



10/23

**MINUTES**

**Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 17 October 2023 at 7.30pm at Ightham Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr Willingham (Chair), Cllr Holden (Vice Chair), Cllr Clark, Cllr Emmett, Cllr Fielder, Cllr Hall, Cllr Hogarth, Cllr Mitchem, The Parish Clerk, Cllr Rayner, Cllr Betts (arrived late), 2 members of the public

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - Cllr Burgham

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** - None

**3. PUBLIC** – A representative from Ightham PSA asked whether the Parish Council would be willing to contribute towards a generator for the Ightham PSA Fireworks on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. They have received a quote for £663.30 (inc VAT). Estimated costs of running the event are £3,800 and concern is that they won't break even if they don't sell enough tickets and they won't run the event if they don't make any money. Cllr Willingham confirmed that The Parish Council are already paying for the portaloos and bins which will cost around £200. Most Councillors were supportive of contributing towards the generator and Cllr Willingham agreed to get a further quote from Okas Plan Hire and said that we would make a generous contribution, but the amount would depend on the final cost.

Another representative raised various questions:

1. Whether the Parish Council would consider putting an electrical and water point in the recreation ground for future community events as there is a potentially big cost to hiring generators.
2. Whether they could use the existing storage container or get a separate storage container for school equipment. Cllr Willingham said that the existing container was for the Football Club.
3. To ask if the PC could mark out spaces at the car park to maximize the number of spaces to try and alleviate the bottleneck at the entrance.
4. To report the drain on the footpath which overflows with sewerage during heavy rainfall. The Clerk said that this has been reported several times and each time Southern Water come and clear the drain but don't fix the problem.
5. To ask for more frequent bin emptying as bins along the path are frequently overflowing. The Clerk said that she has already asked TMBC about this.

**4. MINUTES** - The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 September 2023 were approved with 2 minor amendments. The Clerk will make the amendments and pass to Cllr Willingham to sign.

**5. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR** – Cllr Rayner reported ongoing financial issues at KCC. Cllr Rayner reported that he had been following up on a drainage solution at Oldbury and had been informed that it would take at least a year to resolve. He said that with support of Ightham Parish Council, he would push to get a solution more urgently. The Chair confirmed that we would like to pursue this as people were having their homes flooded and IPC would be willing to give financial assistance. Cllr Holden said that taking no action could have insurance implications for KCC.

Cllr Rayner recommended that the Clerk contacted Mike Taylor at Borough Green who has a contact at Southern Water who may be able to help with the overflowing drain in the recreation ground. He would be happy to meet with us on site if necessary as the situation is unacceptable. Cllr Emmett reported that there was another overflowing sewer in Old Lane, the Clerk will report both.

Cllr Rayner recommended checking out our insurance policy vis a vis the car park and marking spaces and to also consider disabled spaces.

Cllr Willingham reported that we had received no planning applications since September. Cllr Rayner said that this had also been raised at Wrotham and KALC T&M. TMBC are currently upgrading their IT system to Agile and concerns have been raised by Councillors about not having the ability to view

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



comments on planning applications on the new system. Cllr Rayner recommended emailing the Chair of KALC T&M to take this up on behalf of Parishes. Cllr Rayner left the meeting at 8.55pm.

**6. MATTERS ARISING**

**Highways & PROW Matters** – Update from Traffic Group Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) meeting and response to Kent Highways. The Traffic Group met last week to put together a draft response to send to West Kent Community Engagement Team. The response includes our priority list of highways improvements for the village. Our main priority is traffic calming on The Street and Oldbury Lane. The recent feasibility study carried out by Kent Highways for The Street, Sevenoaks Road and Oldbury Lane showed that they were all unsuitable for a 20mph speed limit citing various reasons. We disagree with some of the reasons given and have put together some counter arguments. Cllr Mitchem suggested that we engage a Traffic Consultant if necessary. We have booked a speed count (ATC) at 3 locations on Fen Pond Road where we have had reports of speeding and HGV's.

