



IGHTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

ON THURSDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2023 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

AT 8.00PM

Present: Cllr Willingham (Chair), Cllr Holden (Vice Chair), Cllr Burgham, Cllr Fielder, Cllr Hall, Cllr Hogarth, Cllr Mitchem, The Parish Clerk, County Cllr Rayner and 12 members of the public.

- 1. Chairman's Welcome** – Cllr Willingham welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies** - Cllr Emmett, Cllr Clark, Cllr Betts, PC Lisa Whitehead, David Sherhod, James Hitchcock, Revd Canon Hatwell, Ightham Tennis Club, James Reid.
- 3. The Minutes** of the Annual Parish Meeting on 22 September 2022 were approved and signed as a true record.
- 4. County Report** – *(Cllr Rayner made a short report on behalf of Cllr Betts, TMBC who was unable to attend the meeting)* Cllr Rayner reported that he had started out as a Borough Councillor for TMBC 40 years ago, he then took on Chairmanship of the KALC T&M Area Committee and as been a County Councillor since 2017. Cllr Rayner has been involved in 4/5 Local Plans. The last Plan failed, and we are now just through stage of Regulation 18 of the current plan. The Plan ran into several issues following the 2023 elections as the Conservatives lost their majority. They have now formed an Alliance with Independent candidates Cllr Mike Taylor and Cllr Wendy Palmer and Cllr Taylor is now Cabinet Member for Planning and Cllr Palmer is Chair of Area 2 Planning. There is no overall support for Borough Green Gardens and there is a new policy of opposing development in Greenbelt. The Plan is in the process of being reworked and Reg 18B will be launched in April 2024. There are over 50 new sites that came forward since Reg 18 and they will remain confidential until Reg 18B. There will be more stages following Reg 18B and the Plan is expected to go to the Inspector in Spring 2025. The Parish Alliance, including Ightham, Borough Green, Wrotham, Platt and Plaxtol have joined forces to hire experts to make any representations.

A question was raised about the volume of houses proposed. Cllr Rayner said that the number of properties required has been reduced but we don't yet know by how much; The Secretary of State has relaxed the number of houses to be built, recognising issues with greenbelt. We were expecting to have to build approx. 13,000 houses over 10 years and it is anticipated that this will be more like 8-9,000. TMBC are pressing ahead with the plans so as not to cause any further delays and can adapt the Plan if necessary. The houses will be spread throughout the Borough.

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

A question was raised about the lack of infrastructure which is already under pressure . Cllr Rayner said that unfortunately housing usually comes first and the infrastructure will follow. The main aim is to protect AONB and Greenbelt in the Plan however there is a shortage of houses nationwide and 40% houses need to be affordable.

Cllr Rayner reported that on County matters, he has fought to keep council tax down. There are financial issues at KCC due to unaccompanied asylum seekers; Under the Childrens Act 1989, KCC are required to look after child asylum seekers and are currently responsible for 2,000. There has also been an increase in the number of children needing SEN support such as transport for school. Additionally, Childrens mental health support following covid has increased by 15-18% and the cost of accommodation and support for the elderly has risen by 15-18%. In all, Kent County Council spends £1.3 billion per year on adult and children’s services amounting to 66-68% budget. Costs of maintaining highways and refuse disposal have also risen.

Black bin waste goes to Allington to supply electricity. The cost of recycling household waste has risen due to transportation costs.

Last year there were issue of getting children to school as some bus companies withdrew services. The situation has improved this year as contracts were renewed earlier.

In July, Cllr Rayner was appointed Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance; this means that it may be easier to find funding for projects such as the drainage at Oldbury. We are awaiting design work to fix the issue.

At Old Lane, we have recently had the situation clarified around declassification. Old Lane will continue to be classified as a BOAT and KCC will remain responsible for emptying the drains.

Cllr Willingham gave thanks to Cllr Rayner for attending all of our Parish meetings.

5. **Police Report** – The Clerk read out the Police report: in July/ August, 1 theft of a motor vehicle was reported in Fen Pond Road.
6. **Update on our Highways Improvement Plan** – Cllr Mitchem

Our Highways Improvement Plan (or HIP) was originally submitted to Kent Highways in 2020 following advice and a comprehensive report covering the whole village from an experienced traffic consultant. Some of the recommendations have been implemented already such as improved priority passing signs, road narrowing signs, double yellow lines and improved road markings.

The HIP needs to be updated every year with a list of measures in priority order and 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.

In 2023 our main priorities were to reduce the speed on Oldbury Lane, The Street and Sevenoaks Road to 20mph and to install white gateways with traffic calming signage at the Borough Green roundabout and Fen Pond Road and Ismays Road. These have been chosen due to their deliverability and Parish contribution. Whilst we are pleased to report that the gateways were installed last month, unfortunately, following a feasibility study, our request for a 20mph limit was turned down as the roads were deemed unsuitable.

