

## PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 18 October 2023 at 1930hrs

Shepherdswell Village Hall

### MINUTES

To receive reports from the County and District Councillors, 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)

**Due to a full DDC Council Meeting being held, the Clerk read out a report on behalf of KCC Cllr Beaney**

*'Currently we are not having Joint Transportation board meetings however this has been taken to scrutiny at KCC to see why this decision has been made. We as members could never get anyone from highways to attend so all we found ourselves doing, is being updated with the current work schedule.*

*We want a better method of getting information to and from officers.*

*You may have heard on the news that KCC is going bankrupt, this is not the case. Cabinet members have been working hard and we will not be issuing a section 141 notice this year. The leader of the council has changed members of the cabinet to ensure that no stone is left unturned when it comes to overspend. We as back benchers are urging the cabinet to try and make savings in the two largest portfolios which is children services and adults services. This takes up 80% of our yearly budget. So we are continually pushing to say that it's not helping slicing money away from other services if we don't get to grips with these statutory services.*

*I have asked Thomas Williams to have Teams meetings with myself to discuss individual highway issues in my P.C. I've had one with Whitfield. We will be holding one with Eythorne next. I can arrange one for Shepherdswell if you would like me to do so.*

*To finish, now that new P.C members are settling into their new roles, I want to hold a meeting with neighbouring P.Cs so that when it comes to working on problems P.Cs can join and work together with some issues.*

*I'll be sending dates out for this soon.'*

End.

#### **Speedwatch Report**

A written report has been received from Richard Woods. The Chair recorded his thanks to all the Speedwatch volunteers.

#### **Neighbourhood Watch Report**

Cllr Symes reported that she and Cllr Taber attended the Dover Area Neighbourhood Watch meeting. Their main area concerns are Sandwich regarding motorbikes, Eastry has seen a rise in shed break ins, including those on the allotments so Reed Meadow allotments need to be aware. Dover has reported issues with drifting and have said they are looking into whether the driver's insurance is valid if they have modified

their vehicle. The theft of Fiat 500 cars appears to be on the rise, possibly due to the fact that they don't have to pay to go into a congestion area. An update to the Dover District Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is expected soon from Sergeant Lee Warner, who is the new Sergeant in charge of allocating PCSOs. The meeting was notified that there will be approximately 12 PCSO's to cover the Dover area. Those present were encouraged to sign up to the EWatch scheme, which has already been done.

The Chair recorded his thanks to Cllr Symes.

### **The Clerk read out a report on behalf of Juliet West - Community Warden**

Within the last four weeks Juliet has had to deal with Fuel theft, Parcel delivery thefts, Trespass, Noise nuisance, Nuisance/obstructive parking, Multiple road closures causing traffic disruption, Nuisance dogs off lead in public areas, Dog on dog attack, Anti social behaviour, Neighbour dispute, Scams/social media/email/phone calls, Majority of caseload recently relates to individual welfare cases, Social prescribing, Positive wellbeing, Welfare checks/concerns, Multiple agency referrals, Community/district events,

The Chair recorded his thanks to Juliet West – Community Warden.

## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no comments/questions from the public.

### **1.0 IN ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**Present:** Cllrs; John Bulaitis (PC Chair), Bradley Stauffer-Kruse (Vice-Chair), Marien Elgar, Barry Crush, Lyn Symes, Sue Taber, Terry Hunt, Sindy Denyer, Aidan Softley, Carole White, Keith Roberts, Mark Watson

4 Members of the public

Clerk: Jan Rousell

**Apologies:** KCC Cllr Beaney, Cllr Jamie Pout & Juliet West - Community Warden

### **2.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 20 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Minutes of both meetings held on 20 September were agreed to be a true and accurate record proposed by Cllr Roberts seconded Cllr Symes, **All agreed.**

### **3.0 MATTERS ARISING**

Page 2 – question regarding Green Policy as it is nowhere else on the agenda, The Chair asked Cllr Stauffer-Kruse to provide a brief update on the Electric Vehicle points which were supposed to be installed in the summer.

