

MINUTES OF HANKERTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 6 JAN 25

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Held on Monday 6 January 2025 at 7.30 pm in the North Aisle, Hankerton Church

Present: Parish Cllrs Dai Davies (Chairman), Richard Barrow, Denis DeSouza, Malcolm Gerald, Kate Nurden; M R Bromley Gardner (Clerk); Wilts Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall (Item 9 onward); and 15 members of the public.

1. Apologies. Cllr Jacqui Erskine-Crum.
2. Public Questions. One resident asked whether, now that the 6 metres of the Hillwell-Follyfield footpath had been re-surfaced, the rest could now be done. The PC answered that since the 6 metres had cost £300 (+ VAT) it would clearly be an expensive proposal; and that the request last year had been to resurface just the muddy patch – the rest actually did have a hard core surface under the grass.
3. Declarations Of Interest. None.
4. Urgent Matters at Chairman's Discretion. A proposal from LHFIG for anti-speeding measures had arrived on Friday afternoon. With the next LHFIG on 21 Jan and thereafter the next one in May, this was being added to the agenda (Item 11).
5. Minutes of Last Meeting. The Minutes of the last meeting (held on 4 Nov 24) had been circulated in advance. They were approved and signed. The following were outstanding:
 - Point raised by member of public – WWT roadside hedge and 'ditch to nowhere' – Chair and member of public had not yet walked the ground.
 - Remote Attendance – email consideration and decision of a PC response had not happened.
 - Footpaths – Chair and Footpaths Cllr had not yet walked HANK 19.
6. Finance. The account was heading for an end-of-year balance of £3460. The following payments were authorised:
 - 2024/14, £360, to Durnford Landscapes, Hillwell-Follyfield footpath 6 metres re-surfacing.
 - 2024/15, £168.62, to Brunel Engraving, plaque for Coronation tree in churchyard, payable to Clerk who paid the bill by personal credit card.
7. Cllr Vacancy. There was one candidate for the vacancy. Jonathan Allmark was unanimously co-opted onto the PC and took a seat at the table.
8. Planning Applications. The PC considered PL/2024/10264, Plot 11 Follyfield. The applicant and the closest neighbour were both in the meeting. Due to differing versions of what the situation was, the PC felt unable to decide on a response until the facts had been clarified. Clerk to respond accordingly to Wilts Council. **Action: Clerk**
9. Storm Bert Flooding. David Pynn as Flooding Advisor to the PC spoke. Four properties in Chapel Lane had flooded, 2 seriously, as had Cloatley Grange; the road at Hankerton Bridge Pumping Station had flooded when the brook overtopped, supplemented by discharge from the road manholes. The Wilts Council Senior Drainage

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Engineer, Danny Everett, had visited Chapel Lane. With his input there seemed to be 3 strands for action:

- a. He advised that the ditch behind the Chapel Lane properties would be much better, with greater capacity, as an open ditch rather than piped in sections.
 - It was acknowledged that this was a matter for the residents only, not for PC action.
- b. He identified that the entrance to the Chapel Lane east ditch, opposite the 2011 culvert under Cloatley Road, was higher than the base of the roadside ditch there. This needed clearing to allow unrestricted flow from the roadside ditch.
 - It wasn't clear who owned this ditch – Applecroft or Cloatley Manor. Discussions between the 2 owners needed.
- c. Downstream from Chapel Lane, the PC would contact landowners, as far as Eastcourt House, first to request permission for a ditch-walk (by David Pynn, probably with the PC Chair and maybe others) to identify any restrictions needing clearing; and second to ask them to clean their ditches once the ground allowed. Contact to be initially face-to-face if possible, thereafter up to 2 letters; Wilts Council could be called in if no landowner action in response.

Action: Clerk

10. Precept 2025/26 Part 1 - Baseline. The Tax Base had increased to 154.58 (current year 150.34); this meant lower householder payments than this year for any given amount of precept. The current year was heading for an expenditure £850 greater than the income, reducing the end-of-year balance/reserve to about £3400.

11. Spending Plans. Decisions:

- Agree to increase the churchyard maintenance payment to £1250.
- Accept the offer by the ex-Cloatley Manor Ukrainians to cut the Amenity Area grass 3 times at £50 per cut – total £150.
- Look to buy a better quality Union Flag with anti-fray edging at up to £150.
- LHFIG Anti-speeding proposal – to consult the village through the PC website, to reconsider at the 3 Mar 25 PC meeting;
 - but to include £600 in the budget (30% of £2000 LHFIG proposal cost).
- Local elections – estimated potential election cost (@£2 per elector, 225 electors) was £450, but for an unopposed election (7 or fewer candidates, which Hankerton had not had in the last 16 years) there was very little information and the cost was potentially as low as £12. Decision to take these costs at risk.

Action: Clerk

12. BKV Celebration. The celebration to be delayed until the summer. The cost to the PC not to exceed the £100 prize money.

Action: Chair, Dai Davies

13. Noticeboard Follyfield. No news. No inclusion in budget.

14. Hillwell White Lining. Item no longer needed. Residents may put up own small signs.

15. Precept 2025/26 Part 2 - Decision. Taking account of Item 11-14 decisions the planned expenditure was £6074, the end-of-year balance of about £3450 should be maintained, and the Precept was set at £5800. This was a nearly 20% increase but in cash terms it was only a £6.11 increase for the year (at Band D).

Action: Clerk

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16. Defib Training 2025. Sat 29 Mar, 9.30am, in Charlton Village Hall, joining with Charlton's defib training session at no cost.

17. Emergency Contact Hub. The Swindon and Wilts Prepared team visited the church to see the North Aisle and agreed it could do the job. They left a small pack of log books and badges. The PC agreed the Clerk's suggestion that we move slowly on further developments including buying equipment, instead keeping in touch with other PCs' progress and learning from them.

18. .gov.uk Update. The re-written PC website was now with HugoFox with a .gov.uk address. The Clerk had applied for his .gov.uk email address but with no news yet, no doubt due to the Christmas break. We could apply for other Cllrs who wanted one of our remaining 4 .gov.uk email addresses once the first one has come through.

19. Emergency Plan. Dai Davies volunteered to assume Cllr responsibility for the Emergency Plan – gratefully accepted by the PC.

20. Parish Council Election. The PC election will be on 1 May 25. The period for those who wanted to stand for election to hand in their nomination forms to Wilts Council (between 10am-4pm on working days) was from 12 Mar 10am to 2 Apr 4pm. The Clerk would send more information. Wilts Council were offering a webinar on this process – the Clerk would send information by email.

21. Planning. Decided at Wilts Council since the last meeting: Minety Solar Farm, variation of condition relating to SE access moved by 7 metres – approved.

22. Cllrs Observations and Items for Next Meeting. None.

24. Next Meetings. 3 Mar, (12 May AVM), 19 May APCM, 7 Jul, 1 Sep, 3 Nov.

The meeting closed at 9.04pm.

Chairman