At the request of residents, we have also just carried out a speed survey on Borough Green Road and the results have been passed to Kent Highways.

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

TSS carried out a 7-day survey on Borough Green Rd commencing the 08/07/23. The number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit of 30mph was 16335 which is 52.81% of the total vehicles recorded in both directions. The data shows that over half of all people using the road during the survey period were speeding over 30mph. However, only 15.41% of these people were going above 35mph which is the enforceable speed.

Average speed shows that Tuesday had the highest average speed at 31.16mph heading west and Monday heading east 30.95mph.

We are aware of the hot spots for speeding and poor driver behaviour and a lot of this is around the centre of the village/A227. KCC will very rarely be able to install physical traffic calming measures on A or B classified roads due to emergency services as well as high flows of HGV's. This is consistent with other Local Authorities and national guidance.

We will respond to KCC after our next meeting with our comments regarding the request for the 20-mph speed limit in the Street and Oldbury Lane as we disagree with some of the points made in their dismissal of this project.

There is a new police structure in place, and we have asked our new PC to conduct some speed enforcement and have sent her details of the roads where we think most incidents of speeding occur.

We are also in the process of setting up Community Speedwatch. The Clerk has completed training and some residents have signed up already. We are waiting for the Speedwatch co-ordinator to set up some onsite training and the scheme will hopefully be up and running in the autumn if we get enough volunteers.

We have had 'priority passing signs' installed in The Street and we have asked TMBC to clamp down more rigorously on illegally parked cars in The Street, which impair the sightlines and contribute to confrontational behaviour between drivers. Which they have done.

We regularly get requests for double yellow lines – Kent Highways will only consider these where there is **full** support from residents living on that road and surrounding areas.

In addition, the Parish Council regularly engages with the police and Ightham Primary School where we receive reports of inconsiderate or illegal parking.

We welcome any ideas from residents regarding the traffic issues in Ightham so that we can take them forward to KCC.

Questions: A resident raised the issue of speeding on Fen Pond Road and asked what could be done as it wasn't safe to walk along given there is no footpath. Cllr Rayner said that installing a 20mph limit wouldn't be enforceable. The cost of putting in a footpath would be very expensive and would fall to the Parish Council although could be done in stages? Speed cameras are joint venture between the Police and Highways but no new cameras have been installed in the last 10 years and they are usually only installed on A roads. Speedwatch is an option. Cllr Rayner suggested keeping a record of accidents and challenge KCC on the reasons for their pushback on the 20mph limits that we have already asked for as reasons seem contradictory with what we have seen elsewhere in the Borough. The Clerk suggested that we do a speed survey on Fen Pond Road as a starting point.

7. Reports from Parish Organisations: (Some are attached below)

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

WI – Helena Johnson, Treasurer

Ightham Primary School & PSA – Paula Freeman, Chair of Governors

Cricket Club – Tom Bentall, Treasurer

Reports from The Tennis Club and St Peter’s Church were read out by The Chairman and Clerk respectively.

- 8. Chairmans Report - Highways** - We have a Highways Improvement Plan in place to address traffic calming throughout the village and will report on this later in the meeting.

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 didn’t raise our precept this year due to the cost-of-living crisis. For 2023/4 our precept is £129,516. The Clerk will give a short report on the Parish Finances.

Tennis Club – In 2022/3 we installed some lights on the pathway up to the Tennis Club. Unfortunately, most of them were vandalised and we have had to reinstate them, which is an additional cost to the Council.

Local Plan – In 2022 the Parish Council responded to the consultation on Regulation 18 for the Local Plan. 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. The Parish Council held a briefing session in the village hall with Matt Boughton, leader of TMBC and Borough Councillors Robin Betts and Martin Coffin. Parish Councillors hand delivered invitations to all households in the village to raise awareness and provide details on how to respond. We are awaiting details of the next stage of the process.

Recreation Ground – 2 new benches have recently been installed in the recreation ground, one being a commemorative bench for the Jubilee and the other being a replacement memorial bench.

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

Elections 2023 – in May 2023, all 9 Parish Councillors were elected following an uncontested election. We currently have no vacancies.

Finally, we would like to report that we presented Jenny Hutchinson from the Hutch Deli with the KALC Award for services to the community

- 9. Finance Report –**

Precept 2023/4 – we decided not to raise the precept - £129,516

Accounts 2022/3 – We instructed a new Internal auditor who conducted a thorough audit of our accounts and processes. AGAR was submitted to Mazars in June 2023.

