



**IGHTHAM PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

ON THURSDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2022 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Willingham (Chair), Cllr Holden (Vice Chair), Cllr Burgham, Cllr Clark, Cllr Emmett, Cllr Fielder, Cllr Hall, Cllr Hogarth, Cllr Mitchem, The Parish Clerk, County Cllr Rayner, Borough Cllr Betts and 17 members of the public including representatives from various clubs and societies.

Chairman's Welcome – Cllr Willingham opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and calling for 1 minute's silence to mark the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

County Report – Cllr Rayner reported on the following:

There been a reduction in the bus subsidy of £2.2million and some commercial bus services have also been withdrawn due to driver shortages and the increase in petrol prices and Go Coach moving from Otford to Swanley. This has caused issues with school bus services and KCC has been working with local operators to take up some of the routes. Cllr Rayner urged parents with ongoing issues with buses to write to KCC to keep the pressure on.

Cllr Rayner is working with Kent Highways and Ightham Parish to improve drainage and the surface in Old Lane and Oldbury Lane. Following a recent consultation, double yellow lines will go in at the junction with Old Lane and A25 however will not go ahead in Oldbury Lane due to insufficient public support.

There have been difficulties recently with road closures and long detours. Cllr Rayner explained that KCC are obliged to give authority for road closures. There has been an increase in the quantum of closures due to insurance requirements of contractors who have difficulty in getting insurance if they don't have a full road closure to carry out works.

A question was raised about the cost for KCC of migrants coming to Kent? Cllr Rayner said that there is no cost for adults however the financial responsibility for unaccompanied children falls on KCC. From March 2022, there is an arrangement whereby funds can be recovered from central Government.

A question was raised about the boundary change. Cllr Rayner said that the Borough Wards were being changed to as part of a cost cutting exercise with the number of Councillors being reduced from 54 to 42. Nothing has changed for KCC, there are 8 Parishes in Malling West, the next vote will be in 2025. There will be a new Parliamentary boundary from next

Signed.....Dated.....

year. Following an electoral review, Ightham will be in a ward with Wrotham, Stansted, Addington and Trottscliffe and will be called Pilgrims with Ightham.

A question was raised about road closure signs not being collected after works were completed, Cllr Rayner said that the signs were the responsibility of the contractors however it was the job of KCC to ensure that they are collected. The Clerk reported that she has reported the uncollected signs.

Borough Report – Cllr Betts said that he had sympathy with parents over the bus situation and that cutting services wasn't compatible with climate change.

Cllr Betts will continue to represent the Ward following the boundary change.

The Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation was launched today. Cllr Betts urged everyone to respond and consider the infrastructure and climate change in their response.

The Waste Services Contract has improved. It has been a difficult few years with covid and shortages of HGV drivers. A new Officer has been appointed to deal with issues which will be a positive move. Kent is no 7 in the UK for improvements in recycling and TMBC have achieved top marks for recycling in Kent.

A new household waste recycling area has just opened in Allington, it is state of the art and carbon neutral. The bulky waste collection has ceased however residents can request bulky items to be collected from their property for £58 for up to 6 items and the Council has approved a reduction to £12 for residents on a limited income. A contractor will be employed in October to deal with litter and fly tipping. In addition, Operation Assist is tackling fly-tipping and there have already been a number of arrests. TMBC has one of the lowest rates for fly tipping in Kent.

TMBC finances have been hit hard with inflation and the energy crisis. Waste services have suffered also with increases in diesel and driver shortages. A number of swimming pools are closing due to the energy costs, TMBC are looking after the Leisure Trust and are managing to keep some pools open but it is an additional drain on funds.

TMBC are forward thinking in terms of Climate Change and have 32 electrical charging points with an additional 100 planned. Leybourne Lakes has an eco café which is carbon neutral. Larkfield Leisure Centre has had approval for solar panels which will reduce energy costs. There were green energy business grants available to help encourage businesses to address climate change, these are now focussed on reducing bills.

Cllr Betts attended the Coxcombe Fair and gave thanks to those who organised the event.

A question was raised about whether recycled material is recycled? Cllr Betts said that it was and that TMBC get credits from KCC. Black bin waste goes to Allington for incineration but it generated energy and the ash goes into blocks. 0.1% waste goes to landfill.

