

Hartest Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held in The School on Monday 7 November 2005 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs James Long (Chairman), Mary Gough (Vice-Chairman), Rachel Irvine, David Loxton, Jo Pask, John Schofield.

Apologies for absence: Cllr Robin Oaten – previously arranged PCC meeting,

Attending: Mr David Morbey (Clerk to the Council), 5 members of the public.

05/104 Declarations of interest none

05/105 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2005

The minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

proposed: Cllr Pask, seconded: Cllr Irvine **Approved**

05/106 Public Forum

A resume of the public forum which included comment at this point and during the meeting is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

05/107 Consideration of the Parish Plan draft document

It was noted that some of the documents produced by the Parish Plan Group (PPG) for consideration at the meeting had been rather late in delivery. These were also lengthy and so had been emailed by The Clerk to Councillors. Some Councillors had not been able to access all aspects of the emails and so some documents had not been seen by all Councillors.

Council greatly supported the production of the Parish Plan which was a great opportunity to take forward the ideas and aspirations of the village. The draft was not yet complete and this made it difficult to comment. Council recognised that a tremendous amount of work had been undertaken by the PPG but there was some disappointment that the draft did not seem to reflect this. The document seemed bland. There was a suggestion that the village could have been informed by experts about the issues posed by the questionnaire before it was sent out. There was some concern about whether the draft accurately reflected the views of the village and whether the group had allowed any personal enthusiasms to influence the document. This idea was rejected by a Council representative on the PPG. Taking up this point, views were expressed that some conclusions had been reached which did not seem to be supported by the data from the questionnaire. A number of examples of this were cited, some in particular showing that a conclusion of support for a project or idea had been reached when in fact the majority opposed it. There was understanding that this confusion may have resulted from the restrictive type of questionnaire which asked for simple yes or no responses which then made it difficult to establish if a no response indicated opposition, or simply indifference, to a topic. It would need scrupulous care to interpret such results. There was a suggestion that rather than recommend future projects or action, it might be better to let the data speak for itself so that the village as a whole could reach a view after publication. Opinion was mixed on the merit of including global or nationwide issues such as CO2 emissions from motor cars rather than keeping simply to parish concerns.

Some important omissions from the draft were noted:

The young people's questionnaire results and any recommendations arising.

The importance of the role of the retired and the elderly in the village and their future housing and other needs.

The cemetery.

The position of Hartest within the East Anglia region and the relationship with surrounding areas.

The data on the number of questionnaires returned and completed

There was comment on the apparently backwards format of the draft which had descriptions about the village placed last. There was also comment that an action plan for the future might be best placed at the front of the document. A question was raised about funding for any future projects and the proper forum to carry forward any projects arising from the Parish Plan. The deadline for printing the Plan of 31 January meant that redrafting would need to be completed urgently so that further consideration could be given by Council, hopefully at the meeting on 21 November although another meeting may have to be scheduled if necessary. Mr Chivers was asked to give sufficient notice of changes so that a new draft could be given proper consideration. Councillors were asked to let Mr Chivers have any further comments as soon as possible. **Action Councillors** There was a question as to whether the Chairman would be able to complete a draft of his Chairman's Statement before the next meeting?

Possible Action Chairman

05/108 Date of next meeting – Monday 21 November 2005 at 7.00pm in The Institute.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Appendix to the minutes of the meeting of Hartest Parish Council held in The School on 7 November 2005 at 7.00pm.

Public Forum

Mr Douglas Chivers, Chairman of the Parish Plan Group addressed the meeting before discussion on the draft Parish Plan. He said that it was a draft which was not yet complete although the final document would include pictures and diagrams to help make the data more easily understood. The Parish Plan Group (PPG) was seeking comments and suggestions from the Parish Council.

After Council discussion Mr Chivers and other members of the PPG were invited to comment. Mr Chivers said that the aim had always been to represent the views of the village accurately and fairly in an effort to make the community better. He stressed that the draft was just that – a draft and that it must be recognised that not all members of the PPG were necessarily happy with everything in it and that some editorial judgements had to be made. He took from this meeting the main point of ensuring that no bias or inaccuracy would be included. He accepted that there were some errors at present and that any discrepancies in the data should be eliminated and that conclusions drawn should reflect the data. The PPG wanted to genuinely reflect the views of the village and produce a neutral document to suggest what might be done. It was not the intention to tell people what to do. He said the omission of the Youth Questionnaire would be remedied and he would think again about the order of the document. Other members of the PPG commented on the interpretation of the yes/no answers and thought generally that people were not opposing ideas when giving “no” answers to specific questions. The design work would try to integrate common threads rather than keep everything segregated. It had been useful to receive feedback. The deadline of 31 January would be kept to if possible, but there was scope for running right up to the 31 March cut off date if absolutely necessary.