

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 15 May 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 brief Speedwatch report was read out. The Speedwatch team have been unable to carry out recent sessions due to unexpected road closures. New sessions are planned, weather dependent. The new parking restrictions by Carpenters Yard has increased speeds along Coxhill. The Chair recorded his thanks to Richard Woods and the Speedwatch team.

Neighbourhood Watch Report – Cllr Taber reported that there have been several reports of vandalism at the recreation ground. The Neighbourhood Watch team ask that these be reported to the Police – this is important as the Police need to target any possible patrols. The Chair recorded his thanks to Cllr Taber and the Neighbourhood Watch team and also recorded his thanks to Roger Reeves for his recent attendance at the Annual Parish Meeting.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A member of public remarked that the hedgerow along Coxhill was becoming rather overgrown. Clerk to report to Highways, but it is emphasised that this can be done by any resident using the link on the Parish Council website.

43/2024 TO ELECT A NEW CHAIR FOR THE FORTHCOMING MUNICIPAL YEAR

Cllr Bulaitis nominated Cllr Mark Watson to become the new Chair, seconded by Cllr Roberts. **All Agreed**

44/2024 TO ELECT A NEW VICE CHAIR FOR THE FORTHCOMING MUNICIPAL YEAR

Cllr Bradley Stauffer-Kruse agreed to remain Vice Chair having been proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Crush. **All Agreed**

45/2024 IN ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

3 Members of the public

Clerk: Jan Rousell

Apologies: NONE

46/2024 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 17 APRIL 2024

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April were agreed to be a true and accurate record proposed by Cllr Hunt seconded by Cllr Roberts. **Agreed with 3 abstentions.**

The confidential minutes of the closed meeting held on 17 April were agreed to be a true and accurate record proposed by Cllr Hunt seconded by Cllr Roberts. **Agreed with 3 abstentions.**

47/2024 MATTERS ARISING

Cllr Elgar pointed out that the Church Fete held on Coldred Green was not a forum event – the church have their own Public Liability Insurance.

Statement from Cllr John Bulaitis on the statement from Cllr Sindy Denyer (item 32/2024)

It was with sadness that I listened to Sindy Denyer's statement at the April PC meeting. The statement was not only unnecessary but, in some respects, disingenuous. For the public record, it is unfortunately necessary to respond to some points.

1) The solicitor's letter (from Ross Hamilton – RH) was received by the Clerk (Jan) on 3 April and Jan immediately shared it with myself, Bradley and Sindy.

Jan asked for a meeting 'asap' to discuss the best procedure for the Council to discuss its contents. She invited Sindy to the weekly catchup meeting (JR, JB and BSK) on 5 April. Unfortunately, Sindy could not attend. I wrote to Sindy on two further occasions (10 April and 11 April) suggesting we talk about the report before the Council Meeting in order to 'to try to come to an agreed way forward'. Sindy did not reply. The implication in her statement that I was trying to avoid a discussion on the issues is – to put it mildly – totally wide of the mark.

2) The Solicitor's Report contains – by its own recognition – provisional 'initial advice' and is a 'preliminary overview'. I personally found little controversial within it. I could, therefore, see no reason why it needed to be discussed in an extraordinary meeting or closed session. But our Standing Orders allow all councillors – including Sindy – the right to call for an extraordinary meeting or to propose a closed session. Noone, including Sindy, chose to do so.

3) Sindy issued her own 'minutes' of the meeting with the solicitor. These had not been agreed with the RH. They included some recommendations to the Council that went far beyond the advice in the solicitor's letter. Amongst other things, the 'minutes' claimed that – according to RH – if the Council proceeds with 'fencing around the cricket square', it would 'place individual councillors at risk of litigation' and was 'technically a breach of restrictive covenant'.

Given the seriousness of this suggestion, I believed it necessary to write to RH to clarify his advice in advance of the Council. RH replied that:

'From a practical point of view I entirely accept that a cricket square requires protection if it is to remain useable and it does seem from what you say that the barrier is less substantial than I had anticipated and the situation on the ground is clearly of some longstanding and indeed I note has been the subject of approval in the Council's Minutes.'

My action in writing to ask the Solicitor for clarification meant the Council avoided an unnecessary and potentially fractious discussion about whether or not the decision of the January meeting to protect the cricket square with plastic poles was 'legal'.

4) Sindy's points about the motion/resolution I submitted to the April meeting show a lack of understanding of our procedures. Under our Standing Orders, all Councillors have the right to table resolutions/motions for discussion. My resolution was linked to the solicitor's report. It was not a dictat or *fait accompli* but an attempt to move the situation forward – it was a proposal that councillors could debate, and either agree or reject.

John Bulaitis, 5 May 2024

48/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

49/2024 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION LIMITED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA – 15 minutes in total.

None

50/2024 CLERK'S REPORT

Cycle request – the Clerk has received an email from a resident regarding cycle facilities for children in the Shepherdswell. The email will be circulated to Councillors and the item added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Recreation Ground Update – emails have been sent to other Parish Councils regarding the charitable status of their recreation grounds. Responses will be discussed at the next meeting.

Monitoring Officer – the Clerk has received correspondence from the Monitoring Officer regarding the complaint against a Councillor. No further action is to be taken.

Solicitor's correspondence – an invoice for the advice sought regarding the recreation ground has been received. Also the Council have now received an estimated cost regarding renewal of the tenancy for The Former Telephone Exchange.

51/2024 FINANCE

51.01 Finance Committee Chair's Report

The Chair, Cllr Hunt, reported that the Finance Committee met on Monday 13 May 2024. The terms of reference were reviewed and the Committee proposes that the number of Councillors on the Finance Committee is reduced from 6 to 4 members.

