

## **LOWER HARDRES AND NACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021**

In attendance were the Chairman Cllr Jane Grundy, the Parish Clerk and six members of the public

Apologies were received from Cllr Moore, Claire Taylor and Carol Day

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020 – 2021**

Much of the work of this report has been done by our hardworking Parish Clerk and for that I am most grateful, Sue.

### **Covid 19**

I think it appropriate to commence by apologising for the date and time changes and cancellations of meetings during the past year. Unfortunately, when the Country went into lockdown in March 2020, we were informed by the powers that be that we could not meet face to face, we were not to hold an Annual Parish Meeting and the existing Chairman was to hold office for a further year. As a result, all our meetings up until 7<sup>th</sup> May this year had to be held remotely via Zoom. Zoom technology is in its infancy and Open Reach reception is very variable in Lower Hardres. To people like myself who have poor hearing it is difficult get a feeling for the nuances of normal debate. I understand that the Zoom Meetings of a Parish Council not 1,000 miles from here has become a source of “prime time” entertainment! Although the year was reasonably quiet on the Parish front, behind the scenes it turned out to be the busiest year ever for the clerk, due to everything being communicated by very lengthy emails, including daily bulletins on Covid-19 from the Government Offices, NHS, KCC, NALC, KALC, to name but a few. All busy replicating each other. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 we were told that from then on, all meetings had to be live – this evening's meetings are the first face to face ones we have held since early March 2020.

During the time of the lockdown, Cllr Taylor put together, with members of the public, an arrangement to assist Parish residents in their shopping, collection of prescriptions, a chat if needed and any other issues that may have arisen. I would like to place on record our grateful thanks to Cllr Taylor and all those volunteers who assisted during that very rare and lonely period.

### **Finance**

We are pleased to announce that we have kept the precept for 2021-22 to £8713.00, the same as last year.

Unfortunately, CCC advised that they were phasing out the concurrent functions funding over the next four years, however due to the major objections from the Parishes, CCC has agreed to pay the same as last year for the next two years, whilst a review takes place

## **Planning Applications**

We considered 15 Planning applications plus several communications concerning possible breaches of planning. The most controversial applications being those for the Bygones site, of which there have been several. Despite our strong objections and numerous letters containing valid policies against the proposals we have this week been advised that planning permission has now been granted by CCC. This is very hard to understand as the Planning Authority had previously refused one of the applications, did not determine a second and approved the third – all of which provided similar policies against the applications. The site will now have 9 container vehicles - to enhance the countryside!!! I would like to place on record how much the Parish Council appreciate the diligent work that Cllr Brian Moore has put in to record our very sound objections which the powers that be have ignored without even the courtesy of explaining why.

Whilst on Planning Issues it is worth mentioning that the City Council dealt another blow to Parish Councils and the general public by removing, at very short notice and without consultation, the right to call in applications. Prior to this, if a Parish observation did not match with the Officer's recommendations, the application would go before the planning committee for determination, and in the case of the public, if there were four objections that too went before the committee. That right has now gone, so Parishes now have to liaise with their ward member – who may or may not agree with the Parish.

## **Highways**

Highway issues never cease and there have been the usual problems such as potholes, signs, overhanging trees, verges etc. It is worth bearing in mind that you can report these yourselves as it may be quicker than waiting for it to be reported to a meeting of the Parish Council. The Tel no is 03000 818181. The endless procession of HGVs on the B2068 still occurs from time to time and was particularly bad prior to KCC Highways and Highways England putting operation Fennel and Brock into place leading up to and including the Christmas period.

Work on Hardres Court Road and the drainage work at the junction of School Lane seemed to take an age with a number of 'Road Closed' notifications. I must say that, in their wisdom, Highways, despite our observations, have declined to make sensible repairs to the minor roads round the Lower Hardres War memorial choosing to squander the money on the road from Lower Hardres Church to the Duck at Pett Bottom, a narrow road totally unsuited to anything larger than a small car or horses in single file certainly not Supermarket large delivery vehicles who blindly follow their satnavs rather than using their common sense! They have placed a "Not Suitable for Large Vehicles" blue notice on 30mph sign on the right hand side of the road as you drive from the Old School towards Tapley Lane (Should it not be on the Left of the Road ~ minor point) but failed to put any such notice where School Lane meets Tapley Lane driving in opposite direction towards The Old School!

## **Public Rights of Way**

Our PROW Cllr Adrian Beaumont has been kept busy, liaising with some owners of land over which there is a PROW and we all appreciate his enthusiasm and guidance on Footpaths in the Parish News

Finally, I would like to thank our Parish Clerk, Sue Shaw, who has patiently guided us through the intricacy's local government for many years. The time Sue puts into her duties is considerable and has not been helped by the problems she has had with her house which has had some major misfortunes. My thanks too to members of the PC for their support and wise counsel over 9+ years I have had the honour of being chairman of this Council. I look forward to supporting Cllr Jane Grundy who has kindly agreed to take over as Chairman.

### **OTHER REPORTS AND MATTERS RAISED BY THE ELECTORATE**

Speedwatch Report

Neighbourhood Report

Village Hall Management Committee

The Village News

Lower Hardres Church

#### **Questions raised were as follows:**

- Could we put a flower planter by the bench on the B2068
- The Forge needs attention
- Is it possible to have a stand outlining the history of the village
- Danger to the pedestrians using the pavement in Fausset Hill

As there were no more questions, the Chairman thanked Cllr McCully for his Chairmanship over the past nine years, and also thanked all for attending the APM and closed the meeting at 6.45pm

Signed.....Date.....