

The **Minutes** of the **Meeting** of **Upchurch Parish Council** held
remotely on **Thursday 4th February 2021** at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr Tyrone Ripley (Chairman), Cllr John Arnold (Vice Chairman), Cllr Pam Denny, Cllr Alan Horton, Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cllr Gary Rosewell and Cllr Neil Sheppard; and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

Also present was Ward Member Richard Palmer.

150. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Peter Masson and Cllr Neil Sheppard (work); apologies accepted.

Apologies had also been received from County Councillor Mike Whiting (at another meeting); apology noted.

151. Declarations of interest

None were declared.

152. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14th January 2021

Cllr Rosewell **PROPOSED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2021 as a true record; **SECONDED** by Cllr Arnold: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**. Cllr Ripley will sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting at the next physical Council meeting.

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Public Time

The meeting was adjourned for the public time.

SBCllr Palmer said there have been more reports of flytipping in Canterbury Lane; concern has been raised about commercial rubbish dumped on private property, Swale Borough Council is aware.

The Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne has been in contact regarding putting a memorial plaque on the rail bridge in Oak Lane.

Cllr Ripley said the Council had responded to the request in March 2019 and were supportive of a plaque and asked that consideration be given to the actual position of the plaque as the bridge is on a very fast stretch of road.

Cllr Horton said the Council also concluded that if the Society had a permit to put the plaque on the bridge, it is not the Parish Council's responsibility.

Cllr Ripley thanked SBCllr Palmer for attending and for his report.

SBCllr Horton said it had been quiet from a Ward perspective. There have been concerns about the planning application for 15 Horsham Lane.

Cllr Ripley thanked SBCllr Horton for his report.

The meeting was reconvened.
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153. Correspondence

KCCllr Whiting was unable to attend the meeting but had sent the following report:

January has simply flown by, but no less busy. I'll concentrate on the main issues raised with me during January and some welcome good news.

RAIL

Members will be aware of the rail works to repair the embankment at Newington. The line is closed until 8 February and a replacement bus services is operating. Network rail is organising Zoom meetings for members of the public to call in and get the latest updates, and I will post details as I get them on my Facebook page [facebook.com/cllrmikewhiting](https://www.facebook.com/cllrmikewhiting).

LITTER

There is an unacceptable amount of litter on the A249 and at Junction 5, Stockbury. I have raised this with Highways England on residents' behalf and I have been told a clean up is being planned when they can get the necessary lane closures in place to make it safe for their operatives to work on the verges.

SCHOOLS

I am really pleased KCC has agreed a £4 million extension to Highsted Grammar school that will increase the school's capacity by 25%. Work will start later this year, and the new facilities open in September 2022. As the population grows it is vital for me that we get the infrastructure first, and that means enlarging our grammar schools as well building new high schools. It remains in KCC's infrastructure plan to have a new primary and secondary school built off the Grovehurst Roundabout in the next three years, to serve the development planned for that area and provide greater local choice for families living in Iwade.

ROADS

KCC has also announced a further £5 million road resurfacing fund. The A2 from Medway to Newington has recently been resurfaced, and the stretch throughout to Keycol Hill is already programmed. The new fund will ensure the A2 along Key Street and London Road will also benefit.

VACCINATIONS

The Covid-19 vaccination programme in our area is now well underway. I was at a meeting with the NHS last week where they told me that the programme is "patchy" across Kent and Medway, including here in Sittingbourne. However, they are confident they will meet the national target of ensuring everyone in the top four groups will have their jab by the middle of February and are organising home visits for those who can't get out to get their jab. NHS managers are asking GPs to have reserve lists of people who can come in at short notice to ensure no doses of the vaccine go to waste. While this may mean some in lower priority groups get their vaccine ahead of those in higher risk groups, it is better than throwing doses away. Their priority is to ensure every available dose available is used. Full details at <https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/your-health/coronavirus/covid19vaccine>. I congratulate and thank all of the health professionals and the army of volunteers that are ensuring this mass-vaccination programme can go as smoothly as possible. The best way you can help is to accept your invitation when you receive it and get your vaccine. Mean-while stay indoors as much as you can, wear a mask if you do go out and keep your distance. Infection rates in Swale coming down quickly, down 1/3rd in the past week, but let's not give the virus any opportunity to reverse that welcome trend.

FINANCIAL HELP

Finally, a reminder that anyone eligible for free school meals who needs extra financial support to help feed their children can visit www.kent.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals.

The *KentTogether* helpline remains open for any other Kent resident who needs support with food, collection of medication and prescriptions and other urgent needs during the pandemic, 24 hours a day. You can get help by visiting www.kent.gov.uk/kenttogether or calling 03000 41 92 92.

