

HAVERSHAM-CUM-LITTLE LINFORD PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PUBLIC PARISH MEETING Chair's Report 2022/3

Thank you to all the Parishioners who attended our Annual Public Parish Meeting on Monday 6 April 2023; it was a pleasure to update everyone on the work of Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council ('the PC') in the past year. What follows is a precis of the information we provided at that meeting and the PC would welcome any questions or comments Parishioners have on its contents; please direct emails to haversham.ltlinfordclerk@gmail.com.

Our Councillors have assumed different areas of responsibility within the PC's remit and without their determination and persistence it would be impossible for the PC to provide a service to its Parishioners. Therefore, I would like to say first and foremost thank you to my fellow Councillors for all their hard work.

Looking back on 2022/3

Defibrillator Project – as Parishioners will know, this project is all but completed and this is thanks to the tireless efforts of Jane Dawes and Cllr Burgess, supported by widespread community backing for the project. There is a small detail outstanding, that is, to install the fingerpost signs on Manor Drive and at the end of Little Linford Lane, which will be completed imminently. The defibrillators have been well received and remained happily unused. The location of the machines has been officially registered and there are ring-fenced monies of £7,000 from community donations and grants to maintain them for years to come. We shall be holding further defibrillator training later on in the year, so look out for that if you wish to participate.

Queen's Green Canopy – we were very grateful to receive 10 trees, granted as part of the initiative to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. The tree planted nearest to the children's play area in the Recreation Ground also has a plaque purchased by the PC to denote it as being part of the Queen's Green Canopy. The trees supplied are a mix of varieties and we hope that Parishioners were happy with the placement of the trees. I would like to thank all those who helped keep the trees watered during a very warm summer, especially Peter Dunn from Crossroads Farm and the residents of The Crescent.

Landscaping Project – for well over a year the PC have been looking at taking on devolved landscaping services from MKCC and this project has been led and carefully researched by Cllr Turnbull. The idea had been to form a consortium with Castlethorpe and Hanslope who already manage their own services. While the notion of improved control and oversight of our landscaping services was very attractive, the PC decided on balance not to proceed. This was due to significantly increased costs due to inflation and uncertainty about the level of grant that would be received from MKCC. Therefore, our landscaping services will remain managed by MKCC directly. Nonetheless, the project involved an incredible amount of effort and persistence to reach this point in decision-making and Councillors would like thank Cllr Turnbull for all his work over the duration of the project.

Allotments – our allotments go from strength to strength and a flourishing community has formed around a shared passion, excellently managed by Cllr English. The PC has slightly increased the cost per plot this year to reduce the need for reliance on the PC's funds but we believe that they are still very competitive when compared with neighbouring Parishes. I would like to say thank you to Cllr English in managing the allotments as they take a surprising amount of work to do so.

Traffic Initiatives – the PC have been putting pressure on MKCC on a number of fronts, with mixed success. It is not always easy, or straightforward, dealing with MKCC and yet we persist in continuing to raise these matters as often and effectively as possible. The PC's key areas of concern have been:

- i) To reduce the speed limit on the High Street to 20mph and the area from Wolverton roundabout to the start of the village to 40mph. The initial requests made by the PC have been lost in MKCC's system and instead MKCC decided – surprisingly- to make Wolverton Road 20mph, although the exact expanse of the limit has not been yet confirmed. The PC will persist in re-applying for a reduced speed limit on the High Street when it is able to do so via MKCC.
- ii) To install a pedestrian crossing outside of the school. MKCC has not accepted this request although it has to a degree been superseded by a new initiative whereby MKCC works with schools to support school crossing patrols. It is understood that a pilot scheme will be rolled out this September and the PC will support any application from Haversham School to be part of that initiative.
- iii) To get agreement from MKCC to close to all but emergency vehicles the unnamed road from the weir beyond Mill Road to past St Peter's Church ruins. Given the widespread support for closing this road to all but emergency vehicles, the PC is extremely frustrated that all efforts in this regard have as yet been unsuccessful. In particular, we have the support of Thames Valley Police and The Park's Trust. We are hopeful that we get traction on this matter soon as we are approaching it from a number of fronts.

Neighbourhood Plan – as at the time of writing, the independent Examiner has signed off the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan subject to a number of amendments. These amendments were minor in nature and related to points of clarification rather than substantive changes. MKCC will now organise a referendum and whilst the PC recognises that there will be differences of opinion on the Neighbourhood Plan, we would strongly encourage everyone to vote. It has been an extremely involved and intensive piece of work for the PC to carry out and we would highlight to Parishioners that the process, such as it is laid out, has been carefully followed throughout.

Finance Report – based on preliminary unaudited figures as at the end of March 2023, the PC had reserves of £37,473.32, of which £7,431.60 were ring-fenced funds for the maintenance of the defibrillators. While this is at the upper end of the recommended amount of reserves for a Parish Council of our size, some costs did not materialise before the end of March and their payment in early 2023/4 will reduce reserves to some degree. I include below our budgeted and actual income and expenditure figures for 2023/4 which may be of interest.

