



1/24

Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 16 January 2024 at 7.30pm at Ightham Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Willingham (Chair), Cllr Holden (Vice Chair), Cllr Clark, Cllr Emmett, Cllr Fieler, Cllr Mitchem, The Parish Clerk, County Cllr Rayner, Borough Cllr Betts (arrived late) and 1 member of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Cllr Burgham and Cllr Hall

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – Cllr Emmett in relation to the Application for Arboret

3. PUBLIC A member of public attended to make representation on behalf of the Scouts and to clarify the position on using assets from the Scout Hut such as water and electricity. It was confirmed that HMRC regulations mean that they cannot be utilised by the wider public until 2029. It was noted that any external electrical supply will need to be safe and secure and PAT tested and risk assessed. The cost for getting an additional external connection for the scout pavilion cost in the region of £20k. He suggested using gas burners and rechargeable lights as an alternative. In terms of water, the Tennis Club has an outside tap that a hose can be connected to otherwise water carriers can be used. It was reported that children had been climbing on the shipping container – The Clerk said that she would put up a notice and send an email to the Headmaster warning parents.

4. MINUTES - Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 19 December 2023 were approved and signed as a true record with one typo amended in manuscript.

5. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR – Cllr Rayner left the meeting before making a report due to a commitment to attend another meeting.

6. MATTERS ARISING

Highways & PROW Matters – Potholes on Coach Road outside Woodlands, potholes on Mill Lane (reported), Potholes on Oldbury Lane (reported), leak on Sandy Lane (reported to SE Water with request to salt the road). **Update HIP** – Cllr Mitchem reported that Kent Highways have come back to us with an update on the various HIP requests: On The Street they have now logged all of the recent accidents /incidents and the Planning and Advice Team have made several recommendations to improve signage and road markings. It was agreed that they should proceed with these. It was agreed that we should carry out further ATC's, one outside The Forge and another on Bates Hill near to April Cottage. In response to our requests for improvements on Fen Pond Road, the planning and advice team have come up with some different recommendations for road markings, it was agreed that we should ask Kent Highways to reconsider our original request, Cllr Mitchem and the Clerk will get together to draft a response. **Community Speedwatch** – The Clerk reported that there is now a team of 7 volunteers including the Clerk and Cllr Clark and the onsite training session will be on 23rd January. The Clerk said that we would be able to borrow equipment initially but may need to purchase our own. The Clerk said that we should get some posters to put up which should act as a deterrent. Following requests from a couple of residents to have a meeting to discuss Highways it was decided that we should move our annual Parish meeting from September to April and dedicate it to highways matters and update on our Highways Improvement Plan. There will be an opportunity for residents to raise any issues that we can then take back Kent Highways. The Clerk will circulate a date that can be advertised in the Parish Magazine.

Recreation Ground. Electrical and Water supply quotes – Cllr Willingham said that he was meeting the electrician next week to fix the lights on the main path and the path to the Tennis Club and suggested asking for a quote/whether it would be possible to add an external cable from the box by the gate. After a short discussion it was decided that it would be too risky and costly to pursue this given that there are only a couple of events a year, hiring a generator for events would be more cost

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



effective. **Path repairs** – The path was completed last week and unfortunately a section of the path was vandalised by sticks shortly after completion. We have received a couple of queries about the surface of the path. The Clerk and Cllr Mitchem met with the contractor on Monday, and he confirmed that the path would settle and the nature of the surface means that it will compact over time to create a smooth surface. The surface was chosen on the basis that Local Authority regulations state that we cannot put tarmac over tree roots which had broken through the original tarmac in several places. This surface is flexible and porous which allows for root growth, and we can add additional material to repair the path/fill any gaps which in turn will settle to create a smooth finish. The contractor agreed to come back if we are not happy with it. It was agreed that the new path looks smart and an improvement on the old path. The Clerk will ask James Hayward to backfill and reseed the section between the lights and the Scout Pavilion in the Spring. **Wetpour repairs** – The Clerk reported that the repairs were being carried out today and she will check the finish tomorrow. **Outstanding play equipment repairs** – The Clerk reported that she had sent the report to Wicksteed to ask for a quote for the items on the schedule and is awaiting a response. The Clerk has asked Tyrrells to quote to repair the fence panels at the back of the play area where several slats have been removed. The Clerk has received a refund for the gate arm as it couldn't be fitted to the existing gate as it wasn't stable enough. The Clerk asked Cllr Fielder whether he would be able to remove the covid notices and he agreed to do this. **Graffiti** – Cllr Mitchem said that the most offensive graffiti had been removed and suggested that we ask Wicksteed whether they can remove the rest. Alternatively, Cllr Emmett recommended a paint that would cover it. The Clerk will contact Wicksteed in the first instance.

