

**PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2014 AT IGHTHAM VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllr J C Edwards (Chair), County Cllr Mrs Valerie Dagger, Borough Cllr Mr F R D Chartres, and 26 parishioners including seven Parish Councillors. Cllr Hall gave apologies.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

Satnam Kour, Chief Housing Officer, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council gave a brief presentation on Housing in Rural Areas. She said that there was a shortage of affordable housing nationally and particularly in rural areas where prices are higher than in urban areas. This is a problem as the low supply of social housing is forcing people out of their local area.

Ightham Parish Council has commissioned a Housing Needs Survey, this will help to identify local housing needs, including type and size of housing required for the future in Ightham. The survey is conducted by Action with Communities in Rural Kent and will be circulated by post with a letter from the Parish Council. Once information is collected the needs can be identified. If there is a need for housing in the area, at that point, potential sites will be identified. This can be challenging in a Conservation or GreenBelt area but one way of bypassing the usual Planning Regulations is by applying for the site to be classified as a “Rural Exception Site”, as this will override any of the usual restrictions. Once social/affordable housing is provided, priority is given to applicants with a local connection. A Local Letting Plan will detail the selection criteria. The Housing Provider will be a Housing Association who will rent and part own properties. In the case of the Fen Pond Road development, this is Circle Housing. Some houses are rented and some part-owned with applicants owning up to 80% of the property.

Ightham Parish Council will need to be responsible for encouraging as many people as possible to fill in the survey, and we will be aiming to achieve at least 80% response rate.

Questionnaires are likely to be sent out in the next couple of months.

The Chairman thanked Satnam for her presentation.

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on 25th April 2013 were agreed and signed as a true record of that meeting.

**THE CHAIRMAN** gave his report to the meeting. This included:

**Planning**

During the financial year, 81 planning applications were considered and objections were made to 2.

**Highways**

We continue to press Kent Highways to repair potholes promptly and regularly give them a list of potholes in the Parish to fill. The new 50mph speed limit on A25 between Dark Hill roundabout and Seal came into force last Spring. Flashing 50mph signs have been put up near the Recreation Ground and Dark Hill. These were funded by our County Councillor, Valerie Dagger.

**Recreation Ground**

Remedial works in the Car Park in the Recreation Ground have just been completed. The Car Park cost in the region of £100,000 and was funded entirely by the Parish Council. This has provided invaluable parking for the school and various sports clubs and has helped to alleviate the parking issues in the surrounding residential areas.

The Planning Application for the new new Scout Hut/Pavilion has been approved and the Scouts and Football Club are busy raising funds for the Building project

Other smaller projects, in addition to routine works that have been undertaken this year include; new notice boards, new tables, hand dryer and cupboard in the Village Hall, cleaning the War Memorial for the WW1 Centenary and the replacement of the Bus Shelter on A25 opposite Common Road. We have just received funding towards a Defibrillator from our County Councillor, which will be located in the centre of the Village for residents to use. We are also working on clearing Old Lane so that it can be used as a footpath again.

### **Finances**

We have decided not to increase our precept for 2013/14. We still have funding in the Reserve account which have been earmarked to assist with projects such as the new Scout Hut/Pavilion, levelling of the playing fields and replacing the roof on the Village Hall.

The accounts for 2012/2013 were inspected by our internal auditor, signed and forwarded to the District Auditor, who approved them with no comments or recommendations.

**FINANCIAL REPORT** An Income and Expenditure Account for 2013/2014 was circulated at the meeting.

### **COUNTY REPORT**

Cllr Dagger gave her report on the last year which is attached.

### **BOROUGH REPORT**

Borough Councillor Rodney Chartres gave his report on the past year. He began by thanking Cllr Dagger for the excellent service that she gave and was pleased that she had been re-elected. He gave thanks to John Edwards and the Parish Council for being pro-active and for being financially prudent in building up a capital reserve to meet upcoming needs.

Cllr Chartres reported that after much campaigning, funding had finally be granted to get underground cabling in Ivy Hatch.

With regard to the Housing Needs Survey, Cllr Chartres reiterated how important it was to respond to the survey as there is a serious lack of housing for younger people in Ightham. It is important that residents identify potential development sites rather than have them imposed on us from National Government.

Unfortunately the Busty Stream had flooded twice during the winter months. TMBC is looking into improving the channels at the lower end of the village to prevent it happening in the future.

Unfortunately due to a UK Power Network power cut, the Pageant had to be cancelled as it would have been unsafe to go ahead.

Cllr Chartres said that KCC Highways had done an excellent job of filling potholes and they will be following up with a second programme of works.

Unfortunately there have been a couple of traffic shunts at the entrance to the Car Park on A25. This is being looked into by the Traffic Department at KCC Highways to improve the turning. The problem exists along the

whole stretch of A25 towards Seal. KCC Highways are also looking into Slow Down Flashing Signs on Bates Hill and A25.

High Cross Road and Pine Tree Lane are being resurfaced in May.  
The decision on widening A21 has been delayed.

Cllr Chartres praised June Cooke for doing an excellent job in leading the School and integrating with the Local Community.

With regard to Planning, very few Planning Applications are refused, it is important to have a discussion with the Planning Advisors before submitting an application.

Re the Old Lane Travellers Site, we are still awaiting the outcome of a second enquiry.

Cllr Chartres congratulated the Football Club on winning every trophy there was to win this season.

The Planning for the Scout Hut has now been granted.

Management of Oldbury Hill and Styants Bottom will be taken over by the National Trust in the Autumn, in the meantime there are a number of outstanding issues that need to be resolved.

The Local Plan is a chance for Ightham to give some serious consideration to the future of Ightham. The website has all the details.

The next election will be in 2015, if reelected, Cllr Chartres will continue to take responsibility for Ightham in the new 2 member constituency with Wrotham.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Chartres and said that it was an enormous bonus to have him on the Parish Council as it provided an invaluable link to the Borough Council.

**REPORTS FROM PARISH ORGANISATIONS** Reports were received from various village organisations on their activities over the past year.

#### **AOB**

The Chairman reported that another postbox had been stolen from Back Lane in addition to the one stolen from Ismays Road at the end of last year.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting, which closed at 9.45pm