

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at The Memorial Hall, The Street, Frittenden on Tuesday 6th March 2024 at 7.30pm.

Present were: Cllr A Staples (Chairman)
Cllr G Lawrence
Cllr J Tuke
Cllr M Viviers
Cllr S Murray

In attendance: Mrs E Nightingale (Clerk), Cllr Fairweather (Borough)

PUBLIC FORUM:

A member of public requested the assistance of the Parish Council in addressing a letter the residents of Folly Cottages had received from TWBC, which stated that unless repairs were made to the track leading to those properties by the week ending 22nd March 2024 waste collections would cease to be carried out by TWBC's contractor and the residents would be required to place their bins on Mill Lane for collection. One of the residents had approached Cllr Lawrence about this in advance of the meeting. Cllr Lawrence had circulated details of the issue and raised it with Cllr Fairweather.

Cllr Fairweather was able to report that he had raised the matter with the relevant officer at TWBC and had been able to secure an extension to the above deadline to the end of April 2024. The residents were asked to keep TWBC informed of progress in relation to the required works and Cllr Fairweather believed that, if this was done, it was likely that TWBC would grant a further extension should this become necessary, particularly if any delay was caused by the need for residents to follow the procedure required for temporarily closing the public footpath along the track whilst works were carried out.

Cllr Fairweather will assist residents in making enquiries of Kent County Council as to the correct procedure in that regard if they had not had a response to their own enquiries by next week.

Cllr Staples thanked Cllr Fairweather for his swift and effective support on this matter.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr R Vernon, Cllr L Gosbee, Cllr Holden (County)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct Part 2)

None

3. BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Cllr Fairweather reported that TWBC had now completed its purchase of the long lease to the Royal Victoria Shopping Centre. That had been completed at a total cost of £8,890. TWBC has owned the freehold since 1992 and sought to bring the lease into its ownership so that it could have total control over how the property was run going forward and ensure that its contribution to the town centre was enhanced.

Cllr Fairweather noted that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee is looking at the various committees through which TWBC's business is run in advance of the next elections when the total number of councillors will be reduced. It has long been the rule that the Planning

Committee's membership is to be made up of equal numbers of councillors from rural and urban constituencies. This may change as a result of the above review. Cllr Fairweather commented that it was increasingly difficult to get councillors to volunteer to sit on committees such as the Planning Committee given the time commitment involved and the fact that there was an increasing trend towards younger councillors being elected who had other calls on their time outside of the Council.

Cllr Fairweather noted that the Assembly Halls were putting on more and more attractive events. The Tunbridge Wells Literary Festival would be taking place during 9th to 12th May 2024 with events being centred on the Assembly Halls, and fringe events also taking place elsewhere. Events involving Michael Ball, Sir Lenny Henry, Michael Mansfield KC and Peter James would be taking place at the Assembly Halls.

Cllr Fairweather drew the Council's attention to a Home Upgrade Grant which was currently available through TWBC. It was for people who lived in cold homes, often not heated with mains gas. Information about this grant was available on TWBC's website and Cllr Tuke will put the link on the Frittenden Facebook Page.

It was also reported that the Weald Sports Centre had one a new £90,000 grant to upgrade strip lighting to more energy efficient LED lights and also to instal new pool covers that would reduce heat loss.

TWBC is currently running two consultations – relating to the Strategic Plan and the Draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan. The first closes on 15th March 2024 and the second closes on 15th April 2024.

Cllr Staples noted that the consultation in relation to changes made to the Draft Local Plan had been extended. The Council did not intend to make any further submissions or comments as the changes did not impact on Frittenden.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 6TH FEBRUARY 2024

It was proposed by Cllr Lawrence, seconded by Cllr Tuke, and **RESOLVED** (1 Abstention) that the Minutes from the Council meeting on 6th February 2024 are a true and accurate record of that meeting. That being so, the Chairman signed the said Minutes.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Parking at the junction of The Street, Mill Lane & Biddenden Road

In his absence, the Clerk confirmed that Cllr Vernon had been in correspondence with Kent Fire & Rescue, who were broadly supportive of measures being taken to prevent the junction becoming blocked by parked cars but, as yet, it had been unable to provide any specific examples of how this had negatively impacted on its operations. It needed to be given the date of the incident involving a medical emergency in Mill Lane in order to check its records. The clerk had asked the person who reported that incident to the Council for this information but was yet to receive a reply.

Bettenham Bridge

The Bridge had again been damaged less than two weeks after the last lot of repairs were completed. Cllr Staples noted that this would continue to happen until Kent County Council put up better signage to prevent large vehicles using Bettenham Lane to access the Weald Business Park on Dig Dog Lane. This has been raised with KCC and Cllr Staples would raise it with Cllr Holden.

Annual Parish Assembly

A representative of Canham Homes will attend to speak about the development at Four Acres.