Income £142,556 (precept and rental income)

Expenditure £107,686 – Routine £62k, village hall £5k, scout pavilion £5k, recreation ground £22k, highways £2.5k

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

Budget amounts for 2023/4:

Running Costs £60k

Capital Expenditure (includes reserves):

Village Hall £220k

Recreation Ground £90k – pitch levelling, car park surface, fitness equipment

Highways £25k

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

- 10. Any Other Business** - A question was raised about the lorries and waste tipping on Fen Pond Road. Cllr Rayner said that the matter had been reported and the site was under investigation. Waste/soil was being dumped which is unlawful and has now been stopped by Enforcement.

The meeting closed at 9.24pm

Please visit our website www.ightham.org for meeting minutes and up to date information about Ightham village matters or contact the Parish Clerk via email: ighthamclerk@gmail.com

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

Overview of the 2022/2023 year from Ightham Primary PSA

With the cost of living on the rise, we started the academic year off with a second hand uniform sale (£104). We then held another 3 throughout the year at the request of parents.

We booked a charity clothes donation with bags2school (£144 profit). This is something I think the community could get more involved in with better advertising. We do these 3 times a year.

Term 1 - We then held a successful movie night watching 'Bad Guys' which the children throughly enjoyed (£328 profit).

Then Halloween, we sold pumpkins and scary doughnuts. We held a photo competition for the children for best fancy dress and best carved pumpkin (£410 profit).

Term 2 - Christmas 2022 we held a fair on the play ground with mulled wine and a chance to meet Santa in the outside classroom (£1576 profit). Christmas jumper day (£216).

Followed by Santas sleigh which we extended this year out to Wrotham village (£449 profit).

Term 3 - The new year was quieter which allowed us to think out the years events, we decided to update the charities constitution as it was rather out of date! We also designed a parents questionnaire to try and gage what parents want and generate ideas. We didn't have a great uptake with only 36 parents complete it.

We set up a Collection pot to raise money for an air con unit for one of the classrooms which gets incredibly hot during the summer. With some matched funding from one of the parents companies we managed to finally meet our target of £3000 and buy the unit before the heat set in.

Term 4 - In march we held a well attended school disco (£1128).

Then a Mother's Day plant sale (£192).

Ks1 needed some new playground toys so we did a sponsored read over half term and raised £1525 with just 4 children raising the majority of the money. Easter term ended with break the rules day (£946) and a very wet easter egg hunt (£157).

Term 5 - bought the coronation fair which turned into a huge community event and raised a whopping £9,305.

We also arranged a wine tasting event for parents at the Mount vinyard which wasn't well attended but raised £179 none the less.

Term 6 - we sold sports day and end of term refreshments.

Annual Report to Parish Council – Ightham Primary School

The academic year 2022-23 was successful overall for the School. We performed above the national average measure academically in every area

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

from Reception to Year 6 and 35% of our Year 6 pupils passed the Kent Test to move onto a grammar school education.

This was against a backdrop of union action in schools across the country relating to staff pay and conditions. However, I am pleased to say that none of the staff at Ightham chose to strike and the school remained fully open throughout.

The School was pleased to break even financially to the year ending April 2023, and we are on course to break even this year as well. The School continues to 'make do and mend' on a very small capital budget as we attempt to maintain the school building and grounds. I am pleased to report that a structural survey found no evidence of RAAC at the school in June 2023.

The School very much values its extremely positive relationship with the Parish Council. The Annexe, which the School leases from the Parish Council, continues to be very well used and our Family Liaison Officer is based there.

Paula Freeman remains the Chair of the Full Governing Body, a role she has successfully held for the last four years. The Full Governing Body, which is responsible for strategic leadership at the school, remains very strong.

The core staff at Ightham remains in place which ensures that our very high standards are maintained and built on.

The Parent School Association (PSA) continues to flourish under the leadership of Jo Crisp.

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 contribute to the costs of a Family Liaison Officer to support our families and children, as well as helping out with maintenance work around the school.

We have much to look forward to this term. Our Harvest Festival will be taking place at St. Peter's Church in early October and we shall, once again, be holding our termly Community Afternoons at the Church Hall.

David Sherhod, Head Teacher

September 2023

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

Report from St Peter's

Over the last year, St Peter's, Ightham and St George's, Wrotham have been working on ways that we can work together better as a united benefice

- I have delayed my retirement for a year in order to help the 2 churches and parishes develop their relationship under one incumbent, especially after the Revd Edward Wright retires this month.

- We, in conjunction with the Friends of St Peter's, put on a successful concert with the Kings' Men singers - very enjoyable, with the bonus of raising some funds. There will be another concert with them next July - watch this space

- The church's Green Team have been meeting in order to see how the church can be more environmentally friendly and whether we can be less dependent on fossil fuels

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