Budgeted Income vs Actual Income

Item	Budgeted Income	Actual Income	Variance
Precept	23,576.00	23,576.00	0.00
Interest received	0.00	256.61	-256.61
VAT reclaim	2,500.00	4,950.12	-2,450.12
Magazine Advertising	1,000.00	997.00	3.00
Allotments	600.00	1,607.50	-1,007.50
Neighbourhood plan	0.00	0.00	0.00
Defibrillator donations	2,000.00	3,375.00	-1,375.00
Section 106 inc donations	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other donations/grants	0.00	1,018.38	-1,018.38
Total Income	£29,676.00	£35,780.61	-£6,104.61

Total Variance	-£6,104.61
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Budgeted Expenditure vs Actual Expenditure

Item	Budgeted Expenditure	Actual Expenditure	Variance
Clerk Salary (inc pension)	12,795.00	12,832.95	-37.95
Office and Admin (inc bank charges & payroll services)	650.00	740.52	-90.52
Incidental	2,495.00	1,676.66	818.34
Skate Ramp maintenance	350.00	0.00	350.00
Website	300.00	131.26	168.74
Parish Magazine	2,835.00	2,835.00	0.00
Hall Hire	100.00	121.00	-21.00
Audit Fees	370.00	370.00	0.00
Subscriptions	300.00	130.94	169.06
Chairs Report	100.00	0.00	100.00
Insurance	700.00	698.94	1.06
Training	35.00	35.00	0.00
Allotments inc cutting	2,250.00	2,278.23	-28.23
Rec and Crescent cutting	4,000.00	3,794.62	205.38
Planters	310.00	309.97	0.03
Dog bin emptying	1,100.00	899.64	200.36
Grant expenditure	400.00	900.00	-500.00

Neighbourhood plan	3,000.00	1,698.00	1,302.00
Defibrillators	2,000.00	2,997.81	-997.81
Section 106	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Expenditure	£34,090.00	£32,450.54	£1,639.46

Total Variance	£1,639.46
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In terms of the budget for 2023/4, the PC have asked for a slightly higher Precept amount than in the previous year – representing a 4.9% increase. This equates to a 30p increase per month for a Band D household within the Parish. Due to inflation this small increase was necessary to secure many of our services including landscaping, magazine printing, dog waste bin emptying and insurances. The PC kept the increase as low as possible by deciding that certain costs, relating to fixed asset maintenance (e.g. benches and the skate ramp) and the remaining elements of the Neighbourhood Plan, would be financed from the PC’s reserves in 2023/4, amounting to an estimated £4,500.

Looking forwards to 2023/4

Community Speedwatch – this initiative has been launched this year, led by Cllr Langham. Several sessions have been held and speeding vehicles have been reported to the Police. Unfortunately, the quantity of sessions has been hampered by the number of available volunteers. If anyone can give up a little of their time to volunteer, it would make a big difference to the success of the initiative. Evidence has shown from neighbouring Parishes that a concerted, consistent effort is needed to reduce speeding. Speeding is an issue which clearly concerns many Parishioners, and, that being the case, this is one of the weapons in our arsenal to tackle the problem. The online training required only takes two hours and the Speedwatch sessions themselves typically only last for one hour at a time. Please contact the Clerk if you are interested in getting involved. Thank you to Cllr Langham for getting this important initiative off the ground; if you are concerned about speeding through the Parish please get involved!

Community book exchange – I am very pleased to report that the book exchange will be installed shortly. The PC believes it will be a welcome and valuable resource for the community. The books will be suitable for all ages and checked periodically by Cllr English to ensure circulation. The good quality books you no longer want will be well received in their new home! Thank you to Cllr English for proposing this initiative, organising the installation and agreeing to manage the ongoing maintenance of the community library.

Playground equipment – certain items of playground equipment are in need of replacement – two sets of swings, multi-play frame and a see-saw, as well as the surfaces that are in poor repair. The total project cost to replace this equipment is expected to be in the region of £50,000. Some external funding may be available to assist the PC with these costs, but funders will require a proportion of the money needed to be raised by the community – probably in the region of £5,000. The PC will start to engage the community to understand what pieces of replacement equipment users would like to see and also in raising the needed funds. The PC

will have a stall at the upcoming Coronation Fete and children (and adults!) will be able to design their own playground and discuss with Councillors what they would like to see installed. This is going to be an exciting project but the PC will not be able to do it without the backing of the community. You can visit the Justgiving page with this QR code:



Constitution of the Parish Council – several of our current Councillors, including me, will not be re-standing for election in May. This includes Cllr Swannell, who has recently left the PC, and Cllr Burgess who will attend his last PC meeting in April after nearly 25 years. Their knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed. I extend a sincere thank you to them both for all their work and support throughout their tenures.

In May, two new Councillors join the PC – Ceri Parkes and Richard Pryor – and they will be a welcome addition to the team. At the May meeting a new Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed and I offer them and all the Councillors my very best wishes and my thanks for their future service to the Parish.

As it is so close to completion, I have agreed to continue to lead the Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the PC until all the requested amendments have been made and MKCC have agreed a referendum date.

Finally, I would like to thank all my co-Councillors for their advice, support and friendship during the time I have had the honour of being the first woman to hold the role of Chair of Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council.

Cllr Pamela Williams

11 April 2023