Cllr Stauffer-Kruse reported that the issue is that there is not enough power on the village hall side of the street. A resident has been asked to sign a wayleave that enables the installation company to access power from their front garden but the resident is uncomfortable with the damage that may be caused. So the contractors are looking at other ways to get the power – possibly from the telegraph poles above the street. There have also been suggestions that we could possibly draw the power from the new builds. As soon as the power issues are resolved, the installation can go ahead. Cllr Stauffer-Kruse has also suggested a meeting with the resident, to put their mind at ease. The grant is secure, so the installation will take place.

Item 14 – Solar Panels. Unfortunately, the time extension requested for the funding for this scheme was not granted so applications will need to be resubmitted.

Highway Improvement Plan – Cllr Taber will share the information received from KCC with the Speedwatch volunteers. It was agreed that HIP would be added to the Agenda for the next meeting.

#### **4.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no DPI's. Cllr Softley declared an OSI for item 13.

#### **5.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION LIMITED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA – 15 minutes in total.**

There was none.

#### **6.0 CHAIR'S REPORT**

Though the Parish Council is a very small cog in the wheel, it is a symbol of our democracy in this country. It's appropriate that we record our grief, our sympathy and our solidarity with the people of Israel and Gaza who have been touched by these horrific, terrible events in the last 10 days.

The Chair suggested that a representative of the CLT be invited to the next meeting to update us. The site is nearing completion, the decorations and landscape are almost complete. The scaffolding is either removed or almost removed and there is a target by the contractors to handover in mid-January. There has been a delay due to power supply problems.

WW Martin have requested a meeting to discuss the decamping of Reed Meadow and they also want to discuss putting up a gate between the site and Reed Meadow. We can discuss this under item 14.

There have been questions raised about how the allocation of tenants will be done. This is a rural exception site and the allocation follows DDC local connections criteria. There are 5 parts to the criteria – all parish related. Please note, it refers to this Parish – there has been some confusion as DDC mentioned neighbouring parishes, but we are assured that it is this Parish. DDC and English Rural Housing process the applications but they then come to the Parish Council for verification. This could start within the next few weeks so processes need to be put in place. The proposal is to appoint 2 Parish Councillors to work with the clerk to undertake any checks in a confidential manner.

There are 3 houses on the site which are not part of the social housing development, which were earmarked to actually fund the development. One year ago an agreement took place between English Rural Housing and WW Martin and those 3 houses are now in the possession of WW Martin. WW Martin have stated that they still do not have a strategy for those properties, whether they are going to sell or rent them but they will be offered to locals initially, in either case.

Members will be aware that the planning inspectorate is coming to Dover to examine the Dover Local Plan. The sessions take place between 16 November and 14 December and the Chair recorded his thanks to the members of the council and a group of Parishioners who have put in written representations and requested to be participants in the discussions. In fact Shepherdswell and Coldred is represented on several of the panels. The Chair also thanked Mark Norcliffe, Sean Williams, John Townsend and Susan Taber for the excellent work they have done in preparing hearing statements, which are written statements which summarise the Council's policies on these issues. The Chair has also prepared a statement and so we will be well represented at this enquiry. In fact, we are one of the few Parishes which is going to be represented, a great credit to the Parish.

Our Clerks have been trying to pull together a working group to draw up plans that approach a range of issues that affect the Village Hall but approaches them in a coherent and holistic way that is sustainable and ecologically friendly and obviously financially viable as well. For example, not separate the issue of the solar panels and the question of the water tank, the pipes, the heating and so on. The working group will involve members of the village hall committee and any Councillors that want to participate. This needs to be done quickly so we take it into consideration for the budget next year.

Final thing is that we have had a request from the VGA about funding a Christmas Tree on the village green. They have been asked to put it in writing to Clerk.

Before handing over to the Clerk, the Chair recorded his thanks to Cathy Skinner, Locum Clerk for her sterling work during the period between Clerks.