It was reported that the cardboard recycling bin has now been removed from the lower village hall car park as there is less need this service now that TMBC are doing kerbside collections.

Cllr Betts reported that the tree replanting behind the car park is being chased up with the Forestry Commission by the new Tree Officer at TMBC.

Signed.....Dated.....

Cllr Willingham gave thanks to Cllr Betts and Cllr Rayner.

1. **Apologies** – Max Robinson, Ightham Tennis Club, David Sherhod, Ightham Primary School, Paul Lumley, Ightham PSA, Canon Tim Hatwell.
2. **Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 25 April 2019** – Minutes were approved and signed.
3. **Parish Report & Presentation of the KALC Award** – Cllr Willingham gave his report below. After the report, he presented Hugh Stirk with the KALC award for services to the community. Cllr Willingham then gave thanks to the Parish Councillors and Parish Clerk.
4. **Finance Report** – Parish Clerk. See report below.
5. **Reports from Parish Organisations:-**

Ightham History Project – Jean Stirk asked anyone to contact her if they have any questions about the history project or village archives.

Ightham Mote – Bernadette Gillow gave a report from the Mote. Visitors haven't returned in the way that they hoped since Covid. There are a number of events and exhibitions planned, details on the website. There has been various activity on site in opening up views over Scathes Wood and work to the farm for facilities for the gardeners so the garden compound can be used for the café. The BBC has been using the Mote for filming recently and programmes will be shown next Spring.

Ightham Tennis Club – Jori Bennett reported that the Club has had a strong year and have recently spent money on resurfacing the courts and installing new LED lights, they gave thanks to the Parish Council for part funding. There is a strong membership with 154 members including 110 juniors. There is a new coach who will be starting cardio tennis.

Ightham & District Gardeners' Club - Pippa Coulthard gave thanks to the Village Hall Committee and Ightham Mote for their efforts in the Coxcombe Fair. They Club have had 2 shows and are happy to return to face to face meetings.

Ightham Primary School – A report was submitted and read by the Clerk. Summary of points: As of September 2022, 208 children attend the School, with the maximum capacity being 210. Pay increases awarded to staff – 5% to teachers – are unfunded by the Government and therefore have to be met by the School's existing budget. 57% of our children in Year 6 passed the 11+ in the last academic year, well above the county average of 25%. Paula Freeman remains the Chair of the Full Governing Body.

The Parent School Association (PSA) continues to flourish, although it has inevitably found fundraising much harder due to the pandemic over the last couple of years.

Friends of Ightham School (FOIS) has met regularly over the last year or so and is very grateful for the donations it has received from parishioners. These funds have enabled the School to employ a Family Liaison Officer on a two-year contract to support our families and children. The Annexe, which the School leases from the Parish Council, is constantly in use and has created much-needed additional space for the school to use.

We are very grateful indeed to the Parish Council for recently agreeing to match fund the Hard Court Flooding soakaway. The School very much values its highly positive relationship with the Parish Council.

Ightham Scouts - James Reid reported that the Scout HQ has just celebrated its 3rd anniversary. It was opened by Tom Tugendhat MP. Covid created lots of issues but the scouts were able to continue meetings via zoom. There have been lots of activities since the lockdown ended and James gave thanks to the PC for their support. The cardboard facility has been removed which was a means of raising money, James will look into replacing it. The Music Festival had to be cancelled due to covid and it is unlikely that it will be run again.

Signed.....Dated.....

Ightham Church – Richard Abnett reported that St Peter’s just celebrated 900 years and gave thanks for the daffodil planting. The Parishes of Ightham and Wrotham are now a joint benefice, Rectors of both Parishes will be retiring next year and will be replaced by 1 Rector.
Ightham WI – Helen Jenkins reported that the WI have just celebrated 100 years. They carried on meeting during Covid via Zoom and are now having hybrid meetings. They have 59 members

The meeting closed at 9.43pm

Chairmans Report

First annual parish meeting since 2019, we haven’t been able to have our annual meeting due to covid although the Parish meetings continued during lockdown via zoom

Highways - We have an ongoing problem with speeding in the village and in July 2019 appointed a traffic consultant, Les Henry Associates, to do a help us to suggest traffic calming measures that we could put forward to Kent Highways. Our Highways Improvement Plan was submitted to Kent Highways in 2020 and some of the recommendations have been implemented already. The HIP needs to be updated every year with a list of measures in priority order. Kent Highways Project Managers investigate 1 or 2 priorities per year. Our main priority is to implement a 30mph blanket speed limit throughout the village however we have been told that this is unlikely to be deliverable. Or main priorities for 2022 are to reduce the speed on Oldbury Lane to 20mph and to install gateways with traffic calming signage at the Borough Green roundabout and Fen Pond Road. These have been chosen due to their deliverability and Parish contribution.

Planning - We continue to receive around 10 planning applications a month from TMBC for our comments as statutory consultee. The majority of the applications are for tree work and The Parish Council is generally supportive of all but a very few applications.

Finances - We raised our precept by 2% this year to £127,350, our budget in 2022 including reserves in £160k. The Clerk will give a short report on the Parish Finances.

Coxcombe Fair - We celebrated the Queens Jubilee in May 2022 with a bonfire and the Coxcombe Fair which was organised by a Committee of Parishioners. The Fair was well attended and raised £15,000 which has been distributed to various organisations within the community.

Scout Pavilion - Officially opened in September 2019 by our MP Tom Tugendhat.

The old scout hut reverted to the Parish and we had it fitted out and now lease it to the school who have renamed the building “Oldbury Annex”

Tennis Club – In 2021/2, the Parish Council gave matched funding to Ightham Tennis Club to resurface the courts and replace the flood lights.

Signed.....Dated.....

Cricket Club – In 2021 we granted some money to the Cricket Club to build a new toilet block.

Recreation Ground - In summer 2022, we carried out repairs to the car park in the recreation ground. We had investigated a new tarmac surface but decided not to go ahead as estimated costs were in the region of £100,000. We also planted some trees in 2022 to commemorate the Queens Jubilee.

Village Hall – The Parish Council applied for a grant for solar panels on the village hall roof, these are due to be installed in October 2022.

Local Plan – The last Local Plan was rejected by Planning Inspectors due to failure in duty to co-operate. The whole process had to start again with a new call for sites in February of this year. The Parish Council decided **not** to put forward any sites for development as all sites previously put forward were rejected due to them being in greenbelt and AONB. We are now at Regulation 18 stage where we are invited to comment on the draft plan. It is unlikely that the plan will be finalised before the elections in 2023.

Memorial Stone - In 2019 we were approached by Shoreham Aircraft Museum about putting up a memorial stone opposite the Church to commemorate Mark Ravenhill, a World War II pilot whose aircraft came down in a field on Fen Pond Road. The stone was installed in July 2022 with a short ceremony and a fly past.

Boundary Review - The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) carried out an electoral review of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in 2021. From 2023, Ightham will be in a new Ward with Wrotham, Stansted, Trottiscliffe and Ryarsh called “Pilgrims with Ightham”

Bus Funding reduction – In Spring of this year we were invited to comment on a consultation to reduce subsidised services. Some local services have been withdrawn and in addition, some commercial services have also been withdrawn including some school services. The Parish Council lobbied KCC, our MP and Cabinet members to reinstate the services in the summer of 2022 and attended a meeting with Cllr Rayner and our MP in early September. Some replacement services have been installed but they are far from satisfactory and we continue to support their reinstatement.

Finance Report – Annual Parish meeting 22.09.22

We concluded our audit on 8th September with no matters of concern.

We opened our year with £193,178 over 3 accounts.

Our precept was raised in line with inflation (at the time, December 2021) by 2% to £127,350 which equates to £2 increase on band D property.

Budget amounts:

Running Costs £50k

Capital Expenditure:

Signed.....Dated.....

Tennis Club £25k

Electrical Charging Points £6k

Call for Sites Legal Fees £10k

Coxcombe Fair £7k (excludes £2k already paid)

Battery for photovoltaic panels £5k

New car park surface £50k

We will carry forward money for the village hall (150k), pitch levelling (40k), trees (5k), fitness equipment (15k) highways (20k)

We are limited by statute on what we can spend money on (**Local Government Act 1972**)

At beginning of September we have £259,000 over 3 accounts.

Signed.....Dated.....