Allotments – Land to Rear Common Road – The Clerk had drafted a letter to send to residents and this was agreed. The Clerk has also asked Treeability whether they would be able to quote to remove the waste. We will decide what to do with the parcel of land once we have managed to clear it.

Village Hall - Update - Solar Panels – Cllr Willingham is waiting for a quote. Damage to railings, EV charging points, internal decoration, and damp repairs – awaiting further information. **New GRP Substation** at Ightham Village Hall – The Clerk has written to UK Power Networks who have agreed to cover all legal costs for the new substation, they have asked for a 99-year lease and this was agreed. **Reserving for rebuilding** - Cllr Holden reported that with the new budget we will be holding reserves of £250k and should start to think about what we want and how much it will cost to rebuild the hall. Cllr Willingham said that the brickwork as far as the kitchen was solid and that we should only need to rebuild the section from there to the road. It was suggested that we should carry out a feasibility study to see what the options are and to contact Clerks at Platt, West Peckham, Groombridge and Longfield who have all recently had new village halls to see whether they can recommend anyone. Cllr Hogarth asked whether we would have to consult with Parishioners and Cllr Holden said that the Parish Council is elected to make decisions however would get some designs when the time comes and consult with residents.

Flooding – Busty & drainage mapping – Cllr Clark reported that the barrier had been repaired and all the wood had been removed. Cllr Holden reported that he had the maps and will report back at the next meeting.

Noticeboards – Replacements – The Clerk reported that she had ordered 2 new noticeboards at a cost of £2,296.50, they should arrive next month.

DD 80th anniversary - We have had an email from Borough Green asking whether we would be interested in joining up with activities around D Day including a fly past by a Spitfire. Clerk to respond to see what would be involved.

Ightham Primary School consultation to join an academy – Cllrs have read the paperwork circulated by the school and have no comments to make although we need to know if and how this will affect the lease of Oldbury Annexe if it goes ahead.

It was mentioned that one of the oak trees was dropping branches on the path in the recreation ground, Clerk to email school to let them know.

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



7. REPORTS FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLOR – Cllr Betts asked whether we had progressed with the solar panels as there is another round of grant funding available and recommended contacting Jeremy Whittaker to facilitate any application.

Cllr Betts reported that the Angel Centre in Tonbridge was being demolished due to the increasing costs of maintaining it and inefficiency; the site will be redeveloped, and a new carbon neutral leisure centre will be designed and rebuilt using a combination of existing funds that had been earmarked for maintenance, a grant from Sport England and decarbonisation funding. The location for the new sports centre has not yet been determined. Sainsburys and the old Beales site will remain. Tonbridge swimming pool has applied for a grant to decarbonise. Cllr Betts reported that TMBC was one of only 3 Councils in Kent not to have any debt.

Cllr Betts reported that TMBC used a market supplement policy to employ planning staff and they are now at 95% capacity which will help to stabilise the planning system.