## 7.0 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk began her report by thanking Cathy Skinner for her help and support and also the Councillors for their encouragement.

The clerk reported on the new Parish Surgeries, it is proposed to hold these at T42 on the first Friday of every month from midday until 2 o'clock with the Clerk and a Councillor present. It is also proposed to purchase a banner to display – this can also be utilised on other occasions.

The domain name is now registered to the correct address.

The annual inspection of the Recreation Ground took place earlier this month – the report was circulated. Several risks were highlighted – some also being highlighted on last year's report.

The clerk reported that all four of the defibrillators have been inspected with new pads and batteries needed for the defibrillator at the Scout Hut. The clerk is now checking the defibrillators twice a month and records are being kept.

PO Box Number – the clerk reported that although previous agreement had been reached to purchase a PO Box Number, it was now thought that a more satisfactory way forward would be to register the village hall as the Parish Council's address and to purchase and install a secure Parish Mail Box. Examples were shown to the meeting of mailboxes.

Chaucer Paving are commencing work on the cemetery footpath at the end of this month. The gate to the cemetery will also be repaired at the end of the month.

The Chair went through the proposals raised above....

A rota will be drawn up for councillors to attend the parish surgeries with the clerk, a banner will be purchased at a cost of approximately £40. Proposed by Cllr Symes, seconded by Cllr Taber. **All Agreed**

The recreation ground inspection. Cllr Hunt asked how much could be done by the SWC. Cllr Roberts advised that the bark is paid for annually and topped up. Cllr Hunt agreed to go through the report with the Clerk and set up a plan of action to remedy the risks raised.

The Village Hall will become the Parish Council's postal address and will be on all correspondence along with the clerk's mobile number. A mailbox will be purchased at a cost of approximately £60 and fixed to the exterior wall of the village hall with Parish Council clearly marked on it. Cllr Stauffer-Kruse proposed, Cllr Elgar seconded. **All Agreed**

## 8.0 FINANCE

8.01.1 To approve payments.

<b>Balances as 05 September 2023</b>	<b>£</b>
Current A/C	10,417.16
Business A/C	75,990.12
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
SVHA – Aug & Sept bookings	227.50
Harmer & Sons (inv 22120)	753.28
All Clear Services (K Beale) (inv 0090)	464.29

KCPFA Membership Fee	20.00
Best Host	24.00
Locum Clerk (inv10-23)	1987.32
Clerk salary	1016.02
Grants of Exclusive Rights of Burial Book of Certs	153.60
Leo Lyons (inv 9091)	292.50
Leo Lyons (inv 9093)	210.00

Cllr Roberts raised some queries regarding some of the items listed the invoice received from All Clear Services. A discussion followed, Cllr Roberts proposed that the invoice should be held until a meeting has been arranged between the Chair, Clerk and All Clear Services. Seconded by Cllr Hunt. **Agreed with one Against**

Cllr Hunt raised a query regarding the purchase of the Clerks laptop – why wasn't the Parish Council's debit card used? The debit card is registered under the previous Clerk's address and Dell would only deliver to the card's registered address. Dell are to be asked if they will issue another invoice with the Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council stated on the invoice to enable the Council to reclaim the VAT paid.

It was proposed to accept the schedule of payments by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Watson, **Agreed with one Abstention**

8.02 Cllr Hunt proposed that the audited AGAR be approved, seconded by Cllr Roberts. **All agreed**

8.03 It was proposed that Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council's current and Reserve account be transferred from Natwest Bank to Unity Trust bank to enable online banking facilities by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Taber. **All agreed**

Cllr Hunt raised a question regarding the use of personal devices to access the Parish Council's bank account. What if there were a Freedom of Information request, would that personal laptop be seized? It was agreed that this issue would be added as an Agenda item for the next meeting.

Cllr Elgar asked if it was easy to change the level of access Councillors had with Unity Trust – it is, although only Key Contacts can make these changes.

