HOLMWOOD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2025

Present:	Mr Keith Carter	Chairman
	Mr James Afford	Vice-Chair
	Mrs Mary Mansell	
	Mr Ian Fairbrother	
	Mrs Rachel Snook	
	Mr Leslie Lester	
	Mr Robert Jordan	
	Mrs Jan Russell	Parish Clerk

In Attendance: District Councillor Rosemary Hobbs

Apologies: Surrey County Councillor Stephen Cooksey. District Councillor Claire Malcomson.

1. MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 09 JANUARY 2025.
The Council agreed the minutes of the Full Parish Council meeting to be a true representation of the meeting and were approved by all Councillors. Proposed by Councillor Lester and seconded by Councillor Jordan.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM 09 JANUARY 2025.
Kings Royal Garden Party: At the last meeting the Council had been asked by Surrey ALC to nominate a deserving long-serving Councillor to represent the Parish and Town Sector on behalf of Surrey. The Councillors unanimously nominated Councillor Mrs Mary Mansell. Congratulations to Mrs Mansell who has been selected as the Surrey representative and will be attending a Royal Garden Party in May.
Defibrillator and CPR Training: The training session was arranged for Tuesday 25 February in the Village Hall. The very informative session was attended by Councillors and residents who all enjoyed the training. The numbers were somewhat disappointing, even though the training had been advertised on Facebook, the Parish Council website and the noticeboard. The Councillors thanked Councillor Carter for organising the event.
It is essential that the defibrillator, especially the battery and defib pads are checked regularly. Councillor Carter asked if a Village Hall Trustee would be willing to undertake this on a regular monthly basis. Councillors will be advised.

3. VILLAGE HALL.
Councillor Mansell asked if a breakdown on the Village Hall accounts had been received from the Trustees yet. A breakdown for the year 2023/24 had been submitted and the breakdown for the year 2024/25 will be available at the next Parish Council meeting.
Councillor Lester advised that one of the top windows in the hall is leaking. Tarpaulin is covering the window at present and estimates for a replacement are being sought.

4. CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND
Repairs to Safety Surfacing:
Repairs to the safety surfacing in the playground have been confirmed and this work will be carried out between the 24 and 26 March 2025. A notice will be erected at the playground, on the notice board and on the website, advising which equipment will be out of use whilst

repairs are being carried out. The Clerk will ensure the National Trust is made aware of this work.
Councillor Snook reported that there has been an increase in dog excrement in the play area. It was suggested that a "No Dogs Allowed in the Playground" notice could be erected.
The Chairman told the Council that he had spoken to parents in the playground recently and they considered the area safe but would like additional equipment installed, suggesting a zip wire.

National Trust Licence for Playground:

The National Trust has questioned what agreement, if any, is in place to govern the relationship between the Parish Council and the NT so far as the playground is concerned. The NT has been unable to find any formal agreement and have issued a documented licence which underpins the arrangements and sets out certain responsibilities and obligations around the playground.
The Councillors have responded to this licence, setting out amendments before an agreement can be agreed.

- *The village has used this parcel of land for many years without any requirement of a licence which appears to be overly and unnecessarily bureaucratic.*
- *In agreement with the NT at the time the park was commissioned, and indeed, promoted by the then leading officials of the local NT, we were allowed and encouraged to develop the playground.*
- *This licence now appears to stamp over what was a 'gentleman's agreement' and impose on the Council restrictions and requirements which are the NT's responsibility.*
- *The Parish Council, absolutely, will not take responsibility for your trees. This is much too onerous an imposition on the Council. The Council already maintains the grass at no charge together with the park's surrounding hedges. The NT may as well bequeath us the land if you expect us to look after it entirely. To ensure the safety of the public using the land is the owner's responsibility. As the equipment is bought and installed by the Council, it is rightly our responsibility to ensure that equipment is safe to use but this does not include the surrounding land which is not owned by us.*
- *The Parish Council cannot, therefore, agree to this licence in its present form.*

Councillor Mansell then reminded the Councillors of the history of the playground. In 1953 when Warwick Close was being built Mr. Phillip Henman contacted the Parish Council with the suggestion that a play area be provided for under 8-year-olds and was prepared to donate part of his field for that purpose. The Council agreed with the suggestion and thanked him for his generous offer but in 1960 Mole Valley decided that the area should be used for housing. In the meantime, other areas had been suggested, i.e. in front of Ashleigh Cottages which was deemed too near the main road, land at Scott House and between Church Terrace and the Churchyard. The latter was accepted. Once the original land proposed by Mr. Henman was purchased by Mole Valley, Mr Henman donated £1,000 towards equipment for the playground. All these parcels of land were National Trust and in 1964 it was agreed with the Common Keeper that the use of land between the Churchyard and Church Terrace should become the playground. Conditions required that there was no fencing or hard surfacing. Drainage was a problem, and it cost in the region of £250 to clear the land. The playground was originally mown by the Mole Valley Contractors (who were not very regular) and eventually the Parish Council undertook to pay for the maintenance. Mr. Harding was the first person to be paid by the Council and then a Mr. Mick Ford took over. The playground opened in September 1965 and Holmwood WI donated a bench.

