

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at The Memorial Hall, The Street, Frittenden on Tuesday 4th July 2023 at 7.30pm.

Present were: Cllr A Staples (Chairman)
Cllr L Gosbee
Cllr R Vernon

In attendance: Mrs E Nightingale (Clerk), Cllr A Fairweather (Borough) and 5 members of the public.

PUBLIC FORUM:

A number of residents raised concerns about breaches of conditions of the licence recently granted in respect of the Knoxbridge Public House. Those concerns had been reported to TWBC and the Parish Council instructed the Clerk to write to the relevant officer at TWBC expressing its support of an investigation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr S Murray, Cllr J Tuke, Cllr G Lawrence, Cllr M Viviers, Cllr S Holden (County)

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

None

3. BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Cllr Fairweather provided an update.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON THE 6TH JUNE 2023

This item was postponed to the next meeting of the Council.

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

Street Cleansing

The 2022/23 contract with Urbaser Ltd has been rolled forward for another twelve months.

Litter picking hoops

These have been ordered and will be dispatched as soon as the supplier's invoice has been paid following approval of this month's payments (agenda item 14).

Education in the Weald Action Group

Cllr Staples will pass on to Cllrs Lawrence and Viviers any communications from Kim Fletcher.

Parish Field

The Clerk reported that the Grounds Maintenance Contractor for 2023/24, Kent Grassland Services, will charge an additional £200 plus VAT for reducing the width of the Parish Field hedge where it faces onto Laundry Lane when it is due to be cut in September. It was proposed by Cllr

Staples, seconded by Cllr Vernon, and RESOLVED by all members present to instruct Kent Grassland Services to go ahead with that work.

Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/23

The Clerk confirmed that the audit process had been completed, the Certificate of Exemption had been submitted to the external auditor and all relevant documents had been published on the Parish Council's website in accordance with the Transparency Rules.

Village Clean Up

The next event will be advertised in the July/August edition of the Parish Magazine.

6. HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Clerk reported that she had met with Michelle Norris, a Community Engagement Officer for KCC Highways Operations. Ms Norris reviewed the Highway Improvement Plan previously submitted by the Council and was supportive of some of the measures requested. The Clerk had explained that all requests had previously been refused on the basis that there were no funds available and therefore any measures would have to be funded by the Parish Council, which was not possible given its very limited resources.

Ms Norris would be prepared to support a request for the installation of new village gateways and has sought support for the replacement of the existing flashing speed warning sign with a mobile speed indicator sign which could be moved between 3 locations and would show what speed drivers were going as they passed the sign.

The Clerk had raised with Ms Norris the need for better signage relating to the various blind bends on Grandshore Lane. Ms Norris' initial view was that this should not be a priority for the Council as it was the least likely to attract any funding.

In all cases, the Council would have to fund a design fee in order to get each piece of work specified and costed. That fee was in the region of £1,000. In the case of the village gateways, the Clerk had asked whether it would be £1,000 for each of the three gateways (i.e. £3,000 in total) or a single fee of £1,000 as the replacement of all three was a single project. Once the design phase was completed, the project could not be completed until/unless there was funding available. This may take a few years, but Ms Norris recognised that Frittenden had received very little in the way of funding/resources to date and that the extremely poor state of the gateways and signage attached meant that their replacement should be considered a priority. Ms Norris was happy to work with the Council to secure what funding was available as quickly as possible, but this could not happen until/unless the design fee(s) had been paid and the project fully specified.

Ms Norris indicated that the prospect of successfully obtaining funding would be increased with evidence of speeding within the village's 30mph zone. Cllr Staples indicated that he would provide relevant data collected via Speedwatch.

The Clerk also noted that there were specific rules around where any new speed indicator sign could be erected and it would require further investigation before it could be determined that those rules could be accommodated given the nature of the roads/verges where the posts for the mobile sign could usefully be placed.

In the meantime, Ms Norris would make available to the Council as 30mph pack free of charge. This consisted of stickers that could be placed on residents' wheelie bins, A4 posters that could be laminated and attached to lampposts etc, as well as a banner stating that 30mph is a limit not a target. That banner could be placed periodically on the fence outside the School if it was happy to permit this.