It was proposed that the Clerk – Jan Rousell - would be the key contact for the account and have VA access (view the account and submit payments). The Chair – John Bulaitis - would have VSA access (view the account, submit and authorise payments). The Chair of Finance – Terry Hunt, Chair of Planning – Marien Elgar and Chair of Communications – Lyn Symes will all have VA access (view the account and authorise payments). All other Councillors will have V access (view the account only) unless they request otherwise. Cllr Stauffer-Kruse and Cllr Softley do not wish to have access. The account will be set up with dual authority – meaning that two Councillors have to authorise each payment.

Cllr Denyer asked about the ease of transferring over to Unity Trust Bank, this is done by Unity Trust using the Current Account Switch Guarantee. Cllr Hunt asked about the security of Unity Trust Bank. Unity Trust specialise in providing bank accounts to Parish Councils and such like. They are very well known and secure.

Cllr Roberts proposed that the above be adopted, seconded by Cllr Hunt. **All agreed**

## 9.0 PLANNING COMMITTEE

To receive a report from the Chair of the Planning Committee. Cllr Elgar reported that 1 application has been received, comments as follows:

Ref: 23/01076 Location: Rickstones, 23 Mill Lane, Shepherdswell

Proposal: Re-pollard back to old pollard points of 12 Sycamores the subject of Tree Preservation Order No 5 of 1976

Parish Council to refer to tree officer.

Cllr Elgar also reported that the application for the development of the land at St Andrew's Gardens had had its description changed to make all matters reserves, up until now all matters have been reserved except access. The outline application can now be determined without waiting for Kent County Council to come up with their proposals regarding access.

Cllr Symes approved the report, seconded by Cllr Watson. **All agreed**

## **10.0 COMMUNITY**

### 10.01 Community Minibus

A report has been circulated. Following the last meeting the proposal is that the management of the minibus is left in the hands of the school. They deal with all aspects of looking after the bus, organising hire and so on. They have already started using the bus, they have 8 registered drivers. There will be a letter going out to the community to provide details on hire. We as a Parish Council need to encourage Parishioners to make use of the bus. It was pointed out that Mr Lamb's letter needs to include the age limit of drivers, due to insurance.

### 10.02 Warm Hub

Cllr Denyer proposed that the warm hub be readdressed. Last year Cllr Hunt did a lot of work with EKR to see if a warm hub could be created. It makes sense to pick it up again this year to see if we can find a solution. If EKR were to go ahead it would require some level of funding from the Parish Council. Cllr Watson agreed to provide some figures to the Finance Committee. Cllr Taber suggested that EKR may be able to apply for funding from the Cost of Living Community Impact Fund.

It was discussed if there was a need in our villages for a Warm Hub. Cllr Hunt has a conversation with the Headteacher about this issue some time ago because there was concern that there were children going to school hungry. Cllr Watson would still like to explore the idea. Cllr White commented that it may not just be for a cup of tea that Parishioners may need to use a Warm Hub, it could be for heat also. Cllr Elgar pointed out it needs to be made clear that people can stay as long as they want to. Cllr Roberts stated that we need to be funding EKR for the cost of fuel, not just the cost of refreshments. Cllr Elgar stated that if it is decided at the Finance Committee to go ahead it will need to go into the newsletter for December.

Cllr Watson proposed that it be finalised either way at the Finance Committee, seconded by Cllr Denyer.

**All agreed**

### 10.03 Village Green

A report has been circulated. The Chair thanked Cllrs Crush and Softley for all their hard work in putting the report together.

After some discussion, the meeting eliminated the use of soft wood posts.

Cllr Crush reported that an email has been circulated with costings for the meeting to consider. The two options are to replace all posts and put scaffold tubes back or replace all posts and have chains. It was proposed that Cllrs Crush and Softley get more information on replacing scaffold tubes with wooden oak rail.

## **11.00 Communications Committee**

Cllr Symes reported that Cllr Watson has kindly agreed to take over the Instagram page she was still in progress on how to add him as admin. It was agreed that the twitter account be shut down which has now been done.