Cllr Betts reported that he had just come from a Climate Change Forum meeting and had reviewed a survey that had been sent to residents. Of residents who completed the survey, 92% respondents said that the environment was important to them, and the highest priority for them was transport infrastructure. Other elements, residents are supportive of include reducing carbon emissions, supporting habitats for biodiversity, avoiding single use plastic and improving energy efficiency. There is no update on the Local Plan, an update is due at the beginning of April. Cllr Emmett asked why 36,000 empty properties in the Southeast couldn't be put to public use? Cllr Betts said that TMBC have doubled Council Tax rates which are applied as soon as a property becomes empty to try and encourage landlords to sell or rent the property. Land banking is controlled by central Government. Cllr Betts reported that the St George site on Wrotham, which has remained empty for many years, has finally had an approval for a carbon neutral development. The site has now been demolished and the owners are waiting for an amendment to a covenant restricting the site to housing for the elderly, for over 55's.

Cllr Mitchem asked Cllr Betts to update on street cleaning in Ightham as we haven't seen anyone for a while. Cllr Betts confirmed that there was a budget of £1million for street cleaning including litter picking and recommended that the Clerk emailed David Campbell Lenaghan to ask when Ightham was on the schedule. Fen Pond Road is particularly bad.

The Clerk asked Cllr Betts to follow up 3 enforcement cases and will email the details.

8. FINANCE & POLICY

8.1 The following accounts were submitted for payment, proposed by Cllr Fielder and seconded by Cllr Emmett:

Clerks Salary	£871.20
HMRC – Clerks Tax	£30.00
Clerks Expenses	£26.15
Gel Creative - (Standing Order)	£50.00
EDF – Electricity Pavilion (Direct Debit)	£215.00
Zen Internet - Business Full Fibre 2 Price rise*(Direct Debit)	£54.61
Sovereign – Deposit for new surfacing at play area	£347.42
Anthony Edwards – Work at Parish and Churchyard	£872.60
JH Estate & Garden November	£504.00
We Are Beams – Donation (<i>Paid after December meeting</i>)	£100.00
nPower – unmetered supply electricity recreation ground	£131.43
Clerks & Councils Direct – Subscription renewal	£15.50
Ightham Tennis Club – Heat Mat to stop pipes freezing	£320.00
Bastion – New footpath (inc VAT)	£11,960.88

8.2 Income

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



Interest Nat West £234.83

8.3 Alternative bank CCLA – Cllr Holden will review the paperwork to see whether CCLA is suitable for us.

8.4 Budget for 2024-2025 – a breakdown of budget items was circulated in advance of the meeting with suggested precept figures. Our routine expenditure is approximately £80k and we have allowed amounts for capital expenditure including: £250k reserves for rebuilding the village hall, £25k for highways improvements and £60k for pitch levelling at the recreation ground. A discussion was had about making a modest increase to allow for capital items but it was agreed that we should not increase the precept due to the cost-of-living crisis, proposed by Cllr Willingham and seconded by Cllr Hogarth. A 0% increase will mean that our precept for 24/25 would be £13,221. The Clerk will send the paperwork to TMBC.

Cllr Emmett said that we could borrow for the rebuild of the village hall if necessary, but we will have a better idea of cost after a feasibility study. Cllr Holden said that we had never borrowed money and it was noted that we should be able to build up enough reserves to pay outright although costs will rise. Cllr Holden asked about an increase in the Clerks salary? The Clerk reported that NALC had increased pay scales by £1 per hour in November to be backdated to April and the current rate is £21.53 per hour. This will be reviewed for the next meeting.

9. PLANNING

LOCAL PLAN – Reg 18 Call for Sites – Sites in Ightham – to be deferred as we are unlikely to hear anything until April. Comment that we had broadly agreed not to support any development in greenbelt or AONB.

9.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

23/03379 Arboret, Oldbury Lane, Ightham. Erection of a new detached dwelling house with associated access and vehicle parking facilities. “Objection on grounds of design, infilling and adverse impact on greenbelt.”

23/03354 Ramblers, Sandy Lane, Ivy Hatch, Ightham. 3 x Beech – 2-3m crown reduction, thin crown by 10% and cable brace inspection. In Group G1 Tree Preservation Order. “We leave to TMBC to determine.”