It was suggested that the Clerk request 50 bin stickers, 25 A4 posters and a banner.

7. PARISH CHAIRMEN'S MEETING

Cllr Staples reported to the Council on the latest meeting. A copy of his note is annexed hereto.

8. HEADCORN AERODROME CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Cllr Gosbee attended a meeting of the committee on 13th June 2023. The military show would be going ahead in August but without the fire engines which were the subject of noise complaints last year.

3 complaints had been received about aircraft noise, all of which came from the Bletchenden area. The complainants have requested that an independent party monitors the flight paths as they were not happy with the investigations carried out by a member of the committee.

The upcoming aerobatic free days are 8th July, 16th July, 12th August and 27th August 2023.

9. SPEEDWATCH

Cllr Staples reported that there had been 5 sessions since the last meeting. 32 offenders had been recorded exceeding the 30mph speed limit, which was a 12% offending rate. The highest speed recorded was 45mph.

10. PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS

Cllr Gosbee confirmed that there were no issues with the play equipment, save that the metal items and the plastic swing seats became very hot in period of strong sunshine/hot weather. The Clerk was instructed to make enquiries of the manufacturer/supplier, Proludic, to ascertain whether anything could be done to prevent this.

Cllr Gosbee requested that a box of dog poo bags be ordered by the Clerk.

11. ROAD REPORT

Cllr Gosbee reported that the potholes by Place Farm had finally been mended and the middle section of Grandshore Lane had now been resurfaced.

The road surface at the Staplehurst end of Park Wood Lane was falling apart. This had been reported.

The potholes on Green Lane (between Bettenham Lane and Hareplain Road had been mended. The bridge of Bettenham Lane was under repair but Cllr Gosbee had not yet had any success in getting the dangerous holes at Long Meadow repaired.

Cllr Gosbee was pleased to report that there had been no fly tipping this month.

Cllr Staples had received a complaint about the hedge along the side of Dig Dog Lane. It was overgrown and limiting visibility as you turned out of the entranceway to Saw Mill Cottages. Cllr Vernon will establish who owns the land on which the hedge is planted and the Clerk will then write to them requesting that it be cut back. Cllr Gosbee noted that there was a similar problem with the hedges along Satins Hill. They used to be cut annually but it appears that they are now only being cut every two years.

Cllr Staples also noted that there were quite a few hedges that encroached onto the road along Headcorn Road and Biddenden Road. On Biddenden Road there were areas where foliage crossed the pavement making it difficult for those pushing pushchairs or using mobility scooters to pass without having to go on to the road. It was suggested that the owners be contacted and encouraged to cut back the offending hedges etc. in August/September.

12. PLANNING

- Land behind the Knoxbridge – Potential breach of planning

The Council had received reports of potential planning breaches in relation to the use of, and structures placed on, land behind the Knoxbridge Public House. The Clerk was instructed to write to TWBC Planning Enforcement indicating that the Council would support an investigation into whether any planning breaches had occurred.

New Applications

23/01351/FULL & 23/01352/LBC	Sinksnorth Farmhouse, Staplehurst Road, Frittenden Demolition of existing outbuilding & construction of new single-storey extension with minor alterations to the listing building to remove internal recent additions. Proposed by Cllr Vernon, Seconded by Cllr Gosbee RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL
23/01463/LBC	Well House, The Street, Frittenden Listed Building Consent – Internal alterations including new w/c under existing stairs, part removal of kitchen ceiling / 1 st floor ensuite floor, removal of existing kitchen lean to and new kitchen window, removal of existing chimney stack at 1 st floor level and inclusion of 1 no. conservation rooflights onto the lobby roof. Proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Gosbee RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND THAT CONSENT BE GIVEN
23/01666/SUB	Hollenden Headcorn Road Frittenden Submission of Details in relation to Condition 3 - (External Materials Samples details); Condition 4 - (Brickwork Panel details) of 21/03520/FULL NOTED
23/01672/LAWPRO	Unit 1 - 4 Weald Business Park, Dig Dog Lane, Frittenden Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) - Erection of additional unit to be used as a workshop with solar panels on proposed roof NOTED
23/01732/ELEC	Land To The East Of Brissenden Farm, Sand Lane, Frittenden Electricity Notification - Proposed substation NOTED

