

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at The Memorial Hall, The Street, Frittenden on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7.30pm.

Present were: Cllr A Staples (Chairman)  
Cllr R Vernon  
Cllr J Tuke  
Cllr L Gosbee  
Cllr H Cullingworth  
Cllr R Riley

In attendance: Mrs E Nightingale (Clerk), Cllr S Holden (County)

### **PUBLIC FORUM:**

None.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr S Murray, Cllr A Fairweather (Borough)

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

Cllr Staples declared an interest in agenda item 14 (Donations) as a member of one of the proposed beneficiaries.

### **3. BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE**

Cllr Holden reported that Kent County Council (KCC) and Hampshire County Council had jointly sent a letter to the Government asking it to look at providing Councils with greater flexibility around increases to Council Tax and making changes to the regulations governing the provision of services as a response to increased costs and the large holes in Council's budgets. KCC had a £15m gap in its budget and wanted to be able to consider Council Tax increases in excess of the current 2% limit. The Government was looking at allowing up to 5% increases. In the past there have been increases at that level when a 3% increase ringfenced for adult social care had been applied in addition to the general 2% increase currently allowed.

Cllr Holden reported that KCC's Special Educational Needs Service, which took up a substantial part of its annual budget, had been deemed to be not adequate by OFSTED. KCC was therefore having to look at reorganising services and management to address this and try to achieve improvements. Cllr Holden noted that the number of children with special needs in the County had increased substantially.

Cllr Holden noted that the situation at Manston's refugee centre appeared to have improved with fewer refugees being processed there. He noted that KCC had defaulted on its obligations to care for unaccompanied minors on two occasions this year because it had no facility to take them.

The third online Plan Bee summit would take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> November and Cllr Holden was pleased to announce that the initiative now had a parliamentary patron, Tracey Crouch (MP for Chatham & Aylesford). The theme for the summit was 'Landscapes and pollinators'. The aim of the initiative was to improve available foraging for pollinators and, in doing so, also improve the

environment for residents. Cllr Holden was pleased that more and more people were getting involved, from residents in their gardens, to farmers and developers. Cllr Holden also noted that KCC was aiming to plant one tree for every resident in the County.

Cllr Staples suggested that Cllr Holden's team liaise with the editor of the Parish Magazine to promote this initiative.

Cllr Staples asked for further detail on what costs remained to be met by KCC in dealing with refugees over and above any funding provided by Central Government and what proportion of children in the County were assessed as having Special Educational Needs. Cllr Holden will research that detail and report back to the Council.

#### **4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON THE 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 AND 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

It was proposed by Cllr Riley, seconded by Cllr Vernon, and **RESOLVED** (3 abstentions) that the Minutes from the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 are a true and accurate record of that meeting. It was further proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Tuke, and **RESOLVED** (1 abstention) that the Minutes from the Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 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**

##### *Stones on the verge outside Ferrers, Sand Lane*

Cllr Gosbee has not yet spoken with the new owner of Ferrers.

##### *Dog Fouling*

Cllr Staples has put a notice in this month's Parish Magazine to ensure residents are aware of the penalties that can be applied for allowing their dogs to foul in public spaces. It was suggested that notices should be put up to that effect. Cllr Cullingworth will look into the cost of doing so.

##### *Parking across driveways on The Street*

Cllr Cullingworth reported that a notice had been put up by the school reminding parents of the need to keep driveways free to prevent gridlock on The Street.

##### *Parking in Biddenden Road*

Nothing further had been said on this issue and it would remain under review.

##### *Santa Dash*

The Clerk would chase the organiser for an updated risk assessment for submission to insurers.

##### *KALC AGM*

Cllr Staples would be attending the AGM on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

#### **6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON TWBC ELECTORAL REFORM**

Cllr Staples had circulated the wording of the proposed response in advance of the meeting and Councillors had commented thereon. Cllr Staples will incorporate those comments and submit the response by email as there was insufficient room provided on the electronic form to be completed via the consultation portal.

It was noted that 10,000 surveys were to be sent to residents in respect of this issue. No one in attendance had received a survey and the clerk was therefore directed to make enquiries of Cllrs Fairweather / Holden as to whether this step had been taken.

## **7. CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III**

There would be an additional Bank Holiday in 2023 to mark the coronation. Cllr Staples suggested that a public meeting be called in early January to discuss how residents might want to celebrate this event. Cllr Riley suggested that it would be nice to do something environmental to reflect His Majesty's interest in environmental issues. Cllr Staples will make enquiries as to the availability of the Hall before confirming the date of the public meeting.

## **8. MEETING DATES 2023**

The Clerk had circulated a list of proposed meeting dates for 2023. Cllr Staples noted that that AGM would need to take place after the election on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023. It was agreed that the AGM would be held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 subject to the availability of the Hall.

