

LITTLETON & HARESTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual Parish Assembly 14 May 2018

1. The Vice-Chairman, Cllr John Biddlecombe, in the absence of the Chairman, Cllr Patrick Cunningham, welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially HCC & WCC councillors.
2. Apologies were received from Cllr (WCC), Cllr (Littleton & Harestock), Mr & Mrs Bond, Mr & Mrs Muir and Hampshire Constabulary.
3. Cllr Biddlecombe then explained that the minutes of the 2017 meeting were not to be read out loud, but had been available for all to see on the Parish Council website and hard copies had also been provided for all to see at the meeting. He asked whether there were any questions or queries on them. There were none mentioned. The minutes were then agreed without amendment. Proposed by Cllr Anita Neilson and Seconded by Cllr George Sallis.
4. Cllr Biddlecombe then gave the report for 2017/18, written by Cllr Cunningham, Chairman of the Parish Council.

Planning and Development

Again this year, we have received many planning applications and your Parish Councillors have been kept busy on your behalf in both Littleton and Harestock. Some have been quite straight forward, but others have required a great deal of investigation before the Parish Council made its decision. Among those planning applications that had been received, the major issues were 2 applications on the Harestock road – one for a multi unit development on the corner of Orient Drive, and another at 116 Harestock road - both of which were opposed by this Parish Council but were supported by WCC planning officers and passed by the WCC Planning Committee. After a hard fought battle last year, we succeeded in imposing a strictly controlled Transport Plan for Ecotricity's Anaerobic Digester "Feed", we understand that there is a new Planning Application submitted by Ecotricity relating to this proposed Anaerobic Digester in Sparsholt College. At this stage we do not know the detailed implications of the new Application, which we understand does not effect the Transport Plan already in place, but could have significant implications regarding the actual type, capacity, size and type of fuel, as this application may include a change to a different Digester to be used in generating the output of the plant. We are keeping a close eye on this development in conjunction with Sparsholt Parish Council. On 12th of October last, we were made aware, by an article in the Hampshire Chronicle, of a proposed development on the North side of the Harestock road within the St. Barnabas Ward, and in the Littleton Gap, for a 65 dwelling assisted living development. The Parish Council immediately delivered a leaflet to all dwellings in the Parish advising everyone of the matter and our opposition to any inappropriate development in the Littleton & Harestock Gap. As at this date, the Parish Council is not aware of any further progress relating to this alleged development, and no application has been made. We will closely watch for any further news regarding development on this site.

Although not within the boundary of the parish, but the impact of which will be keenly felt, is the 2,000 home Barton Farm development and its related construction which started in Summer 2016. We understand that the construction and property sales pace is at least 1 year behind schedule, with less than 200 units sold so far, the knock-on effect being that building of the Primary school and Park-and-Ride are equally delayed. We continue to monitor traffic through Harestock Road and Andover Road as it impacts traffic and transport issues for the residents and pedestrian's safety in the parish. Councillors continue to attend the WCC/Cala Homes joint Forum, and report back on development and progress on a regular basis. The Parish council continues to monitor and inspect all planning applications and comments and makes recommendations to WCC planning department as required.

Highways and Traffic

We attended several meetings and a tour of the parish with HCC highways engineering department officers to highlight and address our concerns over the state of the roads and verges, and safety of pedestrians. As a result we now have additional white painted road markings and 'SLOW' signs, and improved road signage along Main Road and Kennel Lane, and Harestock Road/Andover Road. We continue to push HCC to carry out Hedge cutting tree removal and grass verge cut back on Main Road – Littleton, and at the surrounds of the junction of Harestock Rd and Andover Rd. Last year, HCC completed a feasibility study into the provision of a footpath from Dean Down Drove to Stockbridge Rd. The road traffic accident statistics show that the area is not at a high enough level to warrant such work which would be in the region of £200k, and funding of such an amount is not available. Although the Parish Council received approx. £23,500 Community Infrastructure Levy money from the Alfred Homes development of 8 houses in Dean Down Drove, regrettably, the Parish finances are not sufficient to fund such expenditure at this time. We still hope that the more pressure put on HCC may produce some funding in time. The Parish Council has also made many representations and impressed upon HCC the danger to pedestrians in the road along Main Rd in Littleton near the Running Horse public house, and it is regrettable that the safety statistics collected by HCC does not warrant build-outs or further traffic calming construction work. A request was made, and discussions and several meetings carried out with land owners in the area to grant the Parish Council a Permissive Path behind the hedgerow, however this permission was not forthcoming without unacceptable conditions attached.

