even making teas and coffee has been greatly appreciated. Everyone gave 100% plus; everyone was a superstar.*  *I would, however, like to make one special mention – Margaret Michalski – Margaret never missed a day, she put in so many hours, worked like a Duracell bunny and her attention to detail was so much appreciated – she was the absolute super superstar. There are a few small tasks that still need to be done in order that the Hall is fully completed, but regardless, it looks great, it feels great and its available to everyone in the community and at a very affordable rate. We together achieved a great result and we achieved that result under budget.*  *Just remember – Nothing is impossible, everything is possible.*  *A final thank you for everyone – Tony.*  **Housing development**  The latest Neighbourhood Plan in 2015 (reviewed in 2019) has seen three new housing developments take place – all of these are complete or due to completion shortly. The first site was Land South of Little Horwood Road, known as the Croudace site where there are thirty new houses including ten affordable housing, all occupied. The second site is Land North of Little Horwood Road known as the High Street Homes site which includes fifteen homes including affordable housing, and an open space. The third site in Nash Road which was developed by Lodge Park Homes is due for completion shortly. Both the High Street Homes (called Liden Park) and Lodge Park Homes (called Shorts Field) will shortly be transferred to the Parish Council along with commuted sums.  After the Chairman’s report it was decided to take a refreshment break before we heard from anyone else – refreshments/cake and biscuits were available to everyone. |
| 4. | **Report from Buckinghamshire Councillor, John Chilver**  Cllr Chilver would like to thank the PC for their kind welcome to Council meetings and their support over the last year. He was delighted to finally see the hard work that has gone into this building.  The two new housing developments on the road out to Winslow are progressing. The 3 appointed Councillors hold a Surgery in the Winslow Town Council offices once a month, on the same day at the Winslow Farmers Market – and his happy to receive correspondence from anyone with any queries about the Council. The Chairman mentioned the Nook Park Appeal and wondered if he had any news on this, but as this has gone to appeal this could take up to 12 months for a reply.  One resident asked “With all these builds being made, why has a cycle path not been included, which would help”. Councillor Chilver confirmed that Buckinghamshire Council have got the plans for a route but would need funding and landowners’ permission. The initial costings were prohibitively expensive and again permission would need to be given by the landowners, but previously they have never responded by back to the Council. |
| 5. | **Brief reports from village organisations**  **Football Club**  Vyv Rudd introduced himself as Chairman of Great Horwood Football Club. He thanked the Parish Council for the Worthy Causes Grant which was used to purchase “Roll on Roll off” football nets, which were due to be delivered the following day. It has been a good start to the season but as always, they are looking for more new players, so if anyone is interested can they please contact him.  **Brownies and Guides**  Clare Martin wanted to thank the Parish Council for the Worthy Causes Grant. This was utilised to take the Guides on an ice-skating trip that everyone loved. They are very busy with their activities; they are going to Climb Quest in a couple of weeks. Parents have been involved in the fund raising because it is recognised that guiding has to be affordable to every parent and every child is to be included in their schedule of activities. They are currently involved with the Charity Aqua box which is a charity providing safe drinking water and humanitarian aid to people affected by natural disasters and conflicts.  **Scouts, Cubs and Beavers**  Yvonne Taylor, Group Scout Leader, said that the Scouting Group in Great Horwood were very proactive and their numbers are increasing, and the mess tent purchased with the funds from the Worthy Causes Grant was gratefully appreciated. They have an “awesome leadership team” but they are also looking for more Volunteers to become Leaders and if anyone is interested to please get in touch.  They offer a varied programme for all ages Beavers have recently had a Burns Night event. The Cubs have improved their map skills and have been on hikes, which turned into an all-day event. They are looking to have a 10-day residential outing to Switzerland during the next year. Yvonne went on to pay tribute to Paul Ketteridge who sadly died last year. There are plans being drawn up to refurbish the Scout Hut and to name some of it as the “Ketteridge Room” in honour of him.  The Groups took part in the Village Fete and a popular game is the “Plate Smash”. If anyone has any old crockery, they want to get rid of please remember to donate this and leave by the Scout Hut.  Their current fundraising activities are to collect aluminium cans – which are to be recycled and funds going to the organisation – a plea was put out – if anyone can save their cans and deliver them to the Scout HQ, down School Lane, that would be appreciated. The money from this fund raising will be used to offset future activities. At this point the Chairman gave his thanks to the Group for assisting with the Litter Pick in the Village in March 2024.  **Great Horwood School**  Paula Shaw, Headteacher thanked the PC for the generous Worthy Causes grants that will make a big difference to the outdoor area. The Worthy Causes Grant was submitted by the Vision in Action School Council for a “Meditation Pagoda” which will be used by both children and adults in the School. Paula mentioned that she has seen an increasing need in school admissions of children with a lot of additional needs, and it is hoped that this area along with the Woodland Area (that the Parish Council supported a few years ago with funding for an Ecology report), would be able to support those children that can find school life quite challenging. It is going to be an exciting addition to the redeveloped Woodland Area – this project has been ongoing for the last couple of years and it is the intention to have a “Launch Day” for the development of the area in September 2024, and the Parish Council will be sent an invite to this event.  **WI**  The WI are very happy to be back in the Village Hall, and thanked the Cricket Club for the use of their facilities for their meetings. They currently have 28 members. The delayed trip from 2020 to celebrate their 70th anniversary went ahead. They have had some interesting talks and outings in the last year, including a cruise on the River Thames completed with cream tea. They have also had a trip on the Community Bus to Wrest Park.  **Village Hall**  Ian Lamberton, Chair of the Village Hall Committee. Ian wanted to start off by wishing a 100th birthday to the village hall, and the refurbishment celebrates its rebirth.  Ian gave a run down of the work undertaken, new disabled toilet installed, new free IKEA Kitchen, Asbestos removed and new insulated ceiling installed. He confirmed that all of this would not be possible without the Parish Council and the Grants that Councillor Cousin secured. He thanks Tony Pearson for all of his work, he was over and above a project manager for this refurbishment. He wanted to make it clear that without the hard work of the volunteers, this refurbishment would not have been completed. As well as a very big thank you to Margaret Michalski, Ian also wanted say thank you to Councillor Cousin for her tenacity and attention to detail for the whole project.  A new Caretaker/Cleaner is needed – 10 hours a month, cleaning, helping with booking and general maintenance – get in touch if you know someone who would like this role – it is paid role.  Ian also reminded everyone that the Post Office is open in the Village Hall from Wednesday 9.30 to 11am.  Party to celebrate Diamond Wedding – The Chairman thanked Mr & Mrs Law for leaving a donation of 6 bottles of wine and a large cake these were available on the night for everyone to enjoy. A card was read out from Mr & Mrs Law.    **Winslow and District Community Bus**  Sheila Cadge on behalf of the WCDB the Parish Council for the Worthy Causes Grant and confirmed that the Bus has a deep clean once a month and the “two new tyres went down well”. They are starting to find that more people are utilising this service. Popular trips out have been on a Steam Train trip and to Eastbourne to name but a few. They are looking for more volunteer drivers, so if anyone is interested, please contact them.    **St James’ Church**  Reverend Stephen O’Connor advised that it was lovely to see more of the residents in Church each week, and would be interested in finding out from the community what kind of services/activities would be sought so the Church could appeal to more people and increase the congregation. There is significant redecoration needed to the inside of the Church following the restoration of the Roof over the last 2 years, which needs to be funded, all ideas gratefully appreciated.  **Horwode Pece**  John Nicholls, Chairman of the Horwode Pece Management Committee, wished to thank his team of 9 volunteers that maintain the equipment to RoSPA standards with their weekly inspections. New plastic lumber has been ordered to replace the wooden areas of the Toddler and Teenager areas and it is hoped to get this delivered in the next 6-8 weeks and installed in the following months. It is hoped that this will last for another 15 years. The Committee are always looking for more volunteers, so if anyone wishes to help, please get in touch.  **Silver Band**  The Chairman, Andrew Cook has been in the band for over 40 years – the band is 136 years old – sadly there are no original members! They are always looking for new people to join and would encourage anyone to have a go, they are a non-contesting bank and offer a low membership fee. They are looking forward to putting together more concerts on The Green this summer, as well as going round the village on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day playing for everyone. Whilst the Village Hall has been refurbished, they have been practising in the School and wanted to thank the School for allowing them to use their Hall.  **Cricket Club**  This is a village team, with currently only one side playing that meet up every other Saturday. More players would be welcome, there is a bar at the Club House. If you would like to join, please get in touch, it would be lovely to get more people involved from the community. The Cricket Club is located in Nash Road just before you get to the roundabout – everyone is welcome.  **Arts and Crafts Club**  The Arts and Crafts Club is open on Friday mornings from 10-12. Lots of different projects are taken on, such as knitting and painting. A large part of this is also a social element for people to come and have a chat. The number of people attending has grown but would like more. |
| 6. | **Open Forum**  A Singleborough resident would like to make the suggestion that the Village Hall is renamed “Great Horwood and Singleborough Village Hall”. Councillor Gilbey advised that this decision would need to be referred to the Village Hall Trustees for consideration.  A resident mentioned that they work full time Monday to Friday and are not able to access the Village Hall during the day, and wondered is any evening sessions such as a Quiz or Bingo night would be something that could be arranged.  A resident asked if the library would be available again in the Village Hall. This did not seem likely, however, there was a suggestion that maybe St James Church could be used.  No further comments were made and the Chairman then invited everyone to have a look at the work undertaken in the Hall, and to enjoy the refreshments offered. |

The meeting closed at 9.12pm

Signed……………………………………………………Date

**Chairman**