Outcome of Previous applications

23/00971/FULL	South View Lodge, Cranbrook Road, Frittenden Construction of open-air outbuilding over existing sand school to create all-weather arena APPLICATION WITHDRAWN
23/00350/FULL	Rose Cottage Farm, Knoxbridge, Frittenden

Two storey side extension; porch; alteration to fenestration PERMISSION GRANTED

Planning appeals

- None.

13. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- None

14. FINANCE

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

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – July 2023					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£15.00	Nil	£15.00	Frittenden Memorial Hall	Room Hire – Meeting Room (1 x session)
BACS	£213.00	£35.50	£177.50	Kent Grassland Services	Grounds Maintenance – June
BACS	£53.60	Nil	£53.60	Mrs Emma Nightingale	Clerk’s Expenses – July
BACS	£107.33	Nil	£107.33	Mrs Emma Nightingale	Clerk’s Salary – July
BACS	£72.00	Nil	£72.00	HMRC	PAYE
BACS	£151.20	£25.20	£126.00	Urbaser Ltd	Street Cleansing – March, April & May
BACS	£145.29	£24.22	£121.07	Pickerz	Litter Picking Hoops
BACS	£149.99	£25.00	£124.99	Gala Tent Ltd	Tent Team Spares – 2 x tent ends
DD	£45.74	£2.18	£43.56	Npower	Streetlighting Energy – June
Total	£953.15	£112.10	£841.05		

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:15 pm.

Chairman’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

ANNEX – Cllr Staples note of the Parish Chairmen’s Meeting

TWBC Budget

Last year’s Budget Consultation received 1100+ responses. The exercise is worthwhile but the present pattern of allowing 6 weeks for consultation creates problems in finalising the budget. It is proposed to reduce the consultation period to 4 weeks?

The summarised results can be found on PowerPoint Presentation (tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

The things people valued most were rubbish collection and recycling while the area in which respondents would most like to make savings is the Amelia Centre.

The issue underlying the financial problems in the borough is that the level of council tax is capped, a general problem throughout the country, but the income base has been static. In this respect TWBC is unique in Kent but has arisen because the population has hardly grown at all and the proportion of single households has been rising.

TWBC actually achieved a surplus of £18k but this was due savings of about £1m in personnel costs as a result of unfilled vacancies.

LG BCE review

In the end the review has decided upon 14 wards represented by a total of 39 councillors. The additional ward has come about by the creation of one single member ward (High Brooms) and one two-member ward (St Johns). Both of these are urban. No concessions were made to rural areas in the matter of unacceptably large ward sizes but some tidying up of wards has been done, for example but Goudhurst and Kilndown are reunited.

The name of one of our neighbouring wards, Goudhurst Lamberhurst and Horsmonden, is contentious as it lists several parishes but makes no mention of Brenchley and Matfield! Rural PCs are urged to support Brenchley and Matfield to press for the ward name to be changed to Rural Tunbridge Wells.

The location of polling stations is to be reviewed

Local Plan

In reality little has changed since previous presentation. It may be necessary to scrap one of the major housing proposals. If so, a new Local Plan will need to be produced, probably in 5 years’ time

Update from TWBC

A Borough wide residents’ survey now in progress (closes 23 July). Responses may be made on-line, or in person at a drop-in centre on a designated afternoon. Locally this will be in Cranbrook Vestry Hall on at 12th July between 2 and 4pm.

Household Waste Recycling Centres

KCC are reviewing their provision of Household Waste Recycling centres as part of a cost-saving measure. This has caused considerable irritation. The Tovil site, though very well used, is not attached to a waste transfer station and it has been suggested that this should either be closed permanently or operate only on a limited number of days each week. The issue is going out for public consultation (but I could find no details about this on the KCC website).

A J Staples