

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON
26TH JANUARY 2009 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY**

Present: Cllr Mr L Abraham
Cllr Mr D Graeme
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby (Chairman)

In attendance: Mrs Gilder (Assistant Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Mrs J Burns and Mr M Harris.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: That,
the minutes of the meeting of the Communications Committee held on 3rd November 2008,
be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Financial Report

The Committee considered a financial report indicating the net position of the Newsletter and Annual Report budget as at 20th January 2009.

RESOLVED: That,
the financial report indicating the net position of the Newsletter and Annual Report budget as
at 20th January 2009, be noted.

5. Newsletter

The Committee considered arrangements for the March edition of the newsletter, and agreed on the main articles for inclusion.

RESOLVED: That,
the agreed articles be included in the March edition of the Parish Council's newsletter,
and the newsletter distributed during the first week of March.

6. Annual Report

The Committee considered arrangements for the 2008/2009 Annual Report.

The Committee noted that the date of the Annual Parish Meeting had been set for Friday 15th May 2009 and therefore, a number of Annual Reports would be required in time for that meeting, with the remainder printed and delivered to residents by no later than 30th June 2009.

The Committee agreed that the format of the Annual Report should remain as last year, printed on white paper with a pale green outer cover.

RESOLVED: That, quotations be sought for the printing and distribution of the 2008/2009 Annual Report, in the same format as the 2007/2008 Annual Report.

7. Website

The Committee considered the Parish Council's website and noted that the 'Community Warden' page, in addition to the current Warden's details, had a photograph and details of the previous Warden, which it was agreed should now be removed.

RESOLVED: That, the Clerk be requested to update the website as discussed.

The Committee noted that the photographs to accompany the text on the History page had not yet been added to the website.

The Assistant Clerk reported that they were still awaited from Dr Cramp.

The Committee discussed the possibility of replacing the photograph on the 'Home' page, with a montage of photographs from around Hartley. The Assistant Clerk reported that, at present, no suitable photographs were available.

RESOLVED: That, Members of the Committee would photograph suitable locations/landmarks in Hartley to be considered for inclusion on the 'Home' page of the website.

8. Information Leaflets for Residents

At the last meeting of the Communications Committee it was resolved that the Assistant Clerk be requested to contact the local Estate Agents to ask whether they would be willing to distribute the leaflets to new residents.

The Assistant Clerk reported that three Estate Agents had been contacted and two had confirmed their willingness to distribute the leaflets.

At the last meeting the Committee noted that the draft leaflets entitled 'What is a Parish Council?' 'How to ask a question at Council and Committee Meetings and 'Local Services and Useful Information' would be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting to be held on 5th November 2008.

The Assistant Clerk reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had considered the leaflets and were satisfied with the information contained.

The Committee discussed how the information leaflets should be presented. The Assistant Clerk produced a draft presentation folder which the Committee considered and approved.

The Committee agreed that in addition to the folders distributed by the Local Estate Agents, individual leaflets should also be available to collect from the Library and the Parish Office.

RECOMMENDED: That the information packs be sent to those Local Estate Agents that had agreed to distribute them, and that individual information leaflets be made available to residents via the Library and the Parish Office.

9. Quality Council Scheme

The Committee noted that the Council's Quality Parish Status had been awarded on September 2005. Applications for re-accreditation cannot be made before the four year period expires but during the three months following expiry, there will be a 'grace' period during which a parish can apply for re-accreditation. If re-accreditation is not sought during the 'grace' period, then Quality status will be lost.

The Committee agreed that re-accreditation should be sought.

RECOMMENDED: That, re-accreditation for Quality Parish Status be sought during the three month 'grace' period following its expiry in September 2009.

The Committee noted that a number of new tests had been added to the Scheme in order to reflect the growing influence that parish and town councils have in local communities.

As the tier of local government closest to the people, parish and town councils can play an even more proactive role in helping to get the public more interested in democracy. With this in mind, it was decided to introduce a Democracy and Citizenship test.

Quality councils will also be required to evaluate the training needs of both staff and councillors and provide evidence through a training 'Statement of Intent'.

The Assistant Clerk reported that a draft training 'Statement of Intent' had been produced.

RESOLVED: That, the Assistant Clerk be requested to provide members of the Committee with a copy of the draft training Statement of Intent, for consideration at the next meeting.

The Committee noted that one of the discretionary items on the application for Quality Status was whether the Councillors held regular 'surgeries' for local residents i.e more than 6 times a year.

The Committee considered the current practice of advertising Members Surgery dates in the newsletter, as and when required. The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to residents, if the dates of the Surgeries were set annually, in advance. It was suggested that they should take place bi-monthly on the Saturday following the full Council meeting.

RECOMMENDED: That,
1) the date of the next Members Surgery be set for Saturday 14th March 2009 and
2) future Surgery dates be set at the Annual Meeting of the Council, to take place bi-monthly on the Saturday following the full Council Meeting, commencing in May 2009.

10. The Power of the promotion of Economic Social or Environmental Well Being

The Committee considered Legal Briefing L24-08, issued by NALC. The draft Order confirms the conditions a parish council must satisfy if it wishes to qualify as an eligible parish council entitled to exercise the power of well being.

The Committee noted that one of the conditions was that the Council publishes a statement of community engagement.

The Assistant Clerk reported that a draft statement of community engagement had been produced.

RESOLVED: That,
the Assistant Clerk be requested to provide members of the Committee with a copy of the draft statement of community engagement, for consideration at the next meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

Monday 2nd March 2009 at 7.30p.m. at Hartley Library.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....