

Minutes of the Hardwick Annual Parish Meeting
held on 14 May 2025 at 7.00 pm
at the Cabin at St Mary's

Present: 6 parishioners including Parish Council members.

In attendance: Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services)

Cllr Tony Gill presided.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Jeff Jones (Hardwick Happenings).

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting on 22 May 2024

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting on 22 May 2024 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. (Prop BC, 2nd PJ, carried with 4 in favour and 2 abstentions)

3. Matters arising

A comment was made that parking under the trees by the Church appeared to have continued. The Chairman replied that the problem had been discussed by the Parish Council last summer, and it had decided to look again at the issue in November when the ground was no longer dry. At the November meeting it had been agreed to evaluate the position again after the winter.

It was noted that there was a new County Councillor following the recent elections.

4. Reports:

4.1 The Parish Council (Cllr Tony Gill)

The Chairman read his report on the Council's activities and matters of interest to the village which is appended to these minutes.

The report covered:

- Cllr Gill thanked the Parish Councillors for all their hard work during the year, and in particular Cllr Rose for his work on the Community Centre and MUGA.
- Thanks were also extended to the Clerk and LGS Services.
- Parish Council membership. Some established members had resigned but two new councillors had come forward, leaving one vacancy.
- Projects completed and agreed. Traffic bollards were placed at the edge of St Mary's play area to protect the grass from parking and large agricultural vehicles, as the annual RoSPA inspection had identified this as a safety hazard.
- The installation of street lights from Hall Drive to Miller's Way as part of the Capstone Fields agreement. The Council has contracted Balfour Beatty to provide more lights between Miller's Way and Cambridge Road. Four lights have been installed and are awaiting connection.
- Brambles and scrub have been removed from the grass area at Egremont Road.
- A glass display unit has been installed in the school foyer, displaying Hardwick memorabilia including a copy of the Hardwick Inclosure. Alan Everitt was thanked for taking this forward. He asked whether someone at the school could take formal responsibility for the cabinet and commented that there were no labels to provide information. This will be considered at a forthcoming meeting.
- Work is due to start on the two pedestrian islands on St Neots Road at the end of May. One will be opposite the bus shelters at Miller's Way and the other near the Capstone Fields entrance. The County Council had not originally informed the Parish Council and the majority of residents that the work was due to be carried out, in order to save costs, but letters were now being distributed.
- Community Centre and MUGA. Cllr Gill summarised developments with the project during the year. The original plan for the Community Centre had

emerged as unaffordable after tenders were obtained, and it was decided to design a new building which would be affordable, for a budget of £1.4m including consultants' fees, using new architects. Following a tender process, Blue Ink Architects were appointed to take the project forward. Regular discussions have taken place between the Community Centre Working Group and the Architect and Quantity Surveyor. It had been decided that a modified design with smaller rooms or a smaller building than originally envisaged would be needed, but retaining most of the main requirements. The Parish Council will meet the Architects to agree a design that is within budget to be taken forward for planning permission, with the potential to develop or extend the building in future if possible.

- Cllr Rose and Alan West, Chair of Hardwick Community Centre Working Group (HCCWG), have been looking at designs for improving the MUGA, as this will no longer be removed under the current proposals. Some of the S106 funds are to be used for improving sport and play facilities in the village. Cllr Rose outlined some suggestions for the use of the area for the use of the whole village. It was observed that the building work should start as soon as feasible, and improvements could be added over time.

A resident asked whether any consideration had been given to a business case for the Community Centre, and where the income would come from. Cllr Gill replied that once the tenders had been received and a start date agreed, this would be considered. The resident suggested that the Council seek advice from those who had experience with building and developing the Cabin.

4.2 Presentation of the last audited accounts

The last audited accounts (year ending 31 March 2024) had been published and were available on the website via the link on the agenda, and will be placed on the notice board.

4.3 The District Councillor (Cllr Lina Nieto)

Cllr Nieto's written report was noted. This covered:

- Her community work and support and Social Media engagement.
- The SCDC budget 2025-2026.
- The SCDC four day week.
- The 5 year Land Supply.
- Local Government Reorganisation.
- The political make up of the Council.

Disappointment was expressed that the District Councillor was not in attendance. Ways of developing relationships and increasing contact with the District and County Councillors will be discussed at a forthcoming Parish Council meeting.

4.4 The County Councillor

The election for a new County Councillor had just taken place. No report was available.

4.5 Hardwick Happenings

No written report was available. Jeff Jones had sent his apologies, as he had only just seen the invitation, and thanked the Parish Council for the grant awarded. He had reported that Hardwick Happenings was working well.

5. Applications for awards of small grants to projects

None. It was noted that grant applications were open throughout the year, subject to completion of an application form.

6. Any other Parish Matters including any resolutions

6.1 Request for replacement bench on Cambridge Road

A resident had placed a post on Facebook requesting a replacement bench on Cambridge Road near the school, as the existing bench was difficult to sit on and in poor repair. There had been support for this on Facebook. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

- 6.2 Question about solar powered batteries for mobile speed signs
A resident asked about solar powered batteries for the mobile speed signs. Cllr Gill confirmed that they had been ordered and he and Cllr Armisen would install them when delivered. Asked why the manufacturer was not installing them, Cllr Gill replied that they were straightforward to install using the manufacturer's instructions and this would save the Council some £500-£600.
- 6.3 Question about Parish Council information in Hardwick Happenings
Referring to a question from last year's Annual Parish Meeting, suggesting that a précis of that meeting be placed in Hardwick Happenings, the resident asked for a page of information to be included in the magazine to inform residents what was happening. The Chairman explained that the minutes were available on the website, including those for the Annual Parish Meeting. The resident urged the Council to communicate more with the village.
- 6.4 Question regarding installation of pedestrian islands
The resident reported that he had been communicating with CCC Highways and Hill, which had resulted in him obtaining valuable information from them. He had queried the proposed diversion of the buses during the installation of the pedestrian islands with CCC. He asked the Parish Council whether it had replied to the email from the CCC officer asking if the Parish Council was willing to fund the use of a banksman so that the buses could get through to let passengers on and off in St Neots Road during the period of the traffic diversion. The Chairman responded that the request would be brought to the Parish Council meeting.
- 6.5 Question regarding parking at the end of Egremont Road and a Facebook post regarding parking in Limes Road and Cambridge Road
The resident asked for an update on the parking situation. The Chairman explained that CCC had advised the best way to approach the request for yellow lines in Egremont Road would be to submit an LHI application when applications opened later in the year. There had been mixed views on this as some felt that allowing parking would slow the traffic. An LHI would be expensive and consultation with residents would have to take place first.
Parking issues in Limes Road had been raised by a resident in a Facebook post, of which the Parish Council had been unaware. The resident commented that residents were posting on the village Facebook pages in the expectation that the Parish Council would see and respond to their posts, and that the Council should either respond or put a notice on Facebook to inform them that the correct way to contact the Council should be by email to the Clerk.
It was noted that parking took place on both sides of the road and on the corner by the school. Cllr Joslin commented that when the Greenways commenced operating, there would be raised tables to slow the traffic down, and that parking was the problem.
- 6.6 Suggestion that the Parish Council considers a policy on defending Parish Council green spaces from encroachment
Reports had been received of encroachment and potential encroachment onto Parish Council owned land in the Spinney. It was suggested that the Parish Council should consider a policy on defending its land from encroachment. The Chairman confirmed that a previously received report was on the agenda for the forthcoming meeting.
7. Closure of meeting
There was no further business and the meeting was declared closed at 8.38 pm.

Signed _____(Chairman) _____(Date)