

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 17 April 2024 at 1930hrs

Shepherdswell Village Hall

MINUTES

To receive reports from the County and District Councillors, Kent Police Neighbourhood Beat Officer, Speed Watch, Neighbourhood Watch and Community Warden. Public questions and comments on non-agenda items (this section will be limited to 15 minutes or otherwise at the discretion of the Chair)

Speedwatch Report – a Speedwatch report has been circulated and is available on the website. The Chair recorded his thanks to Richard Woods and the Speedwatch team.

Neighbourhood Watch Report – Cllr Symes reported that Mr Roger Reeves will be in attendance at the Annual Parish Meeting to address any queries from residents.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A member of public made the following statement/request regarding the development at St Andrews Gardens.

‘Planning Permission has been granted by Dover District Council.

On the Friday following this a gate was erected by the developers...when questioned by local residents they were told that this was to allow Archaeologists access to the site. As the entrance gate between dwellings 38 and 40 was unsuitable due to waterlogging a request was made to the Developers representative at that time that it may have been polite to have had them informed of this structure being erected.

Subsequent to this... the Archaeologists have arrived... completed a series of exploratory trenches... found traces of some description... and are now completing a more thorough exploration. However, as the gate at the end of the cut-de-sac has no dropped curb, the state of the tarmacked pathway is now becoming cracked.

On the outline plans for the development the cul-de-sac is not given as an access to the construction site. It is our concern that once the Archaeologists have completed their work this entrance will continued to be utilised by the developers during the construction of the new dwellings.

A resident spoke to the Archaeologists on Tuesday 16th April and was informed by them, that as far as they were aware the gate would be taken away on their departure.

As stated above, the residents requested a letter of confirmation from Guildcrest that the gate would be removed after the Archaeologists departure, this as yet has not been forthcoming. ThereforeCan we ask the Parish Council to confirm that.

1. The Developers had permission to erect the gate
2. That the Gate will be dismantled at the departure of Archaeologist’s.
3. That the gate is not used during the development of the site.’

The Chair thanked the resident for his report and advised that more information would be sought from DDC Planning.

30/2024 IN ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Present: Cllrs John Bulaitis (PC Chair), Barry Crush, Lyn Symes, Terry Hunt, Sindy Denyer, Carole White, Keith Roberts, Mark Watson and Aidan Softley

5 Members of the public

Clerk: Jan Rousell

Apologies: Cllrs Bradley Stauffer-Kruse (Vice-Chair), Marien Elgar, Sue Taber and Cllr Maria Mamjan

31/2024 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 20 MARCH 2024

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March were agreed to be a true and accurate record proposed by Cllr Hunt seconded by Cllr Roberts, **All agreed.**

The confidential minutes of the closed meeting held on 20 March were agreed, with an amendment, to be a true and accurate record proposed by Cllr Roberts seconded by Cllr White, **All agreed.**

32/2024 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Denyer made the following statement:

‘A solicitors meeting attended by the Parish Clerk and Councillor Denyer to discuss the Recreation Ground Conveyance Agreement took place on the 19th March, the Chairman could not attend. Councillor Denyer provided feedback in the March PC meeting that the solicitor’s review of the conveyance agreement covenant restrictions revealed complex compliance considerations and council should wait for the solicitor’s report before discussing further. Councillor Denyer recommended an informal meeting to brief parish councillors, which was agreed.

The solicitor’s report was received on the 3rd April and the Chairman issued an initial review proposal, feedback was provided by Councillor Denyer who also sent a number of follow-up requests to the Chairman regarding the agreed council members discussion meeting, however this was not arranged. Concerned that councillors needed adequate supporting information Councillor Denyer issued her meeting notes of the 19th March, having first verified these notes were accurate with the Parish Clerk.

On the 11th April, and without informing council, the Chairman, sent a detailed follow- up letter outlining his views to the solicitor, and requested further review & clarification on the recreation agreement advice already received. Without consulting with Councillor Denyer the Chairman sent a further email on the 12th April, asking the solicitor to verify Councillor Denyer’s meeting notes relating to the cricket square. The solicitor’s response did not dispute the accuracy of Councillor Denyer’s meeting record.

Agenda Item 41/2024- The Chairman issued a resolution, not a motion on his proposed next steps and solution relating to recreation ground agreement management. This is contrary to guidance requiring that council meeting resolutions must be linked to agenda/ motion discussion. Best practice guidance ensures agenda items/motions are fully debated at council and resolutions agreed & voted on that reflect the collective view of the council. Agenda Item 41/2024 motions supporting John Bulaitis Resolutions 3 & 4 had not been debated at council, and councillors have not been provided with the opportunity discuss the solicitor’s advice to support an informed decision on the proposed resolutions.

33/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

34/2024 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION LIMITED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA – 15 minutes in total.

A resident expressed his concern that the item on the Agenda that is of the most interest to residents is the last item. The Chair assured him that the previous items on the agenda would not be time consuming and should it be necessary item 41/2024 would be brought forward.