We have set up Community Speedwatch Group and are waiting for a risk assessment and site training; we are able to borrow some equipment initially. Cllr Mitchem circulated some speedwatch posters that can be put out, they are £22 each.

The Clerk reported ongoing traffic issues on The Street with aggressive behaviour by motorists. This has been mentioned in our response to Kent Highways. Ongoing reports of lorries on Fen Pond Road have been reported. Cllr Mitchem reported that she had spoken to our PC to ask about speed checks in the village and they came out to Borough Green Road today and gave warnings to several motorists.

**Allotments** –The Clerk reported that she had received a query about the ownership of land between no 5 Common Road and The Paddock. Cllr Willingham said that it belonged to the Parish but was currently inaccessible apart from via The Paddock. Cllr Emmett said that it was densely packed with brambles and would require a lot to clear it. It was agreed that we would have a look at the site.

**Recreation Ground**–Rospa report – The Clerk has received the report and marked up the repairs. The Clerk passed a copy of the report to Cllr Willingham and will send the report to Cllr Hogarth. There are some repairs required to wetpour and the Clerk will get a quote. Updates on: Container repair, backfilling and reseeding trench from new water main, removal of graffiti, gate – nothing to report. Overflowing drain on footpath – the Clerk has details to contact Southern Water. Work on limes is scheduled for October half term. Quote from Treeability to remove branch overhanging school path for £132, work agreed.

**Recreation Ground Car Park** – Parking bays – we have received a quote for a 600mm rustic fence for £4,375 to go around the perimeter of the car park. Alternative suggestions were given to mark out the bays but we are constrained by the plastic webbing under the current surface and concerned about trip hazard from putting any physical markers on the surface. Posts were suggested but original posts were knocked over. It was agreed that a rustic fence with arrow markers, similar to the one at Hildenborough, would probably be the best way of marking out spaces and would give flexibility to move the signs if necessary. It was agreed that we would get 2 more quotes for a 900mm high fence.

**Ightham School/PSA** - Request for electrical point/water supply for events – it was agreed that this would be a good idea for future events and we will get some quotes. Water supply, we will need to contact Mid Kent Water, we will need to get an unmetered supply of electricity.

**Tennis Club** - Quote for repairs to path - Cllr Emmett said that he would get a quote from a local contractor for resurfacing the path. The roots from the trees have pushed the tarmac up making it uneven. The Clerk will also ask the company who repaired the car park to quote.

**Village Hall** - Update - Solar Panels – Cllr Willingham has been in contact with TMBC about planning permission as we need to verify whether permission is necessary to put panels on the south elevation as we are in a conservation area.

The Clerk reported that she had sent an expression of interest to KALC for EV charging points.

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



We have received a list of repairs and redecoration from the Trustees of the Village Hall. The Clerk was asked to write back to ask them to provide quotes for the work. Cllr Willingham reported that he had contacted someone to repair the railings outside the entrance.

**Flooding** – Busty & drainage mapping – Cllr Holden reminded Councillors to mark out the drains on their maps. It was reported that KCC had been out clearing drains and the Clerk reported that drains are now cleared on a schedule rather than when reported. It was noted that a lot of drains are completely blocked.

**Trees** – Sites for Queens Green Canopy Trees – defer to the next meeting.

**Noticeboards/Benches** – Removal of noticeboards and Oldbury Lane and Sevenoaks Road and order for replacement. The Clerk asked for the noticeboard to be removed before ordering the new ones. Cllr Willingham will ask James Hayward.

**Trees** – Churchyard -Nothing to report.

**SKIPS** – New garden room – The Clerk reported that we are in discussions with Skips about adding a garden room at the rear of Skips to accommodate more children. The school have agreed to allow Skips to use some of the space in front of Oldbury Annexe to use as a play area. The Clerk has arranged for Trueplan to mark out the areas so that they can be included in the lease. We have instructed Warners to draw up a new lease.

**Internal Auditor** – We need a new auditor to audit Parish Accounts, it will be a paid position.

**7. REPORTS FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLOR** – Cllr Betts arrive late to the meeting following a meeting at TMBC. Cllr Betts reported that TMBC are looking at high scoring sites for the Local Plan to propose to members. AONB and Agricultural Classification 1 and 2 areas will be preserved. Housing numbers will be reduced and TMBC are looking to share responsibility more equally between Parishes so will focus on smaller developments, rather than large developments in certain areas. Cllr Betts recommended looking at the sites for Ightham to see whether any would be acceptable. Cllr Betts recommended 2 grant schemes for solar panels: West Kent Rural Grant Scheme who offer up to £25k and Green Business Grants offer £5k. Cllr Willingham said that we have been asked to check whether planning permission is necessary for the village hall and Cllr Betts said that he would get an answer. Her also recommended contacting JPS in Maidstone who supply solar panels. Cllr Betts said that there is a parking consultation, the aim is to generate more income and apply fairer charging for TMBC owned car parks. Cllr Emmett asked about cash machines and not everyone has access to the apps to pay for parking. Cllr Betts said that they were looking to retain cash machines. Cllr Betts reported a 25% increase in homelessness in the Borough which is an additional cost to TMBC.

Cllr Betts reported that TMBC were upgrading their software to a new Agile system. Migration of the data has been an enormous task and there have been some teething problems with the Planning portal being down since September. It is hoped that the system will be up and running by the end of the week and the 21 days consultation period for planning applications will not start until Clerks get notification of the planning lists into their inboxes. Cllr Betts raised the lack of communication with the Leader of TMBC yesterday,

Cllr Holden asked whether the new system would have the same functionality? Cllr Betts said that it would be improved. Cllr Mitchem asked whether we would be able to view public comments on applications and Cllr Betts said that it was important and that we could.

**8. FINANCE & POLICY**

**8.1** The following accounts were submitted for payment: Proposed Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Fielder:

Clerks Salary	£839.20
HMRC – Clerks Tax	£22.00
Clerks Expenses	£30.10
Gel Creative - (Standing Order)	£50.00

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



EDF – Electricity Pavilion (Direct Debit) (Payment increased to £212 from Sept)	£212.00
Zen Internet - Business Full Fibre 2 Price rise*(Direct Debit)	£54.61
Anthony Edwards – Work at Parish and Churchyard	£1,084.12
nPower – Electricity at Recreation Ground	£81.87
Ightham Village Hall – Rental (Cheque)	£350.00
Donation to Victim Support (Cheque)	£100.00
JH Estate & Garden	£tbc
CAF Bank Deposit to open account (Cheque)	£500.00
Poppy Wreath & Donation (Wreath £20, donation £80)	£100.00
Mazars – External Audit Fee	£504.00
John Ballantyne – Varnishing 4 noticeboards and 13 benches	£1,550.00
True Plan – Lease Plans for Old Guide Hut and Oldbury Annexe	£354.00

Transfer £20,000 to Unity Trust Bank (Cheque)

Transfer £20,000 from NW Deposit Account to NatWest Current Account

Cllr Hogarth to authorise online payments. Cllrs Mitchem and Emmett signed cheques.

## 8.2 Income

Precept: 64,758.00

Interest NatWest Deposit A/C: £236.42

Unity Trust Bank £73,270.94 (30/9/23)

NatWest Deposit Account £223,317.77 (29/09/23)

NatWest Current Account - Awaiting statement

**8.3 CAF Bank** - Cllr Willingham signed the mandate which is now ready to send off

**8.4 AGAR** signed off by Mazars – circulated and notices displayed. Acceptance of Internal Audit Report.

**9.PLANNING** - We have received no planning applications this month and are currently unable to access the planning portal due to a system upgrade.

## 10. CORRESPONDENCE – (\* circulated in advance)

KALC News September 2023\*

KALC Annual General Meeting on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at Ditton Community Centre

Request for donation for CAB – It was agreed that we would donate £100

**11. AOB – Cllr Hogarth reported a leak on Bates Hill. Cllr Fielder to report potholes to the Clerk.**

**Date of next meeting** – Tuesday 21st November 2023 - Ightham Village Hall at 7.30pm.

**The meeting closed at 10.45pm**

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