Flooding

This time last year HCC informed us that a number of parishes in the area would benefit from the introduction of flood alleviation measures. This would include implementation in this parish in a joined up scheme along with Headbourne Worthy and Kings Worthy. HCC Flood and Water management department and their Engineering Consultancy team have completed their feasibility report in March and presented it to the monitoring group in April. They have now reached the Preliminary Design stage which shows a solution for the Littleton area of comprehensive pipe drainage system at the junction of Main Road and North Drive, linking in with the Duck Pond, and a new under-ground drainage pipe laid under North Drive and linking up with Pitter Close resident's private pipe. The outflow would then continue underground to the Army Barracks and follow an existing natural channel to a pipework scheme discharging the water under the Andover road in fields along Wellhouse Lane. The

next meeting of the Group will be in September when all investigatory work into underground assets will be completed and they are in a position to deal with the “Call for Funding” of the project. We are pleased to report that, after a small period of concern in February/March, ground water levels at the bottom of the village have remained low this year.

Recreation and Playgrounds

The Parish Council is keenly aware of the importance of grounds and the sports facilities and pitches to all residents, and carries out inspections with the ground maintenance contractors to ensure that the grounds are kept at a high level of presentation and condition. We continue to invest a large portion of the Parish’s funds to support this objective, and are satisfied with the services of the current contractor. This year has seen a continued high level of expenditure in the 2 playgrounds in the parish totalling £25.0k. Both playgrounds have again had new equipment installed as well as replacement equipment no longer fit for purpose. A comprehensive plan for re-surfacing with rhino-mulch under all equipment was completed this year. The Adult Exercise section of the Recreation Ground in Littleton was also upgraded with Rhino-mulch installed throughout the equipment area – we envisage installing additional exercise equipment in the area along with a Picnic Table for the use of non-exercising partners. Our playgrounds continue to undergo weekly safety inspections by WCC to ensure all equipment is safe and in good working order, and discharge our Duty of Care. The standard of the playgrounds has improved beyond recognition over the past 3 years and special thanks again go to Cllrs Neilson and Saunders for their commitment and hard work in achieving it.

Communication

The Parish Council is pleased to receive positive feedback on the council’s website and format (its main communication vehicle), and the wide range of up to date information and content regarding community and council matters. It is also encouraging to see the significant increase of website traffic or “Hits” accessing the Council website over the past year. The website delivers comprehensive monthly coverage, reports and council minutes which serve to effectively communicate to the Parish information covering Planning, Playgrounds, Flood Alleviation, Recreation Grounds, Finances, Highways traffic and transport, Barton Farm, Community Governance Review, Sir John Moore Barracks, County and City Councillors reports, Police and Community reports, Environment, Millennium Hall, and other matters as they arise. It was felt that the current communication mechanisms of the website, the availability of the Parish Clerk and office if needed, and hand delivered leaflets when necessary, were more than adequate.

Environment

A scheme of revised planting has been set to help our grounds maintenance contractor to improve and enhance the raised shrub beds at the shops in Harestock, the beds have been cut back and new planting is scheduled for this month. The planting carried out on the island at the end of South Drive in Littleton last year is now showing as these plants come into flower adding colour and variety to the hitherto overgrown weed-filled area.

Parish Council notices regarding dog-fouling, the use of car park and recreation ground, disabled parking area, and playground notices were erected and clarify the position and responsibility of the Parish Council in the provision of these amenities.

Community Governance Review

The Parish Council received a presentation from Mr D Blackmore of WCC's Democratic Services department regarding the process for conducting the Community Governance Review. Following this presentation, a long discussion ensued at which the Parish Council was required to express a preference for the outcome of this Review and present it to WCC. The 2 options were outlined:

That the Parish Council remains as it is encompassing Littleton and Harestock, or
That it split into 2 entities, Littleton Parish Council, and Harestock either become a Parish Council in its own right or join Winchester Town as the residents see fit.

These two options were then voted upon by the full Parish Council and the result was that the Parish Council wishes to see that the outcome of the Review should be that the present organisation split into two separate entities, i.e. Option B above. Winchester City Council was then asked formally to carry out this Review with the Parish Council's preferred outcome being Option B.

At the request of Cllr Learney a further vote was taken regarding Harestock's position in the event of the current organisation splitting into 2 entities. It was proposed that Harestock should remain under the control of a Parish as opposed to becoming part of Winchester Town, without formal representation, this was passed unanimously. It is understood that WCC will fund this Review. The Parish Council asked about possible transitional relief for a probable increase in the precept for local residents should the split in the Parish come about. WCC will be carrying out a consultation on these proposals and has arranged 2 "Drop In" sessions in coming weeks.

The first will be on Saturday 19th May from 9.30am to 12.30pm in Littleton Sports Pavilion. The second will be on Monday 21st May from 4.30pm – 7.30pm in the community lounge at Henry Beaufort School.