Four Acres Development

Cllr Vernon had spoken to Canham Homes about London Lane being inappropriate for construction traffic and they had agreed to contact their subcontractors to tell them not to use that route.

Streetlights

The Clerk had asked the Council's streetlighting contractor to price up fitting timers to the streetlights so they were left on all night and would report back to the Council at its next meeting.

6. CONSULTATION ON DRAFT ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN CENTRE PLAN – VISION 2040

The Clerk had circulated the link to the consultation portal and relevant documents. Councillors would review the same and consider at the next meeting whether the Council wished to make any comments. In the meantime, hard copies of the consultation documents would be placed in the church so they could be viewed by members of the public who did not have access to TWBC's online consultation portal.

7. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

The Clerk had received 2 quotes which were considered by the Council (a third contractor had declined to tender). It was proposed by Cllr Lawrence, seconded by Cllr Tuke, and **RESOLVED** by all members present to award the following contracts to Landscape Services:

CONTRACT 1 – to mow the Parish Field grass (a maximum of 16 cuts per annum March to November, weather permitting) to include mowing the play area and strimming around the play equipment as necessary, with care being taken not to cause any strimmer damage to the play equipment; to trim under trees and surrounding areas including field edges as necessary, paying particular attention to removing any brambles under the weeping birch; to mow/cut the grass mounds within the Parish Field (a maximum of 8 cuts per annum March to November, weather permitting) at £1,365.12.

CONTRACT 2 – to mow the grass and cut the hedge at the War Memorial (a maximum of 16 cuts per annum March to November, weather permitting) at £297.60.

CONTRACT 3 – to cut the entire length of the Paddock hedges (vertical faces and tops), including the hedge on the road boundary and the hedge between the Paddock and Frittenden House. (a maximum of 2 cuts per annum to take place in May and September, weather permitting) at £170.64.

CONTRACT 4 - to cut the outer side of the hedge between the Parish Field & Laundry Lane, by hand, and to remove all cuttings, ensuring that the hedge is squared off with no overhang at the top. (2 cuts per annum to take place in May and September, weather permitting) at £170.64.

CONTRACT 5 – to cut all internal vertical faces and tops of hedges within the Parish Field, to include the hedge behind the tennis court, with all growth around telegraph poles being removed so that the hedges are maintained at a height of no more than 2.5m (measured from the Parish Field side), and to remove all cuttings. (1 cut per annum) at £341.28.

Cllr Staples instructed to Clerk to write to Mr M Ashbee thanking for his services in looking after the War Memorial for many years.

8. FUN RUN

It was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Lawrence, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that the annually Easter Fun Run would take place on Easter Monday (1st April 2024) and be organised on the Council's behalf by Charlotte Hunter, with all proceeds being divided equally between the Memorial Hall and Frittenden Primary School. The Clerk was awaiting confirmation from the Council's insurers that the event would fall to be covered under its existing insurance arrangements.

9. SPRING LITTER PICK

Cllr Lawrence confirmed that notice of this event had gone into the Parish Magazine and that reminders would be posted on the Frittenden Facebook page.

Cllr Staples noted that a group of local Geocachers had done a litter pick in the centre of the village on 29th February 2024. The Council expressed its thanks and appreciation to the group.

10. PROPOSAL FOR CYCLE PATH IN PARISH FIELD & PHONEBOX REPAIRS

Cllr Viviers reported that a number of residents had volunteered to paint the telephone box which was currently looking a bit shabby. The suggestion was that this would be done during the summer when weather permitted. Cllr Staples noted that the wrong paint had been used when the telephone box was last painted, which meant that it did not weather as well as it should have. Cllr Viviers will consider what work will need to be done to properly prepare and paint the telephone box and cost the materials that will be required. He will then put together a costed proposal for consideration by the Council.

Cllr Viviers also reported that a resident had suggested that a safe place be provided in the village for children to learn to ride their bikes. Cllr Viviers felt that this was a very good idea given the dangerous state of many of the roads in or around the village. It had been suggested that a tarmac cycle path could be laid around the football pitch on the Parish Field and the resident had provided some initial plans which had been circulated to the Council in advance of the meeting. Councillors all thought that this was a very good idea in principle, but were concerned about the practicalities, particularly given the boggy state of the ground in parts of the Parish Field, and the cost. Concerns were also raised about ongoing maintenance costs and whether having a cycle path would increase the risks of accidents/injury, particularly as children would be running around the Parish Field or using the football pitch while the cycle path was in use. It was left that Cllr Viviers and Cllr Lawrence would see whether a local surveyor might be willing to donate their services in putting together a scoping document with estimated costings for consideration by the Council. Cllr Staples noted that if any changes were proposed to the use of the Parish Field, a public meeting ought to be held to ensure that there was sufficient support for the proposal in the community.

11. SPEEDWATCH

4 out of the planned 5 sessions had taken place, with one cancelled due to bad weather. 16 offenders had been logged, being c.8% of the passing traffic, with 44mph being the highest speed recorded. Only 1 letter had been sent out as all others had been first offenders.

12. PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS / EQUIPMENT

Cllr Lawrence was liaising with Proludic over the price of the items to be purchased. Once this was agreed he would provide a purchase list to the Clerk so an order could be submitted. Cllr

Lawrence will cost up replacing the steps on the slide mound and the rubber mats which are currently buried and bring that information to the next meeting of the Council.

Cllr Lawrence then left the meeting.

13. ROAD REPORT

Cllr Gosbee has sent his apologies due to ill health but had provided the Clerk with the following written report, which was read out to the meeting:

“The very bad potholes on the bend between the Tanyard and Leggswood have been temporarily filled by KCC's Paul Catt. There is a very large pothole at the top of Satin's Hill, which I have put a cone in. Some of the potholes past Bubhurst in Biddenden Road have been fixed. Bettenham Bridge has been hit yet again, just after it was finally repaired. Sadly, it will continue to be damaged until there is better signage deterring large vehicles from using that lane. I believe that concrete pillars both sides are necessary to ensure that larger vehicles cannot get past if they ignore any signs. The same method for Buckhurst Bridge would be helpful.

There is a large pot hole/sinkhole in Mill Lane beyond the wood past Maplehurst Mill. This has apparently been reported as urgent.

Regarding fly tipping, a caravan was dumped blocking Park Wood Lane. I spent a long time trying to report it and everyone passed the problem to another office, and by then it had been torched. A lorry load of wheels, tyres and other waste was dumped at green lane which forks off from Bettenham Lane”.

14. PLANNING

New Applications

24/00209/FULL	<p>Little Bubhurst Barn, Bubhurst Lane, Frittenden Re-use and conversion of an existing atcost barn into residential accommodation (resubmission of application 22/00502/FULL – increased footprint, increased ridge height, addition of covered walkway, proposed new access, internal and external alterations)</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Tuke, Seconded by Cllr Viviers RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL</p>
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Outcome of Previous applications

23/03422/FULL	<p>3 The Limes, The Street, Frittenden Replacement roof on existing extension PERMISSION GRANTED</p>
24/00012/FULL	<p>Lambourne Way, Mill Lane, Frittenden Conversion and extension of building into dwellinghouse with garden land and associated works PERMISSION GRANTED</p>
23/01908/FULL	<p>Lake House, Staplehurst Road, Frittenden Creation of three ponds under Natural England Great Crested Newt District Level Licensing Scheme PERMISSION GRANTED</p>

Planning appeals

- None

15. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- The Clerk reported that she had written to Urbaser Ltd asking for the current street cleansing contract (under which it emptied 3 litter bins belonging to the Council) be rolled forward for the next 12 months on the same terms. The Clerk explained that all previous attempts to issue this contract following a competitive tender process had failed. The only party interested in undertaking such a limited scope of work was the contractor who held the TWBC waste collection contract for the area at the relevant time.
- The Clerk had received an enquiry about hop picking in the Frittenden area in the 1950's. The Clerk will refer that enquiry to Cllr Gosbee who is probably best placed to answer it.
- Cllr Staples reported that the Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee had called him to report a very helpful call she had had with TWBC about the s.106 payment to be made by the developers of the Four Acres site. The Hall will be submitting a revised proposal as it had obtained alternative funding for performance equipment included in its original proposal. TWBC did not consider that there would be any difficulties in substituting the items for which funding was now sought (e.g. new chairs) as they were all connected to the Hall's ability to stage performances. Cllr Staples noted that the value of the s.106 payment had increased as it was index linked.
- The Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee had also mentioned a problem with people leaving bags of dog poo around the exterior of the hall now that it had changed its waste collection contract and been issued a locked bin. This was unacceptable behaviour.

16. FINANCE

- It was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Tuke, and **RESOLVED** by all members present to pay the accounts as follows:

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – March 2024					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£17.00	Nil	£17.00	Frittenden Memorial Hall	Room Hire – Meeting Room (1 x session & winter surcharge)
BACS	£213.00	£35.50	£177.50	Kent Grassland Services	Grounds Maintenance – February
BACS	£50.40	£8.40	£42.00	Urbaser Ltd	Street Cleansing – February
BACS	£53.60	Nil	£53.60	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk's Expenses - March
BACS	£110.55	Nil	£110.55	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk's Salary – March
BACS	£73.20	Nil	£73.20	HMRC	PAYE
BACS	£120.00	Nil	£120.00	Mr M Ashbee	Grounds Maintenance Contract 2 (War Memorial) 2023/24
BACS	£50.00	NIL	£50.00	Kent County Royal British Legion	s.137 Donation
DD	£11.99	£2.00	£9.99	Hugo Fox	Website Hosting fee
DD	tbc	tbc	tbc	Npower	Streetlighting Energy – February

Total	£699.74	£45.90	£653.84		
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There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:10 pm.

Chairman's Signature: _____

Date: _____