

**The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Upchurch Scout Hut on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllr John Arnold (Vice Chairman), Cllr Pam Denny, Cllr Alan Horton, Cllr Janet Marshall, Cllr Peter Masson, Cllr Gary Rosewell and Cllr Neil Sheppard; and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

Also present were County Councillor Mike Whiting, Ward Member Richard Palmer and two members of the public.

In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr Arnold took the Chair.  
Cllr Arnold welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**126. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Tyrone Ripley and Cllr Gerry Lewin; apologies accepted.

**127. Declarations of interest**

None were declared.

**128. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

Councillors **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November as a true record. The minutes were duly signed by Cllr Arnold.

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**Public Time**

*The meeting was adjourned for the public time.*

KCCllr Whiting reported that there is a public consultation regarding alterations to the Chalkwell 326/327 bus services which has been adversely impacted by the SGN gas main replacement on the A2. The bus company will have to put on an extra bus to guarantee fulfilling the time table and SGN will not compensate the bus company.  
The Co-op had hoped to be open again by the end of the year but it will probably be January.  
Cllr Arnold thanked KCCllr Whiting for attending the meeting and for his report.

SBCllr Palmer reported that the main issues he had dealt with were the bins and this has been resolved.

Cllr Arnold thanked Cllr Palmer for attending and for his report.

*A resident said the village Christmas tree looks good. There is a problem with dog fouling again. The Community Warden had replenished the bags in the bottles. There needs to be more dog bins, there is a problem with dog fouling in Chaffes Lane and a bin would help.*

Cllr Horton said more dog bins do not make dog owners more responsible.

Cllr Denny said there are no stray dogs meaning that the dogs are with their owners who do not pick up after their dog. There is also a problem at the Recreation Ground, could one of the Tikspac stations be installed there?

**ITEM FOR GPC AGENDA**

*A resident thanked the Council for the copy letters to the chip shop regarding the lights and asked if another letter could be sent and be strongly worded.*

**ACTION:** Cllr Arnold to research light pollution.

Cllr Arnold thanked the residents for attending.

*The meeting was reconvened.*

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### **129. Correspondence**

Cllr Arnold said the correspondence regarding the Chalkwell 326/327 Bus services has been dealt with.

### **130. Planning**

Cllr Masson **PROPOSED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November; **SECONDED** by Cllr Denny: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**. Cllr Rosewell duly signed the minutes of the meeting as a true record.

Ref: 19/505263/FULL

Address: Kaynes Farm Breach Lane Lower Halstow Kent ME9 7PA

Proposal: Retrospective application for siting of a portacabin for residential use in association with existing smallholding and equine facilities.

Cllr Rosewell said that following a letter from the applicant regarding the Parish Council's objections, he had met with the applicant. The Parish Council may wish to review its comments.

Councillors said the applicant's comments could be considered but the complaints from neighbours also need to be taken into account. There may be materials which have been brought onto the site and may contravene waste transport regulations; a licence can be obtained to transport waste but it is not the same as burning on site. The neighbours have stated the activities are a blight on their lives, the Council should not change its stance.

SBCllr Palmer informed Members that he has called the application in to be heard at Swale Planning Committee. Residents have said they are too intimidated to make comments on the planning portal.

Cllr Arnold thanked Cllr Rosewell for his report.

### **131. General Purposes Committee**

Cllr Masson **PROPOSED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November; **SECONDED** by Cllr Denny: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**. Cllr Rosewell duly signed the minutes of the meeting as a true record.

Play area inspection will take place on 16 December

### **132. Allotments**

#### i) To receive an update

Cllr Masson reported a vehicle had reversed into the allotments gate post and it will need to be replaced.

Cllr Horton said that he has helped SBCllr Palmer look into funding for the gates, SBCllr Palmer is in the Cabinet and will progress an application for funding for the allotment gate and also the fencing at the Recreation Ground.

SBCllr Palmer said notice of grant awards will be issued in the New Year.

Cllr Denny asked for an update on hedge maintenance at the allotments.

The Clerk said that she has instructed the contractor.

*ACTION: Clerk to confirm if the work has been carried out.*

#### ii) To consider the recommendation for allotment garden rent

Councillors **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the recommendation of a 10% increase in allotment fees.

Cllr Horton said the Parish Council had agreed two years ago not to fund the allotments from the Precept, in 2019 there has been a five-fold increase in water charges due to increase usage.

### **133. Paddock and Recreation Ground**

#### i) To receive an update

Cllr Denny reported there is graffiti on the play equipment and the bench.

Cllr Masson said the previous Village Caretaker had a graffiti remover.

*ACTION: Cllr Masson to obtain the graffiti remover.*

Cllr Denny reported there has also been broken glass at The Paddock and this has been removed by the Village Caretaker.

Cllr Arnold said there is still an issue with a van being parked next to the Recreation Ground fence.

Cllr Sheppard said the Council should write to the company and request the van is parked elsewhere including photos of the damage caused.

Cllr Denny said this cannot be allowed to continue as the Council is planning to replace the fence and it would get damaged. Residents have also complained because the road floods in this place.

Cllr Horton said rocks could be placed along the verge to prevent parking.

Cllr Arnold thanked Cllr Denny for her report.

#### ii) To consider the recommendation for car parking fees

Councillors **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee to keep the fees at £40 per annum.