23/03523 – Walters, Ismays Road, Ightham. Retrospective planning permission for retaining walls, gate and planters. *Further review before commenting.*

23/03458 FLMIN Ashwell, Mote Road, Ivy Hatch, Sevenoaks, Tn15 0pg. Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling with associated landscaping, parking and entrance gates. “No objection.”

23/03410 Orchard Cottage, Pine Tree Lane, Ivy Hatch, TN15 0NJ. Details of Condition 5 (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal), Condition 6 (Hard and soft landscaping treatment), Condition 7 (Vehicle parking and turning areas) and Condition 8 (Refuse storage and screening) submitted pursuant to planning permission TM/22/01534/FL (Extension of existing residential annexe to create a separate residential dwelling with shared access). “No comment”

23/03443 The Barn, Ightham Court, Fen Pond Road, Ightham, TN15 9JF Non- Material Amendment to planning permission TM/22/01213/FL. Eaves and ridge heights of the extension have been slightly increased to allow for lintels over windows and doors and minor alterations to chimney size and positioning (as illustrated by the outline of previously consented scheme shown in blue on new plans). Alterations to fenestration placement to better suit internal layout. “No comment”

24/00028/PA The National Trust Ightham Mote, Ightham Mote, Mote Road, Ivy Hatch, Tn15 0nt. T1 Large Mature Ash on southeast edge of wetlands. Fell back into wetlands, chip brush into existing pile.

T2,3,4 Group o 3 large Ash on south side of Cobnut platt, fell into neighbouring field, chip brush into pile back into wooded area, transport timber to Mote farm in 3m lengths.

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



- T5 Large mature Ash, reduce crown by approx 3-4m (Safe height for access) to stabilise and retain as feature, making all cuts to secondary live lateral branches where available.
- T6 Large Ash on Field boundary, fell back into clearing, chip brushwood into pile.
- T7 Small Twin stem Ash, fell back into clearing, chip brushwood into pile.
- T8,9,10 Three large Ash on path to clearing, fell into clearing, chip brushwood into pile.
- T11,12 Two Ash close to roadside, winch assisted Fell back into cleared area, chip brushwood into pile, timber to be cut to 3m lengths and relocated to Mote Farm.
- T13 Large Ash close to roadside, winch assisted Fell, back into site.
- T14 Large Mature Ash within cobnuts, prominent feature tree, reduce "No objection".

9.2 PLANNING APPLICATONS APPROVED:

23/01747/FL Ightham Mote, Mote Road, Ightham. Enlargement of existing link path with associated engineering works, landscaping and reprovision of a historic retaining wall.

10. CORRESPONDENCE – (* circulated in advance)

KALC Community Awards Scheme 2024 – The Clerk reported that she had completed our application.

West Kent Rural Grants Scheme

British Heart Foundation - Free Community Defibrillators applications close on **March 15, 2024**

Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) free online training workshops **18 January-7th February**

PPP Meetings 2024 – 8/2, 30/5, 29/08

TMBC - Shopfront and Vacant Unit Improvement Scheme grant funding – applications close **26 February 2024.**

My Community Voice Kent – January 2024

Youth program information for councils - The Media Lab - an initiative to support creative careers for those aged 11 - 18 years.

Green Business Grant Scheme – Deadline **13 March 2024.**

11. AOB

Cllr Willingham will speak to the Plough and Cllr Emmett to the Amhurst (ex Crown Point) to see whether they would be interested in a free defibrillator.

Cllr Mitchem reported that she has spoken to the Cricket Club about trees planting and they will take it to their committee. Cllr Clark suggested that any trees would be better planted inside the fence as they would provide a screen from the road.

Cllr Mitchem reported that the Tennis Club had planted a tree in the recreation ground to replace the Goat Willow.

Cllr Mitchem reported that the Open Gardens were planned for **23rd June.**

Cllr Mitchem reported that she had requested a sign for the recreation ground from Kent Highways.

The Clerk asked whether an orienteering group could use the recreation ground car park for parking on Sunday **19th May?** Agreed.

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.

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