As a committee it was agreed that the website should be changed and made more user friendly and also the email system and we that ask the Parish Council to consider our agreement.

The Committee discussed the idea of having surgeries once a month at the T42 with one or two councillors and the clerk, which will be advertised in the parish magazine and Facebook for anyone that wants to come along and raise any concerns.

Recording and streaming put on hold for the moment but Keith to get quotes for conference microphones. There has been 1.7k reach on Facebook in the last 28 days.

The Chair thanked Cllr Symes. Cllr Denyer proposed that the report be accepted, seconded by Cllr Crush.

**All agreed**

### **13.00 Recreation Ground**

13.01 Cllr Taber reported that the recreation ground working group had been discussing options for the incomplete extension. They were identified as follows :- 1) The site to be returned to its original state i.e., the concrete base broken up and land cleared. This would be costly and it was agreed that leaving the base to deteriorate would be wasteful and in the long term could pose a risk to parishioner safety. 2) The Parish Council to assume responsibility for obtaining required funding and managing completion of the sports club changing facilities and to manage this community asset for the benefit of parishioners. 3) The Parish Council to approve development of the site by another part i.e., the Scouts group have expressed an interest in taking over and re-assigning the site for use as bunk room facilities for out of region Scout Groups who travel through Kent and require short term accommodation.

Option 2 is the preferred way forward but this would need approval from the Parish Council to place an expression of interest with the Community Ownership Fund.

Cllr Taber proposed Approve the expression of interest made to the Community Ownership Fund and authorise the submission of a funding application if the parish council is invited to do so by COF, seconded by Cllr Crush. **Agreed with one abstention**

Cllr Taber proposed that should the COF invite this Parish Council to submit a detailed funding application, we request the Council authorise the Parish Clerk tonight to request the required quotations and detailed costings for building materials, works and professional services in accordance with our normal processes. These would be required to support the application which is time critical .

It was decided that, should we get to the application stage an extraordinary meeting would be called.

13.02 Cllr Taber reported that she had purchased combination locks for both the bottom and top vehicle access points, at no cost to the Parish Council. These would be fitted within the next week and the appropriate associations informed of the combination.

The Chair added that he has written to the cricket club and is awaiting a response. Also, a meeting had previously been arranged with a solicitor which did not go ahead. A proposal was put forward by the Chair for a new scoping meeting to be arranged with a solicitor, at a cost of approximately £75, to look at the issues which have been raised , seconded by Cllr Crush. **All agreed.**

### **14.00 Reed Meadow**

14.01 Cllr Roberts reported that the Reed Meadow Forum had recently met and they would like to propose that WW Martin should return the compound area to as it should be. We would like to ask them to keep the ramp and the entrance to the car park and to repair the damaged part of the car park. Seconded by Cllr Crush. **All agreed**

Cllr Elgar stated that it should be specified that top soil and meadow grass is used.

The chair reported that it has been proposed to put a gate between the new development and Reed Meadow to enable the residents to come and enjoy Reed Meadow. Cllrs expressed concerns regarding safety of pedestrians using the village hall car park as a cut through into the village.

Cllr White proposed that the fence be reinstated, as it was, with no gate. Seconded by Cllr Crush. **6 in favour, 6 against.**

Cllr Elgar proposed that WW Martin be allowed to put a gate in the fence, seconded by Cllr Hunt. **6 in favour, 6 against.**

Recorded vote proposed by Cllr Taber, seconded by Cllr White...

For Cllrs Watson, Elgar, Roberts, Hunt, Stauffer-Kruse, Bulaitis

Against Cllrs White, Crush, Denyer, Taber, Symes, Softley

**Cllr Bulaitis had the casting vote and therefore the motion was carried.**

A meeting to be arranged with WW Martin, Cllrs Roberts and Taber to attend with the Clerk.

14.02 Annual review of the provision of allotments will be added to the agenda for the next meeting

### **19.0 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 15 November 2023 in Shepherdswell Village Hall at 1930hrs.