### **134. Burial Ground and Churchyard**

Cllr Marshall reported the gate to the Burial Ground is sticking again despite the summer repair, making it difficult to open and close the gate.

Cllr Horton said there is money in next year's budget for the Burial Ground.

Cllr Marshall said the Clerk has obtained the church yard regulations from the Diocese and these will be compared with the Parish Council's regulations.

*ITEM FOR GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.*

Cllr Denny said the rose beds have grassed over nicely.

Cllr Arnold thanked Cllr Marshall for her report.

### **135. Church Clock**

Cllr Horton said the clock is keeping good time and that there were no issues to report.

Cllr Arnold thanked Cllr Horton for his report.

### **136. VE Day 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Cllr Horton reported to Members that £2,000 has been set aside for the event and that it is anticipated that £1,000 will be spent in this financial year with the remainder to be carried over to the next year.

### **137. Highways and Street Lighting**

Cllr Arnold said the Council is still pursuing borrowing approval for a loan for the street lights. The Ministry of Housing and Local Communities is assessing the request for borrowing approval.

Cllr Denny said the Speed Watch equipment has been returned by Lower Halstow Parish Council, the battery is flat and will not take a charge due to not being charged since March.

*ACTION: Cllr Arnold to look at the batteries.*

#### To consider quotations for bollards in Chaffes Lane

Cllr Arnold thanked Cllr Horton for meeting one of the contractors on site.

Cllr Horton said that at the meeting it was clear that six bollards would be inadequate.

Cllr Horton **PROPOSED** to accept the quotation from Haymac: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.  
**ACTION:** Clerk to request hot tar fill; request the gap between the bollards be no more than 10' apart and request the guarantee on the bollards.

Cllr Horton said the roundels and SLOW signs have been painted on the roads and that residents have noticed a difference in the speed of traffic. The next phase will be the Horsham Lane junction with The Street and a survey will need to be carried out to ensure it is safe.

### 138. Footpaths

Cllr Masson reported that he was not aware of any issues.

### 139. Finance

#### i. Cheques for approval and signature

Chq no	Payee	Reason	Amount
3841	Upchurch Village Hall	Hall hire	<b>£41.00</b>
3842	Vincent James Landscapes	Grounds maintenance	<b>£590.00</b>
3843	HMRC	PAYE & NI	<b>£137.75</b>
3844	Mrs W Licence	Expenses and Salary adjustment	<b>£65.47</b>
3845	Mr T Honeyman	Village caretaker	<b>£98.52</b>
3846	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Audit	<b>£360.00</b>
3847	RoadMarking Excel Ltd	Roundels and SLOW road signage	<b>£600.00</b>
3848	Upchurch Scout Group	Hall hire	<b>£20.00</b>
3849	Newington Parish Council	Share of Clerks' Conference	<b>£10.00</b>
3850	Mrs J Marshall	Best Kept Garden prizes	<b>£20.00</b>

Councillors agreed to the signing of the cheques.

#### ii. Electricity bill

Cllr Arnold informed Members that the Council is waiting to hear back from EDF as there has been no electricity bills received. An amount has been allowed in the budget for this.

#### iii. Budget 2010-21

Cllr Horton reported the Finance Committee has scrutinised the running costs of the Council and has forecast the expenditure for 2020-21. £17,959 has been collected through the precept towards the upgrade of the street lights. Borrowing permission for a loan to upgrade the street lights is taking longer than anticipated. Another option would be to increase the precept by £30 per Band D property and this would pay for the street lights in one year.

To cover the running costs of the Council and to carry out projects will cost approximately an extra £2.95 per Band D property, just under 6% increase. The Council is waiting for the Council Tax Base figure to be able to give an accurate figure.

There are special projects which will require external grant funding.

No concerns were raised when the Council Tax was increased by £1 per month for four years. The Council could have the light upgraded up to £18,000 per annum for four years but this would be more expensive.

Cllr Sheppard said the benefit of the lights being replaced needs to be explained.

Cllr Horton said there will also be a cost reduction in electricity consumption.

*ACTION: Cllr Arnold to discuss the upgrade programme with the contractor.*

iv. External Auditor's report

Councillors noted the External Auditor had raised no issues.

**140. Website Provision**

The Clerk reported that the work on the new website is ongoing.

**141. Christmas Decorations**

Cllr Rosewell thanked Mr Bob Friend for his generous gift to the village of a Christmas tree which has been installed.

Cllr Horton said that he had received lots of positive comments.

Councillors **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to purchase extra lights for the village with the £399 Festive Grant from Swale Borough Council.

Cllr Horton reminded Councillors that the Santa Sleigh will be visiting the village on Sunday 15 December. As the Parish Council has made a grant to Sittingbourne Lights, all money collected in the parish will be given to Upchurch Village Hall.

**142. Defibrillator**

Cllr Sheppard reported that there were no issues with the defibrillators.

**143. Reports from representatives**

**i. KALC**

Cllr Masson reported that he is unable to attend the next Area Committee meeting on 9 December.

ii. Police Liaison Officer

Cllr Marshall said that she had not met with the PCSO.

Cllr Horton said the PCSO had attended the last Full Council meeting and gave a detailed report to the Council.

**144. Matters arising**

No other matters were raised.

**145. Date of next meeting Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 at 7.30pm in Upchurch Village Hall**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman

Dated this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of January 2020