Parish Council Precept

The Parish Council precept for 2018/19 was set in January and sees the Parish tax for Littleton & Harestock Band D house set at £72.43 for the year which equates to £1.39 per week. The Parish Council is pleased that the level of the precept in the Parish remains as one of the lowest in the Winchester district and is approximately 20% lower than the average for the Parish & Town total.

Miscellaneous

I would like to thank a number of people on behalf of the Parish Council for their hard work and support over the past year, including:

Tamsin Sallis – Administration and maintenance of the Parish Council Website.

David Strugnell – Littleton Nature Reserve and support advice on Paddock View.

Stuart Covill - Cleaner of the Pavilion and Parish Council office.

Katie Massey – Millennium Hall Manager.

Alison & Chris Rice – Tumulus Field Wardens.

Alison Harper & Geoff Toogood – Tree Wardens

Ray Broughton – Advice on planting on the island at the end of South Drive and to improve the water quality of the pond.

Mrs King & Mrs Street – Gardening and tending to the plants and shrub bed alongside the Parish office.

North Winchester Community Church – gardening and tending to the raised shrub beds at Harestock shops.

WO1 (Regimental Sergeant Major) J. A. McGrory R Sigs., Sir John Moore Barracks – for attending Parish Council meetings during the year prior to his departure from ATR Winchester.

And a personal thank you to fellow Parish councillors for attending council meetings and other meetings and events for their appointed area of additional responsibility. A thank you also to City and County councillors for attending our meetings and contributing to the council's work.

Finally, I would like to thank the Parish Clerk for all his assistance and guidance over the past 12 months, and congratulate him again on keeping our affairs and statutory responsibilities in order again.

Cllr Biddlecombe then handed over the Parish Clerk to provide last year's financial report.

Financial Report

5. The Clerk had already distributed copies to all those present of the unaudited accounts for the year 2017-18 and then elaborated on various specific items on the income and expenditure account. It had been a very busy year and the money had all been well spent. These details were agreed without amendment, proposed by Cllr David Fountain and seconded by Cllr Hilary Saunders.

WCC Councillors' Report

6. Cllr Learney reported that this was her report as just covering the Harestock area since the boundary changes and she now represents St Barnabas Ward. It was also a joint report from her and Cllr Weir who could not attend. Over this past year Cllr Learney had chaired the WCC Overview and Scrutiny Committee while Cllr Weir had chaired the Town Forum. There had been more work for all WCC Councillors following the establishment of the new larger wards. Some of the major areas of work had been: Silver Hill; the recent community planning consultation; the acquisition of Winchester bus station by WCC; the refresh of the Local Plan; the new Weeke area car parking scheme (which now needs to be revised); future governance arrangements for the parishes around Barton Farm; redevelopment of Station view and the cattle market car park; the new leisure centre at Bar End and what is to happen to the existing facility in the meanwhile. Mr Middleton then asked about whether the proposed northern park and ride of 200 would be under review as it isn't sufficient. This is to be reviewed. Mr Lipscombe asked about the extra pressure of traffic on Harestock Road as that road is due to have major closures due to work required for the Barton Farm development. Assurances were given that maximum pressure would be exerted to try and ensure that the closures were well notified and adequate diversions put in place. Cllr Horrill

