

Upper Hardres Parish Council

Annual Meeting of the Council

Minutes of Annual Council Meeting held at Bossingham Village Hall
on Monday 14 May 2024 at 6.30pm

1. Appointments

i. Appointment of Chair

Cllr Nick Waldron was elected as Chairman:
proposed by Cllr Mick Broughton, seconded by Cllr Simon Warner.

ii. Appointment of Vice Chair

Cllr Rob Richardson was elected as Vice-Chairman:
proposed by Cllr Simon Warner, seconded by Cllr Angela Waldron.

iii. Retirement of councillor

Mick Broughton retired from the council after four years as a member. The Chairman expressed the council's thanks for Mick's detailed work on the Neighbourhood Plan which unfortunately had to be abandoned due to lack of local support.

2. Attendance and apologies

Attending: Chairman Nick Waldron, Cllr Rob Richardson, Cllr Angela Waldron, Cllr Simon Warner, Clerk/RFO Clare Hamilton, and Mick Broughton.

3. Councillors' Acceptance of Office and Code of Conduct, and declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillors' acceptance of the Code of Conduct: no changes.

Councillors' Acceptance of Office: no changes.

Councillors' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: no changes.

4. Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 23 May 2023

It was resolved unanimously to accept the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 22 May 2023, proposed by Cllr Nick Waldron, Seconded by Cllr Angela Waldron.

5. Annual Governance Statement & Accountability Return 2023/24

Following receipt of the second CIL payment and a donation from ward councillors, income exceeded £25,000 in the financial year 2023/24, therefore the parish council does not qualify for exemption from limited assurance review this year.

It was resolved that, in order to meet requirements, the Annual Governance & Accountability Return will be completed and returned to the external auditor for review.

It was resolved unanimously to approve and sign the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024.

6. Effectiveness of the system of Internal Control

The Internal Audit was carried out by Jon O'Connor on 11 April 2024. Recommendations were made as follows:

a. *Asset Register: advised to update asset register to clarify purchase value v. current replacement value; to combine 'estate' holdings for parish council-owned plot of land comprising village hall, car park and playing field, rather than list as separate items.*

It was resolved unanimously to accept the recommendation from the Internal Auditor to update the Asset Register.

b. *Payments to Clerk: as the authorised user of online banking, the Clerk currently pays herself*

monthly salary and expenses payments. In order to exercise proper financial control, it is advised that the Chair becomes a 2nd authorised online signatory in order to make payments to the Clerk. After discussion regarding the Clerk's diligence in only making payments once approved at a council meeting, preparing bank reconciliations for each council meeting, and communicating all financial transactions to councillors, and councillors' reluctance at becoming a second authorised online banking user, **it was resolved** to retain existing financial arrangements.

7. Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

(a) **It was resolved** unanimously to approve the Accounting Statements which were signed and dated.

8. Budget for the financial year 2024/25

The Budget for 2024/25 was approved at the November 2023 meeting.

9. Amendments to Financial Regulations none

10. Amendments to Banking arrangements

The Barclays account is closed and the Chairman is continuing to contact Santander re. opening a savings account.

11. To consider review of Insurance cover and renewal quotations

A 3-year Long Term Agreement with Clear Councils Insurance (formerly BHIB) is at an end.

It was resolved to continue with Clear Councils on a further 3-year LTA at their quoted premium of £510.17, following the consideration of three renewal quotes.

12. Policies and Procedures No changes.

13. Bossingham Playing Field

Quotations are being sourced for the relocation of toddler climber and associated grass tile safety surfacing, as recommended by Rebecca Booth CCC Senior Environment Officer, and a replacement goal post.

Cleaning of equipment and maintenance works highlighted in 2023 annual inspection have been carried out.

Annual safety inspection is due in October.

Quotes are being sourced for extra fencing on the boundary near the skate zone, and for hedge planting to extend the hedge along this boundary.

14. UHPC Grant Fund awards

Two applications were received for the 2024 UHPC Grant Fund awards.

It was resolved unanimously to award funds as follows, proposed by Cllr Rob Richardson, seconded by Cllr Angela Waldron:

£250 to Bossingham Primary School PTA

£250 to Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) *(following a parishioner receiving life-saving treatment from the air ambulance in 2023)*

15. For information

Annual Parish Meeting follows at 7.30pm.

Signed..... Nick Waldron, Chairman, May 2025