Cllr Horton informed Members that he had received a request for litter pickers from a resident who walks with her daughter and they litter pick at the same time. They have collected thirty bags of rubbish.

Cllr Rosewell said he had some litter pickers.

ACTION: Cllr Rosewell to provide the resident with litter pickers.

Cllr Horton reported that KCCllr Whiting had visited the vaccination centre in Sittingbourne and the programme is going well. There has been concern regarding having to pay to park but this has been resolved.

Cllr Rosewell said the Lower Halstow Parish Council Village Planning Strategy was an impressive document and states their case although the validity of such a document is not clear.

ITEM FOR PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

154. Planning

i. To receive the minutes of the Meeting held on 20th January 2021 and receive an update on planning matters

Cllr Rosewell **PROPOSED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2021 as a true record; **SECONDED** by Cllr Ripley: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**. Cllr Rosewell will sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting at the next physical Council meeting.

ii. Ref: 21/500004/FULL

Address: 15 Horsham Lane Upchurch Sittingbourne Kent ME9 7AN

Proposal: Demolition of existing conservatory. Erection of a front, side and rear extension together with a new first floor and roof. Alterations to the existing front boundary wall and driveway and the erection of a detached double garage.

Cllr Rosewell said the matter has been deferred to Full Council from Planning Committee and that there are five objections on the portal.

Cllr Horton said residents have raised concern regarding the proposal and the impact on the amenity and style in the village. Concern has been raised to how poorly the application had been publicised, the Planning Officer has said that they are only required to notify the properties on the boundary so only three were notified. There are no notices on posts. There is concern that the proposal is out of character for the area and it interrupts the amenity of neighbours. Cllr Horton said that, as Ward Member, he has called the matter in to committee and will abstain from the Parish Council vote.

Cllr Rosewell said he was concerned about the lack of notification and this has been raised with Swale Borough Council, the officer has said that a site notice was not required to be displayed at either application site as all adjoining properties were notified via letter.

Cllr Rosewell thanked SBCllr Horton and SBCllr Palmer for raising the issue regarding the general lack of notification of planning applications to neighbours and not posting notices locally with Swale Borough Council.

Councillors considered the application and noted that there is no standard of housing in the village and that most of Horsham Lane is a mixture of housing. The proposal sets out to fit in with the same height lines as neighbouring properties. It is an exciting design and will be environmentally friendly. It is not in keeping with neighbouring properties. Concern was raised that it would be intrusive to neighbours. The property is visible at the entry point to the heart of the village and is near to the church and Conservation Area.

Cllr Marshall **PROPOSED** to object to the application; **SECONDED** by Cllr Denny; **2- FOR, 3 AGAINST, 2 ABSTENTIONS: MOTION FAILED**.

Cllr Lewin **PROPOSED** to support the application subject to serious consideration being given to neighbours' views; **SECONDED** by Cllr Ripley; **3 - FOR, 2 - AGAINST, 2 - ABSTENTIONS: MOTION CARRIED**.

Cllr Ripley reported that regarding pollutants leaking into ground at Tranquility, the Environment Agency says it will only investigate if going into a watercourse. Swale Environment team is investigating the matter.

Cllr Lewin asked if planning applications could be tracked as it would be good to have the knowledge of decisions.

ACTION: Cllr Lewin to track the applications.

155. General Purposes Committee

Cllr Denny **PROPOSED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2021 as a true record; **SECONDED** by Cllr Rosewell: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**. Cllr Rosewell will sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting at the next physical Council meeting.

Cllr Horton reported that he had received positive feedback regarding the new fence at the Recreation Ground.

156. Allotments

Cllr Ripley reported that the tenancies will be sent out this month.

157. Finance

Chq no	Payee	Reason	Amount
3957	Swale Borough Council	Litter bins	£751.20
3958	Mrs W Licence	Expenses and salary adjustment	£84.78
3959	HMRC	PAYE & NI	£142.61
3960	CANCELLED		
3961	Safeplay PS Ltd	Play area repairs	£416.40
3962	Upchurch Village Hall	Hall hire 52.00	£52.00
3963	CANCELLED		
3964	M Belsom & Son Ltd	Recreation Ground	£11,175.60
3965	Mr T Honeyman	Litter picker	£136.92

Councillors considered the invoices and cheques raised and **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to the signing of the cheques.

Cllr Ripley informed Members that Zurich Insurance has agreed to pay the claim, £2050.53 nett.

ACTION: Clerk to chase the company for an explanation of the price difference.

