

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 30 April 2014 at 7.30 p.m. in the Boxted & Hartest Institute

Chair: Cllr Chris Browning
In attendance: Co Cllr Richard Kemp, Dist Cllr James Long and Various Members of the Village and the Parish Council

1 **Apologies for Absence**

2 **Chairman's Welcome:** Cllr Chris Browning extended a warm welcome to everyone.

3 **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 April 2013:** These were read and approved.

4 **Matters Arising:** None

5 **Chair's Report:** Cllr Chris Browning presented his report on the Parish Council's activities during the year, which covered, amongst others, such items as Councillor resignations/appointments and he extended thanks to those retiring, namely David Burr, Howard Hirst, Anna Warren-Thomas and Cilla Turner, Highway related matters including speeding traffic and Banham's Yard access issues, affordable housing, drainage problems on the Green, Section 106 monies, Cemetery extension and Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Browning's full report is attached.

6 **Parish Council Finance Report:** Brief details of the draft accounts were presented (copy attached), grants made to the Pre-School (£400) towards Interactive Learning Diaries and £500 to the Institute towards a match funded project (to be confirmed). Thanks were also extended Cllr Kemp for his locality funding of £1,350 towards repairs to Blind Lane and the Cemetery remedial work. A precept of £10,187 had been requested for 2014-15.

7 **County Councillor's Report:** In his report (attached) Cllr Kemp touched on the severe financial restraint placed on SCC, its budget savings for 2014/15 and the significant reduction in staff numbers (some 51%), additional Government funding for Broadband and locality grants distributed to local groups.

8 **District Councillor's Report:** Cllr Long's report included the closer working with Forest Heath, its new staffing structures and its main shared priorities of Economic Growth, Housing, Vision 2031 and Communities.

9 **Police Report:** The report for the year 1.4.13-1.4.14 showed 6 crimes compared with 13 the preceding year. The full report is attached.

10 **Hartest CEVC Primary School Report:** Head Teacher, Hilary Hall, reported that, in September 2013, the School had 96 pupils on its roll; the largest ever for Hartest. The impact of the Stour Valley Community School, which opens in September, was outlined. A comprehensive report on all the year's activities was provided (attached).

11 **Hartest Pre-School Report:** The Pre-School's report was read by the Chair, Michelle Wood. The School had managed to raise over £5k from various fundraising events during the year. Current occupancy is about 47%, and predicted to be around 50% by end July (a drop due to a decline in birth rates and the single intake in schools. The new Interactive Learning Diary was proving very beneficial. Michelle advised that she would be standing down as Chair at the AGM in October after four years.

12 **Hartest PCC Report:** No report available.

13 **Neighbourhood Plan:** In his report, Nick Price outlined the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan as an approved, legally recognised, planning document, which will describe how Hartest might develop as a sustainable community over the next thirty years. Whilst the 2006 Parish Plan identified a range of issues important to the community, a Neighbourhood Plan provides the opportunity to encourage real progress in these areas. It is hoped to draw up the Plan in 2015, recognising, however, the complexity of the task.

14 **Hartest Women's Institute Report:** Sue Lewis presented the WI report provided by its Secretary, Liz Depper, outlining the year's interesting programme – from martial arts to motor racing and make up, all wholeheartedly enjoyed and appreciated.

15 **The Boxted and Hartest Institute Report:** Richard Weller-Poley advised that this year there had again been a reduction in bookings. A series of improvements is to be effected in an effort to reduce heating costs – involving extensive insulation in the ceiling and under the floor. Thanks were extended to all Committee Members, and especially Jo, Peter, Trevor and Bob. The full report is attached.

16 **Tree Warden Report:** Michael Feather reported on the planting of a new hedge along the boundary of the new part of the cemetery – undertaken by volunteers one November morning. The hedge is mixed native plants and ornamental standards to give colour and interest as well as providing flowers and fruit for wildlife. Hartest Wood continues to grow well; the ash trees at the bottom end are being thinned. Although our ash trees are not yet showing signs of die-back, it is anticipated that it will be seen in the future; unfortunately there are no treatments for this disease. Michael would appreciate being advised of any incidence of this disease in the village.

- 17 **Charities Report:** A report, by Sarah Howell, on the state of all three of the village's charities, namely the Sparkes, John Corder and Thomas Wright Charities was given. Unfortunately, only the Sparkes Charity continues to receive an annual income (of £88), none of the other Charities had any income.
- 18 **Gardening Club:** A report, on behalf of the Club Secretary, Geraldine Ross, was delivered. About 40 members regularly attend meetings and its Show got increased participation – thus, “bucking the trend”.
- 19 **Carpet Bowls Club:** Mike Lewis presented the Club's report (attached), advising that it regularly welcomes 12-18 members per week. Each year there is both home, and away, matches with Lavenham Carpet Bowls Club.
- 19 **Web Site:** Sue Lewis and Joy Banham advised that the site continues to be very active, and has, apparently persuaded new villagers to reside here after appreciating – through the web site – how active the community is. In a period of 6 days, there had been 129 site visits (90 new and 39 returning visitors), 2.5-3 mins average time spend on the site and, on average, 4 pages visited.
- 20 **Any Other Business:** None

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Approved at the Annual Parish Meeting held on 29 April 2015