Cllr Roberts proposed that the Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee be adopted, seconded by Cllr Elgar. **All Agreed**

A report has already been circulated, however, the Chair highlighted some concerns included in the report in terms of expenditure. Looking at the 2023/24 where the precept income was £50,500, 90% of that income was used by essential expenditure which only left £4650 for capital expenditures. Looking at this year where the precept is £75,750 almost 74% of this is used by essential expenditure which leaves only £20,000 for capital expenditure. This illustrates the fact that the Council's expenditure needs to be curtailed.

The Chair thanked Cllr Hunt for his report.

51.02 To approve payments.

Balances as 10 May 2024	£
Current A/C	77234.97
Business A/C	54020.82
INCOME	
Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors 02/05/2024	185.00
WJ Farrier & Son Funeral Directors 23/04/2024	75.00
WJ Farrier & Son Funeral Directors 23/04/2024	75.00
M Wright (Rent) 12/04/2024	260.00

EXPENDITURE TO RATIFY	
Harmer & Sons (inv 23169)	792.06
Village Hall Fees – April 2024	105.00
Rialtas (inv SM30885)	230.40
HMRC	64.64
Clerk's Wages	1090.32
Clerk's Expenses	54.89
Hugo Fox (inv 5108)	23.99
Besthost (inv 25660)	98.00
Besthost (inv 25664)	135.00
All Clear (Invoice 0097)	473.07
	£3,067.37

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

52/2024 PLANNING COMMITTEE

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

53/2024 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES & OUTSIDE BODIES

Please note that the Chair and Vice Chair are ex-officio members of all Committees

- a) Finance Committee – Cllrs Hunt, Roberts, Elgar & Denyer
Proposed by Cllr White, seconded by Cllr Taber. **All Agreed**
- b) Planning Committee – Cllrs Elgar, Hunt, Softley, Denyer, Symes & Roberts
Proposed by Cllr White, seconded by Cllr Stauffer-Kruse. **All Agreed**
- c) Personnel Committee – Cllrs White, Bulaitis, Denyer & Taber
Proposed by Cllr Elgar, seconded by Cllr Hunt. **All Agreed**
- d) Representatives

KALC (Dover Area) Cllrs Watson & Taber
Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Roberts. **All Agreed**

Village Hall Cllr Elgar
Proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Hunt. **All Agreed**

Health & Safety Coordinator Cllr Softley
Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Stauffer-Kruse. **All Agreed**

Footpaths, Trees and Meadow View Cllrs Roberts & Elgar
Proposed by Cllr White, seconded by Cllr Denyer. **All Agreed**

Recreation Ground Forum To be addressed at a future meeting
Proposed by Cllr Watson, seconded by Cllr Crush. **Agreed with one abstention**

Dover West Neighbourhood Forum Item to be deleted
Proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Denyer. **All Agreed**

Inspection of Council Properties To be carried out by the Health & Safety Co-Ordinator
Proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Elgar. **All Agreed**

Highways Improvement Plan Cllrs Roberts, Taber, Symes & White
Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Denyer. **All Agreed**

Reed Meadow Working Group Cllrs White, Taber, Roberts & Elgar

Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Stauffer-Kruse. **All Agreed**

Communications Working Group Cllr Symes, Taber & Roberts

Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr White. **All Agreed**

Carbon Footprint Working Group Cllrs Stauffer-Kruse, Roberts Symes

Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Softley. **All Agreed**

Cemetery Working Group Cllrs Crush, Symes & White

Proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Denyer. **All Agreed**

S101 Chair, Vice Chair, Chairs of Planning, Finance & Personnel Committees

Proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Symes. **All Agreed**

e) Planning Applications

Coxhill, Westcourt Lane, Westcourt Downs, The Terrace, The Grange, Carpenters Yard & Coxhill Road

Cllrs Denyer & Crush

Coldred Rd, Shepherdswell Green, Church Hill, Moorland Road

Cllrs Taber & Softley

Mill Lane, Millfields, Moon Hill, Siberts Close, St Andrews Gardens

Cllrs Roberts & Denyer

Approach Road, Hill Avenue, Hazling Dane, Bernard Gardens & Meadow View

Cllrs Bulaitis & Watson

The Glen, Penfold Gardens, Station Road, Eythorne Road, Long Lane

Cllrs Hunt & White

Coldred, Upton Wood, Waldershare Park & Waldershare House

Cllrs Symes & Elgar

Lydden Race Circuit and other consultations not included above

Cllrs Elgar & Crush

The above representatives were proposed by Cllr Roberts, seconded by Cllr Symes with **All Agreed**

54/2024 TO SET MEETING DATES FOR THE FORTHCOMING MUNICIPAL YEAR

These dates have been set and circulated. They are also available on the website.

55/2024 COMMUNITY

55.01 Village Hall – Cllr Softley gave a report on his investigations into the current plumbing system and possibilities for the future. The options include:

- Replace with a like for like replacement the current system
- Install fully electric heating and install Solar Panels
- Install a Ground Source Heat pump and heating system
- Install an Air Source Heat Pump

Cllr Softley to seek further information and report back to the next meeting.

Cllr Bulaitis left the meeting at 2055hrs

55.02 Village Green – a report has been circulated from Cllr Crush, which provides proposals on using chains in between the posts, rather than the diamond rails, due to the cost implications.

Alternative views were offered including removing the post completely, having post spaced more closely with no chains or poles (to prevent car from parking on the green) and posts with chain.

It was proposed by Cllr Taber and seconded by Cllr Crush that the Clerk obtain quotes for post and chains, and posts without chains more closely spaced and with reflective markings. **This was approved by a majority, with one vote against and one abstention.**

56/2024 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 June 2024 in Shepherdsweil Village Hall at 1930hrs.