District Councillor Hobbs advised that the grassland in Willow Green on Holmwood Common will be mown with the help of Shire horses. This will take place on 18 and 19 March 2025.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- MO/2019/1641 – Carpel House, Horsham Road, South Holmwood. Importation of material to increase level to unused land, create benefit and cover exposed sewer pipe. Refused by Mole Valley District Council. Appeal Lodged. Mole Valley and Holmwood Parish Council responded to PINS. REFUSED (AND DISMISSED ON APPEAL). Subsequent PINS appeal and submission.
- **MO/2025/0181 - The Old Cottage, Mill Bottom, South Holmwood**. Demolition of 2 No. x detached outbuildings and erection of carport with attached store. Out for Consultation.
- **MO/2025/0248 - Redlands Lodge, Redlands, South Holmwood**. Erection of single-story rear orangery style extension, replace the window at the rear of the property with French style doors of the same width. Out for Consultation.

The Councillors discussed application **MO/2025/0248** and unanimously agreed there were no objections. Mole Valley District Council will be advised of the Parish Council's recommendation.

The Chairman advised the Council that he had attended a Mole Valley discussion on the 12 February 2025 which detailed the District Council's planning procedures. The Chairman said he took this opportunity to ask for an update on **MO/2019/1641**. He was advised that a decision from PINS was still unresolved.

6. **ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER – POWER AND PARTNERSHIP: FOUNDATIONS FOR GROWTH: SURREY UNITARY PROPOSAL:**

The government has outlined plans to create more unitary councils to simplify and streamline local government. At present, Surrey has a two-tier council system, with 11 district and borough councils and a county council with different services being delivered by different assemblies. The government expects all two-tier areas to reorganise in the coming years and has confirmed that Surrey be included on an accelerated programme to do so. A unitary model would mean county, district and borough councils would all dissolve and a new unitary council or councils deliver all services. A new Strategic Authority will be created, led by a new mayor. This would cover the whole of Surrey, or Surrey could join with neighbouring councils with a mayor sitting across a larger geography. District Councillor Hobbs advised that there will be a meeting on the 3 April which should provide information on whether Surrey is likely to be a two or three-tier unitary authority.

7. MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL BY ELECTION:

Due to the resignation of Councillor Clayton Wellman, a casual vacancy has arisen in the Office of Councillor for Holmwoods and Beare Green Ward of Mole Valley District Council and a by-election will take place on Thursday 20 March 2025.

8. FINANCE

- **Financial Statement and bank reconciliation:**

The bank analysis had been circulated to all Councillors.

Bank Balances at 13 March 2025:
Unity Trust Current Account £5.43
Unity Trust Reserve Account £18,544.11

An application had been made for a VAT refund in the sum of £3,029.32

- **Pass Invoices for Payment:**

The following invoices had been passed for payment since 09 January 2025 and before 13 March 2025.

Invoice No	Payee	Amount	Purpose
9043	J W Systems	£1,135.20	IT Maintenance contract
262120	Reimbursement Councillor Carter	£304.79	Defib battery and pads
0021	AHC Limited	£300.00	Defib training

The following invoices were presented at the meeting and passed for payment:

Invoice No	Payee	Amount	Purpose
	Mrs J Russell	£2,249.80	Half-year salary
	HMRC	£624.20	Clerk's income tax
	Mrs J Russell	£75.00	Clerk's expenses

- **End of Year Audit:**

The Clerk advised the Councillors that the end of year audit has been scheduled for 03 June 2025. As the Parish Council's budget was below the £25,000 threshold, the Council will be able to submit an Exempt AGAR to PKF Littlejohn LLP, the external auditors.

Councillors were advised that Mole Valley had forwarded a purchase order detailing 2025/26 precept payments, which are paid in two separate instalments, April and September:

Half year precept payment £6,250.00
Half year concurrent grant £1,533.50
Half year extra grant £523.00

9. SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

The Council will meet again on 15 May 2025 at 7:00pm.

CORRESPONDENCE:

The Council had received a donation request from Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance. It was agreed that as the Parish Council had donated to this charity in the current financial year, the request would be presented at the May 2025 meeting for discussion.
The Clerk will advise the Charity the reason for the delay.