reported the following by email: I have been privileged to be the councillor for Littleton & Harestock since the boundary changes in 2016 where I have represented the Wonston and Micheldever Ward which includes the communities of Littleton & Harestock, Sparsholt, Crawley, South Wonston, Micheldever, Sutton Scotney and Wonston. I am the portfolio Holder for Housing in the Cabinet and for the last year I have been the Leader of Winchester City Council. We represent over 250 square miles across the District and are aware that although the city of Winchester is a key focus, over 80% of the District is rural and so we are concentrating on the entire District by ensuring we conduct our engagement and consultation exercises in our market towns as well as Winchester itself. Understanding the wants and needs of all our residents is crucially important to the work of the Council. We are also responsible for taking Cabinet on the road with alternate meetings being held around the District. This is in our effort to better represent our 120,000 residents in the 45 Parishes, market towns and City. We have spent the last year focused on defining our strategy and developing our major projects. Our Council Strategy has 4 core strategies all developed using an entrepreneurial approach: We are developing quality housing; We are committed to making the District a premier business location; We are delivering services that encourage residents to lead healthy and fulfilling lives; We are also protecting and enhancing our unique environment. Housing is one of our key achievements. We have over 5,000 council homes and 91% of our tenants say they are satisfied with the service provided by the Council. We are also committed to building 600 new affordable homes by 2021 and driving down homelessness in the District. We are very keen to ensure that affordable houses are also built in rural communities, so that our villages remain sustainable. Delivering economic growth in the District is a key part of our strategy. Supporting tourism is a major focus and with over 5 million visitors each year it plays an important part in our business success. We are working locally to improve infrastructure with our partners at the County and jointly sponsoring a Movement Strategy for greater Winchester. Of interest locally will be the potential new Park and Ride on our side of the City and the discussions taking place about the decision to close or keep open the Andover Road. We have also recommenced the Station Approach project which is focussed on providing Grade A offices for the city. Our beautiful environment is a key part of making the District such an attractive place to live so protecting our heritage and landscape, enhancing and increasing use of open spaces is a key element of your work. We have also invested in our flood resilience across the area, an important part of maintaining our environment. Importantly in Littleton and Harestock we need to make sure we resolve with HCC and other key bodies such as the EA, the flood alleviation plan for the area. We are building a new Sport and Leisure Park at Bar End in partnership with the University, the Pinder Trust and with funding from HCC. The facility will open in 2021 as part of our healthy living focus and we are continuing to support the tens of events and festivals across the District such as the Hat Fair, which make Winchester such a great place to live. Planning and enforcement are a key focus for the Parish and I have sought to support the Parish Council in their views on specific applications. The Council has recently reviewed these services and will be announcing improvements post the election. The Sparsholt College AD will be of keen interest to residents over the coming weeks, as the applicant seeks to make amendments to the previously agreed planning application. I believe Winchester residents can be very proud of what their Council is doing on their behalf, but our work is never done. Please do let me know if I can further support the Parish and the residents of the village. That concluded the WCC report.

HCC Councillor Report

7. HCC Cllr Jan Warwick reported the following by email. Background: The population of Hampshire is 1,353,350 (2016) making it the third most populous county in England. 85% is rural and 15% urban. Budget: HCC's revenue budget of £2.0bn (2018/19) includes: £860m for Education; £628m for social care and services for children and adults; £53m for Public Health; £143m for Highways, Transport, Economic Development and Waste. Plus a capital programme of £540m over three years (2018-2021) for extra care housing, additional school places and new schools. Financial Challenges: HCC's total grant loss since 2010/11 has been £219m. Reductions of £140m are required by 2019/20 to meet anticipated grant reductions, pressures from social care and the National Living Wage. 2018/19 adult social care pressures are £23m and the 3% adult social care precept from Council Tax will raise an extra £17m. For 2018/19 HCC has the second lowest Council Tax of any county council in England. School Admissions: Primary School Admissions 2017: 91% of children in Hampshire were offered a place at their first choice primary school and 98% at one of their preferred schools. Secondary School Admissions 2018: 92% of children applying in year 7 were allocated a place at their first choice school and 98% at one of their preferred schools. Road Maintenance and Operation Resilience: Over 5300 miles of road are maintained by HCC. £10m is invested annually on planned maintenance on top of government funding. The government recently awarded an additional £3m for repairs following the poor weather. Sites of road works and road maintenance are listed on the HCC website where problems can also be reported: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance> Broadband: There is currently 93% coverage of superfast broadband across Hampshire. The programme will get this to 97.4% by the end of 2019. The £1m Community Match Funding and Better Broadband schemes are proving popular. You can get further information here: <https://www.hampshiresuperfastbroadband.com/>

Public Participation

8. Mr Thompsett asked whether anyone knew what the building work was opposite the Barton Farm development along Wellhouse Lane and it was explained that it was the linking of the development to the sewerage facility there. Mr Lipscombe apologised for not having attended one of these meeting for some years and asked whether the Harestock sign at the Stockbridge Road end of Harestock Road could possibly be replaced with a new one. This would be looked into. Mr Highfield wished to compliment the Parish Council on undertaking a leaflet drop to advertise this event which seemed to have help increase attendance. Mr B Middleton asked whether it might be possible for the Parish Council to obtain a strip of land alongside the existing Sir John Moore Barracks to provide a footpath from one end of the village to the other. Cllr Biddlecombe explained that in order to do that it would be necessary for the Parish Council to offer something in exchange as part of a negotiation and, at present, the Parish Council wishes to ensure that any future change of ownership of that land does not try to impinge any development on the existing gap, so the Parish Council is currently not in a strong bargaining position on this, but would see what might be possible as the MoD's intentions on this land become clearer. Other uses for the barracks by other central government departments are yet possible, so for something like this might be possible to happen, but not yet.

9. There were no further questions. Cllr Biddlecombe then thanked all those present for their attendance and the meeting was declared closed. The next Annual Parish Meeting will be on 13 May 2019.