35/2024 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported the following:

'I've had correspondence from a resident about the precept – and complaining against the wasteful expenditure of the Parish Council.

I will reply – but I do have to correct one aspect of the statement on this issue. I said that this was the first increase in four years.

That statement was incorrect.

2019 – a precept of 45,900,00

2020 – the precept remained the same

Nov 21 – the precept remained the same

November 22 = the precept was increased to 50,500.

So there had been one increase in the previous four years. This year the precept was set at 75,750.

The essential elements of my report – that every penny is spent on the village, that the accounts are transparent and available to inspection, and that residents are proud of our villages and want the Council to maintain and improve our facilities are absolutely correct.'

Cllr White asked if the precept would have gone up if the council had not provided funding for the community minibus. Cllr Hunt (Chair of the Finance Committee) stated that the precept had to go up because there was an overspend, even without the funding for the minibus. Had the funding not been provided it would have still gone up, but probably not so much.

36/2024 CLERK'S REPORT

Complaint against a Councillor – the Clerk has contacted DDC for an update on this issue. They are still awaiting a report from the Monitoring Officer.

Small Works Contract – a proposed tender document has been circulated to all councillors. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Thanks to Cllr Denyer for her work on this document.

Electronic Device Policy – the Clerk was due to attend training which unfortunately was cancelled. The Clerk will contact other Parish Councils and obtain examples of policies currently in use.

Electric Works for village hall – quotes have been received and the works will be carried out at a cost of £470.

Eythorne Road resurfacing – Cllr Taber has asked highways why the speed bump wasn't replaced when the resurfacing of Eythorne Road was carried out. The response was that it would have been too costly. Cllr Hunt proposed that the Clerk write to Highways and request that the speed bump be reinstated, seconded by Cllr Bulaitis. **All Agreed**

Coldred Forum – the request received and approved during the February meeting failed to include a request for use of the village green on 28 June 2024. All agreed that this should be added to the list.

Clerk's Probation Period – the Clerk reported that following her appraisal, she has successfully completed her probationary period.

37/2024 FINANCE

37.01 To approve payments.

Balances as 12 April 2024	£
Current A/C	79422.38
Business A/C	54020.82
INCOME	
M Wright 15/03/2024 (Rent)	260.00
Reed Meadow Allotment Association 09/04/2024	624.00
Dover District Council Precept	75750.00
EXPENDITURE TO RATIFY	
Harmer & Sons (inv 23029)	753.28
Village Hall Fees – March 2024	92.50
KALC Annual Subscription (inv 9044)	778.90
HMRC	64.44
Clerk's Wages	1090.52
Clerk's Expenses	40.00
Hugo Fox (inv INV-4767)	23.99
NALC Training for Cllr Symes (inv 9359379379)	52.04
All Clear Invoice 0095	165.50
All Clear Invoice 0096	282.50
	£3343.67

Cllr Roberts proposed that the schedule of payments be approved, seconded by Cllr Hunt. **All Agreed**

Cllr Hunt asked if an invoice had been received from the Solicitor. The Clerk explained that a contract had been received which included a request for a deposit. The meeting agreed that the Clerk would email the contract to all Councillors.

38/2024 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Roberts reported following the Planning Meeting held this evening. Please see relevant minutes.

39/2024 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Leaflets were handed to Councillors for distribution. The Chair presented the proposed agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting which will be held on Wednesday 01 May 2024 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

At this point in the meeting Cllr Symes requested that the last two items of the agenda be swapped around, All Agreed

41/2024 RECREATION GROUND

A report from Mowll & Mowll and additional comments have been circulated.

The following resolution was proposed by Cllr Bulaitis:

'Council asks the Clerk to seek advice from the Charity Commission in regard to measures the Council should take to ensure it is compliant under the provisions of the 2011 Act. The advice sought should include the

issue of governance and whether or not it is necessary or advisable for the Parish Council to become a sole trustee of the Recreation Ground.

In tandem with the above, Council agrees to draw up proposals, after seeking Charity Commission advice, for the issuing of licences (or similar type of contract) to various user groups of the Recreation Ground.'

Councillors discussed the implications of obtaining charitable status. Cllr Bulaitis withdrew his proposal and Cllr Hunt proposed that the Council do not proceed with instructing the Solicitor but instead ask the Clerk write to KALC and other Parish Councils to ask what other Parish Councils are doing, seconded by Cllr Roberts. **All Agreed**

40/2024 COMMUNITY

The following two items were discussed in closed session and are minuted seperately:

40.01 *Village Hall*

- i) To review quotes for plumbing works*
- ii) Update on plastering*

40.02 *Village Green – to review quotes for materials*

40.03 Coldred Forum – historically, the litter bins on Coldred Village Green have been emptied by residents. The council have received a request from Coldred Forum to arrange for Dover District Council to empty the bins. Cllr Roberts proposed that the Clerk write to DDC to make this request, seconded by Cllr Hunt. **All Agreed**

42/2024 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Annual Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 15 May 2024 in Shepherdsweil Village Hall at 1930hrs.