Cllr Staples proposed moving the regular Council meetings from the third Tuesday in the month to the first Tuesday in the month. This would allow there to be better engagement with residents through the Parish Magazine. At present meetings took place after the deadline for the submission of content which meant that there was a significant time lag between matters being discussed in Council and advertised through the magazine. It was agreed that Cllr Staples would check whether the Hall could accommodate such a change and report back at the next meeting. The clerk will also check the rules for meetings held in May, as there were specific timeframes for meetings held in election years.

## **9. SPEEDWATCH**

Cllr Staples reported that there had been a 22% offending rate from the sessions held this month. This meant that 22% of drivers on Biddenden Road and The Street were exceeding 35mph. There was also an unfortunate incident of a driver being abusive to the Speedwatch volunteers. That incident had been reported.

## **10. PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS**

Cllr Cullingworth has been carrying out the regular inspections and reported that the steps to the slide were currently very wet and slippery. It was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Tuke, and RESOLVED by all members present that Cllr Cullingworth expend up to £25 in purchasing sharp sand to put on the steps as a temporary measure. Thereafter, investigations would be made into whether an effective more permanent solution, such as fixing gripper strips to the steps, might be possible.

The Clerk was instructed to engage Capel Groundcare to reattach the small ladder to the climbing frame.

## **11. ROAD REPORT**

Cllr Gosbee had reported to KCC Highways the broken road surface on the Headcorn Road between the Staplehurst turning and Appleton Lane. KCC had agreed to come out and look at it.

When the road was closed at the junction of Dig Dog Lane and Cranbrook Road for works to be undertaken to fix the water leak, drivers were able to drive onto the verge to get round the barriers. This has caused extensive damage to the verges and mud on the road. Cllr Gosbee has suggested that KCC take this up with South East Water.

Cllr Gosbee has been told that KCC will investigate the blocked drain outside Poplar House, but no action has yet been taken in that regard.

Cllr Gosbee also expressed concerns about the planting of trees and erection of posts on the verge outside the old Chapel at the end of Sand Lane. He was concerned that, once mature, the trees could block visibility at the junction. The posts were also too close to the edge of the road. Cllr Gosbee was investigating the ownership of the verge and would report back to the Council before it considered whether it would be appropriate to take any action to address those concerns.

## 12. PLANNING

### New Applications

- None

### Outcome of Previous applications

22/02440/FULL	Broadlake Cottages, Mill Lane, Frittenden Alterations to/new fenestration <b>PERMISSION GRANTED</b>
22/02636/FULL & 22/02637/LBC	Gate House, Cranbrook Road, Frittenden Erection of extension to existing outbuilding, including new roof and alterations to fenestration; removal of part of south west wall to create larger useable space. <b>PERMISSION/CONSENT GRANTED</b>

### Planning appeals

- None

## 13. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- Mayor's Toy Appeal – The Toy Appeal will run from 19<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2022. Residents are invited to donate gifts for children aged 0 to 18 years. A poster advertising the Toy Appeal will be placed on the Noticeboard and website. Details will also be provided to the school in case they wished to nominate beneficiaries.

## 14. FINANCE

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

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – November 2022					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£17.00	nil	£17.00	Memorial Hall	Room Hire – Meeting Room (1 x session + winter surcharge)
BACS	£50.40	£8.40	£42.00	Urbaser Ltd	Rubbish Collection – Litter Bins – October
BACS	£53.60	nil	£53.60	Mrs Emma Nightingale	Clerk's Expenses – November
BACS	£170.96	nil	£170.96	Mrs Emma Nightingale	Clerk's Salary – November
BACS	£114.00	nil	£114.00	HMRC	PAYE
BACS	£213.00	£35.50	£177.50	Kent Grassland Services Ltd	Grounds Maintenance – October

BACS	£5.99	nil	£5.99	Cllr H Cullingworth	Refund of cost of topsoil re: Parish Field repairs
BACS	£60.00	£10.00	£50.00	KALC	Fee for Councillors Conference
DD	£51.12	£2.44	£48.71	Npower	Streetlighting Energy - October
<b>Total</b>	<b>£736.10</b>	<b>£56.34</b>	<b>£679.76</b>		

- First Draft Budget – The draft budget had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was discussed and amendments were agreed. Thereafter, it was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Cullingworth, and **RESOLVED** by all members present to approve the amended budget and request a precept of £17,000 for 2023/24, thereby holding the precept at the level applied in 2022/23 and 2021/22. It was agreed that no increase to the precept should be applied given that the Council’s expenditure had come in under budget for the past few years and this had allowed sufficient reserves to be accrued.
- Donations – It was proposed by Cllr Riley, seconded by Cllr Vernon, and **RESOLVED** (1 abstention) to adopt the list of proposed donations circulated in advance of the meeting, save that the sum to be donated to the Samaritans would be increased from £50 to £75 and an additional donation to the school farm on the former High Weald Academy site would be considered subject to further enquiries by Cllr Gosbee as to how that farm was now being financed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

Chairman’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_