158. Paddock and Recreation Ground

Cllr Denny reported that all the play area repairs have been carried out satisfactorily. The signs need to be obtained.

The Clerk reported that she had requested quotes from several companies but had no heard back.

ACTION: Clerk to chase for quotations.

Cllr Denny reported that one of the bins on the Chaffes Lane side of the Recreation Ground had been opened, the bin had been pulled out and the key left in.

ACTION: Clerk to report to Swale Borough Council.

159. Burial Ground and Churchyard

Cllr Ripley reported that the Village Caretaker had not been told to move the wheelie bins out from the Burial Ground and that he would not be able to pull the bins up the steps.

ITEM DEFERRED TO GPC

Cllr Denny said the dustbin is being emptied and the wheelie bins are empty as they are behind the compost bins. The compost bins need to be emptied.

Cllr Ripley said the contractor has started work cutting back the trees. The laurels behind the village hall will be removed as they are encroaching the footpath. The laurels are very woody and if cut back would not look very good.

Cllr Marshall said that something needs to be planted in their place as it will leave an unpleasant view of the village hall.

ITEM FOR GPC

Cllr Ripley thanked Cllr Marshall for her report.

160. Defibrillator

Cllr Ripley informed Members that Cllr Sheppard has said that the defibrillators are in good order. The Clerk still trying to find details regarding servicing the cabinet. It is not completely certain that the cabinets need to be serviced, Cllr Sheppard regularly checks the defibrillators and replaces the pads and batteries when needed.

SBCllr Palmer said that there are companies which carry out annual checks. The AED should test itself, the Lifepak has a display which either shows as OK or will flash a warning, the defibrillator can still be used. The electrical connection to the cabinet should be checked.

Cllr Horton there had been a red light inside the case.

Cllr Arnold **PROPOSED** the Council delegate authority to the Chairman and Clerk to make the decision regarding the defibrillator cabinet; **SECONDED** by Cllr Lewin: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

161. Highways and Street Lighting

i. To receive an update

Cllr Arnold reported that UK Power Networks will start work to connect the new lights and will be finished by mid-March. The old lights will be removed. The contractor will send notice round to neighbours.

ii. Chaffes Lane bollards

Cllr Horton said there had been quotations from KCC Highways and a contractor to install bollards at Chaffes Lane. It was hoped that the KCC Highways Steward would be able to get the work carried out at no cost to the parish.

Cllr Arnold said the Highways Steward had informed him that there was no budget because of the pandemic. He is hoping to get a new budget and be able to do something.

Cllr Horton said it was an outstanding action from the Parish Highways Improvement Plan. The fundamental problem is the awkward nature of the bend and vehicles being parked at all times, especially during school drop-off and collection.

Cllr Arnold said the specification for the work needs to be more specific as one contractor wanted the Parish Council to take responsibility for marking the services, this needs to be included in the tender.

ITEM DEFERRED TO GPC

162. Footpaths

There was nothing to report.

163. Environment

Cllr Denny reported the drains still had not been cleaned and the ones on the corner of Chaffes Lane and Church Farm Road are solid.

The Clerk said the Highways issues flagged up in January had been reported, the KCC Highways portal had been checked prior to the meeting but the portal is down and updates could not be obtained

ACTION: Clerk to chase.

Cllr Lewin reported the vegetation had been cut back on the corner of Chaffes Lane and Oak Lane and it is an awful mess where the debris has been left.

The Clerk said the matter had been reported.

ACTION: Clerk to chase

Cllr Marshall said the drains in Poot Lane are blocked and it floods across the road. Also the drain in Twinney Lane is blocked and water is flowing across the road.

ACTION: Clerk to report.

164. Reports from representatives

i) Village Hall Representative

Cllr Lewin informed Members that there had been no meetings.

ii) KALC

There was nothing to report.

iii) Police Liaison Officer

Cllr Marshall said there had been no meetings.

165. Matters arising

Cllr Rosewell asked when the planters for the fence will be replanted.

ACTION: Clerk to obtain quotations

ITEM FOR GPC

Cllr Rosewell declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 154.ii as he had just noticed the architect is a friend.

166. Upchurch Awards

Cllr Horton **PROPOSED** the items be held in closed session; **SECONDED** by Cllr Arnold: Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it was unanimously resolved that the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

i. KALC Community Award

Councillors considered the nominations for the award and agreed unanimously to give the award to a resident in the village.

ii. Upchurch Parish Council Young Person Award

Councillors considered the nominations for the award and agreed unanimously to give the award to a young person in the village.

ACTION: Clerk to get quotation for a certificate.

167. Date of next meeting: 4th March 2021

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm