

**Furneux Pelham
Parish Council
Meeting**

05/11/2015
20:00
Village Hall

Notice is hereby given of the above meeting for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Fiona Forth, Parish Clerk 30/10/15

Note taker: Clerk

Councillors: S Bratt, C Cantes, R Gale, E Rowland, H Smart, D White

Welcome: Councillor Geoff Williamson, EHDC and Councillor Graham McAndrew, HCC

Agenda

1) Apologies	None received																	
2) Adoption of previous minutes	To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign: a) the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2015 b) the Minutes of the special meeting held on 24 September 2015	All																
3) Declarations of interest	To receive any Councillors' declarations of interests	All																
4) Matters arising	a) Mary Wheatley Trust - terms of appointment b) Finance - see item 5f) below c) Car Park - see item 5f) below d) Website - see item 8 below e) Mobile library - see item 11a) below f) Planning applications - see item 11b) below g) Annual plan	Clerk Clerk																
5) Finance	a) Update on current financial position b) Expenditure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be approved <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Clerk's expenses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£33.85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• payments made since last meeting</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Fred Knight, litter picking</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£70.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Clerk's expenses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£105.46</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Clerk's salary, September</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£222.32</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">BDO, external audit fee</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£120.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Village Hall, lights</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£180.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Clerk's salary, October</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£222.32</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Continued</i></p>	Clerk's expenses	£33.85	• payments made since last meeting		Fred Knight, litter picking	£70.00	Clerk's expenses	£105.46	Clerk's salary, September	£222.32	BDO, external audit fee	£120.00	Village Hall, lights	£180.00	Clerk's salary, October	£222.32	Clerk
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	<p>c) Donation requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herts Air Ambulance - no specific amount, donated £100 prior year • Parochial Parish Council - no specific amount, donated £800 prior year • Village Hall Committee - request for £40 donation for Christmas tree, same as prior year <p>d) External audit report and action plan</p> <p>e) Revised budget for 2015/16 and forward financial plan 2016/17 to 2020/21</p> <p>f) Matters arising from last minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank signatories • Online banking and direct debit mandates • Car park receipts <p>g) Annual review of fixed assets</p>	
6) Hixham Hall	Matter raised by Albury Parish Council regarding a Modification Order - FP 14 and Hixham Hall	Chair
7) Governance documentation	<p>To review and approve the following governance documentation:</p> <p>a) Code of Conduct</p> <p>b) Standing Orders</p> <p>c) Financial Regulations</p> <p>d) Risk Management Policy Statement and Procedure</p> <p>e) Risk Register</p> <p>f) Clerk Disciplinary Procedure</p> <p>g) Complaints Procedure</p> <p>h) Data Protection Policy and Information Security Policy</p> <p>i) Document Retention Policy</p> <p>j) Equal Opportunities Policy</p> <p>k) Freedom of Information Policy</p> <p>l) Information available under FOI Publication Scheme</p> <p>m) Grievance Procedure</p> <p>n) Health and Safety Policy</p> <p>o) Travel and Expense Policy</p>	Clerk
8) Website	<p>a) Update on development of website</p> <p>b) Update on application for funding</p>	Clerk
9) Allotments	Progress update	D White
10) Village Hall Committee	Update from Parish Council representative	D White
11) Correspondence	<p>a) Mobile Library (matter arising from last meeting)</p> <p>b) Planning applications</p> <p>c) Communications to Parish Clerk</p>	Clerk

Minutes

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from E Rowland

2) Adoption of previous minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 3 September 2015 and the special meeting on the 24 September 2015 were adopted unanimously.

3) Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest made.

4) Matters arising

a. Mary Wheatley Trust

Clarification on the terms of the appointment to the Trust obtained through discussion with a Church Trustee, review of the Charity Scheme and the information held by the Charity Commission. The scheme was put in place to ensure that the Trust has 4 competent trustees with 2 being appointed by the Church and 2 by the Parish Council. There is no direct link between the Parish Council and the Trust. The Parish Council is responsible for appointing a competent person and this person does not have to be a current or former Parish Councillor nor is there any requirement for an information loop between the Parish Council and the Trust.

b. Finance

See item 5f) below.

c. Car Park

See item 5f) below

d. Website

See item 8 below.

e. Mobile library

See item 11a) below

f. Planning applications

See item 11b) below

g. Annual plan

Annual plan approved.

Ward Councillors

The Ward Councillors for Furneux Pelham from East Herts District Council and Herts County Council were present at the meeting, Geoff Williamson and Graham McAndrew respectively. Both were given an opportunity to introduce themselves and answered questions. Both are willing to help the Parish Council for example with supporting access to grant funding and experts at their Council's. Specific issues to be emailed are:

- state of the roads - email to G McAndrew
Action: C Cantes
- allotment footpath funding - email G Williamson
Action: D White

5) Finance

a. Update on current financial position

Current financial position, as circulated, noted. The Clerk highlighted that the financial information does not include the Transparency Code funding as no decision has been received as yet in respect of the application made.

Two additional areas of overspending identified. Audit fees - overspend relates to VAT. Website costs - overspend relates to purchasing the domain name for 10 years, as opposed to 1 year, as this represented best value.

b. Expenditure to be approved

Clerk's expenses approved and expenditure since the last meeting noted, as detailed on the agenda. Clerk highlighted that, having been through the governance documentation, when cheques are signed, the signatories need to sign the supporting documentation to evidence that it agrees to the cheque written.

The payment relating to litter picking was discussed as concerned raised as to whether this was classed as employment. The work is self-supervising and undertaken on an ad hoc basis. View expressed that this work is undertaken voluntarily and that the payment made was ex gratia and therefore not employment. This view to be confirmed as correct with HAPTC. In addition, it was agreed that R Gale take on role of supervising the work.

Action: Clerk (HAPTC) and R Gale (supervision)

c. Donation requests

3 donation requests have been received from Herts Air Ambulance, Parochial Parish Council in respect of the graveyard and the Village Hall Committee for a Christmas tree. It was raised as to whether these were appropriate areas for the Parish Council to support or were there other areas more locally that should be supported. In the past, there had been a process to highlight that the Parish Council would consider requests for support but this has not been undertaken recently. It was agreed that a policy should be developed to make it clear on what basis the Parish Council would support organisations. As a consequence, a decision on the current requests was deferred apart from the Village Hall Committee's given the timing. It was agreed that no donation would be made towards the Christmas tree.

Action: Clerk

d. External audit report and action plan

The external audit report and action plan, and audited 2014/15 annual return, were circulated with the agenda. The key points from the report were covered at the previous meeting as these led to the opinion on the annual accounts being qualified. An additional minor issues point has also been made relating to changing the comparative information in the annual accounts. This was done to correct the minor issue raised in respect of 2013/14. The action plan demonstrates that the majority of these issues have been addressed, with the remaining issue being complete in January 2016 when the precept is determined. The Clerk has also identified that as these matters have been addressed, the Parish Council's annual accounts for 2015/16 will not be qualified. This has been confirmed by the external auditors. The audited 2014/15 annual return was therefore approved together with the action plan.

e. Revised budget for 2015/16 and forward financial plan 2016/17 to 2020/21

In essence, these documents, circulated with the agenda, are the same as those presented to the previous meeting. Key decisions still remain to be made in relation to:

- what level of balance should be carried forward annually; and
- what projects are planned for the future and how will they be funded?

It was raised that perhaps the Parish Council should consider preparing a neighbourhood plan. This was rejected due to the cost and time involved in preparing such a plan, in line with previous decisions. It was then agreed that the budget for 2016/17 could be prepared on the basis of the financial information contained in the forward financial plan as it is not until after this year that the funding from the New Homes Bonus tapers off dramatically which will have an impact on the level of precept required.

f. Matters arising from the last minutes

The Clerk provided an update as follows:

- Bank signatories - all complete. In addition, as a reminder, all cheques made out to the Parish Council can no longer be written out to 'FPPC' as the name now needs to be in full for the bank to accept them.
- Online banking and direct debit mandates - this has still to be progressed.
- Car park receipts - expected monies have now been received.

g. Annual review of fixed assets

Annual review needs to be undertaken for insurance purposes and to identify any repair work that is required. Evidence on file suggests the last review was undertaken in 2010. C Cantes and R Gale agreed to undertake review. In addition, the Clerk highlighted that the fixed asset register contains a lump sum value in respect of the years before 2011/12 that is not allocated to a specific asset. Action needs to be taken to rectify this.

Action: C Cantes and R Gale (review) and Clerk (fixed asset register)

6) Hixham Hall

An issue with the public rights of way near Hixham Hall has been raised with the Parish Council by Albury Parish Council. Investigations undertaken have identified that there are a number of anomalies. Chris Hadley has volunteered to take this matter further in conjunction with Albury Parish Council. It was agreed that Furneux Pelham Parish Council supported the need for a modification order and accepted that it could potentially take time.

Action: review position at next meeting

7) Governance documentation

The Parish Council's governance documentation, circulated with the agenda, has been reviewed and refreshed as a result of the external audit report mentioned earlier. The documents have been based on the latest models available from HAPTC, and other available best practice, and tailored to be appropriate to the Parish Council's circumstances. The Clerk highlighted 2 possible amendments:

- i. Risk register - data protection - the Parish Council is not registered with the Information Commissioners Office. Apart from the Electoral Register (kept securely), very little personal data is retained. Guidance from HAPTC was that the Parish Council should register. Agreed that the Parish Council would not register with the ICO given limited personal data held
- ii. Information available under FOI Publication Scheme - minutes are too lengthy to put on the noticeboards. Agreed that the Scheme to be amended and minutes to be obtained from the Clerk.

Subject to the above points, the following documentation was approved:

- Code of Conduct
- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Risk Management Policy Statement and Procedure
- Risk Register
- Clerk Disciplinary Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy and Information Security Policy
- Document Retention Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Information available under FOI Publication Scheme
- Grievance Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Travel and Expense Policy

8) Website

Update on development of the website

Progress has been made in developing the website. The domain name has been purchased - www.furneuxpelham.org.uk - for 10 years as agreed at the last meeting. Hosting has been arranged and is likely to cost around £30 per annum. The actual website is over 50% complete and links will be sent to everyone for comments before it goes live at the end of the month. All Councillors agreed to have their email addresses on the website as a point of contact.

Update on application for funding

Following the special meeting to approve the application, it was submitted to HAPTC and then on to DCLG. The application was for £585. It was one of the first applications received and highlighted that the guidance hadn't considered VAT. A revised application, exclusive of VAT, was submitted and the amount now claimed is £558. Guidance has been provided to reclaim the VAT even though the Parish Council is not registered for VAT and process does not look to be easy but will be investigated. The outcome of the application will be known at the end of November.

9) Allotments

D White provided an update. Although there has been a change in plot holders, the number of vacant plots remains the same at 5 large plots.

10) Village Hall Committee

D White provided a brief update. The redecoration has been started which is being funded from money raised. A new hob has been installed in the kitchen. A number of fundraising events have been planned as well as Christmas related events.

11) Correspondence

a. Mobile library

This matter was initially raised at the last meeting. Councillors have now had an opportunity to review the toolkit issued by Herts County for setting up its own book exchange. Agreed that this is not something for the Parish Council to take forward currently as there was only a small number of users of the service. It will be considered again if a need is identified.

b. Planning applications

Noted that there had been 1 planning consent and 3 consultations since the last meeting. S Bratt stated that he had spoken to officers regarding 1 planning consultation and the issue of sight lines had already been taken into account by them. In general, Councillors are responding to the Clerk in respect of planning consultations.

c. Communications to Parish Clerk

All communications have been covered under other agenda items.

S Bratt mentioned that he was pursuing the matter of which organisation is responsible for maintaining Whitebarns Lane. D White stated that the lower half is maintained by Highways as it is a bus route.

The meeting ended at 21:28.

The next meeting is on 7th January 2016.