

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at The Memorial Hall, The Street, Frittenden on Tuesday 27th September 2022 at 7.30pm.

Present were: Cllr A Staples (Chairman)
Cllr R Vernon
Cllr S Murray
Cllr R Riley

In attendance: Mrs E Nightingale (Clerk), 3 members of the public

PUBLIC FORUM:

The members of the public in attendance provided the Council with details of a planning application they intended to make. They wished to adopt a collaborative approach and were sensitive to the concerns of the Community. They therefore wanted to provide Councillors with an opportunity to ask any questions they might have on their proposals before they were finalised and set out in a planning application. It was noted that Councillors were unable to provide any comment on the proposals until a planning application had been submitted and referred to it for comment, however Councillors appreciated the time they taken to come to the meeting and set out their intentions.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Tuke, Gosbee & Cullingworth

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

None

3. BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE

None

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 19TH JULY 2022

Approval of Minutes was postponed to the next meeting because there were only two Councillors who were at the above meeting in attendance and there needed to be three for a resolution to be voted upon.

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

Stones on the verge outside Ferrers, Sand Lane

It was not known whether Cllr Gosbee had had an opportunity to speak with the new owner of Ferrers, but it was noted that at least some of the stones had been removed.

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION CONSULTATION ON DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WARD BOUNDARIES IN TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Cllr Staples had attended a meeting of the TWBC Parish Chairmen's Group where this was discussed. The feeling was that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction with the way the whole process had been conducted, particularly amongst those who represented more rural parishes. The decision to have voting by thirds had the consequence that wards would need to be three member and the proposed boundary changes to facilitate this had created a number of anomalies which appeared nonsensical. For example, Kilndown was to be severed from Goudhurst and joined to Sandhurst creating a ward of some 14 miles across.

Cllr Staples noted that it was increasingly apparent that TWBC members did not fully understand the implications when they voted to go to three member wards. It was telling that TWBC would be the only authority in Kent that had voting by thirds.

It had been agreed that Anthony Harris of Goudhurst Parish Council would submit a letter to TWBC pressing for them to pause and reconsider. If they were prepared to hold a new vote on this issue, and that was to take place swiftly, the Boundary Commission might suspend making ward changes at this time. If not, a new vote could still be held and, thereafter, the Boundary Commission could be invited to come back and look at the warding again. A draft of Cllr Harris' letter had been circulated in advance of the meeting and it was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Riley, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that Cllr Staples confirm the Council's assent to that letter and request that its name be added to the list of Councils on whose behalf it was sent.

7. DOG FOULING ON THE PARISH FIELD & EXCESSIVE USE OF DOG BAGS

Cllr Staples noted that there was a Public Spaces Protection Order in force which covered the Parish Field and all other public areas in the Parish. Under that Order, it was an offence to knowingly let your dog foul in a public space and offenders could be fined £100. Cllr Staples had raised this at the recent Parish Chairmen's Group meeting and other Parishes reported that the Dog Warden had come out when made aware of incidents of dog fouling, albeit it was not clear whether the Warden would come out as far as Frittenden. Cllr Staples suggested that the above penalty be publicised on the Community Facebook page and that the local PCSO be asked to make some patrols with a view to preventing offending.

Other Parishes had also experienced excessive numbers of dog bags being taken from the dispensers they had provided, to the extent that some Councils had taken the decision to cease providing such bags due to the unreasonable and disproportionate cost of keeping the dispensers stocked.

8. PARISH CHAIRMEN'S GROUP

Cllr Staples reported that, in addition to the proposed boundary changes referred to at item 6 above, the Group had heard about the financial issues faced by TWBC. In particular, TWBC currently had a c.£1m deficit, but this was set to rise to c.5m in 2 to 3 years, largely as a result of a number of its major contracts (e.g. waste management) being index linked. To address this, TWBC wanted to increase the price of car parking in Tunbridge Wells. The view was that parking charges were inelastic because people would continue to pay whatever sum was charged in order to park their cars. The Council disagreed and considered that this would be a significant deterrent to going into the centre of Tunbridge Wells, particularly for those who lived in the rural communities that surrounded the town and had no real alternative to travelling by car. This was considered to be a particularly inexplicable attitude for TWBC to take in circumstances where there had been criticism about the decline of the town centre as a shopping / leisure destination and the dire state of Royal Victoria Place.

The Group was also introduced to TWBC's new Head of Planning. It was of concern that he did not appear to know of the existence of the Tunbridge Wells Agreement, which set out how

TWBC should relate to / communicate with Parish Councils on planning matters. KALC had set up a meeting with the new Head of Planning to discuss this. It also became apparent that there is currently only one Enforcement Officer in place for the whole of the Borough.

9. PADDOCK

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

10. PARKING IN BIDDENDEN ROAD

There had been a discussion on the Community Facebook page about the competing demands for parking on Biddenden Road and whether any alternative parking, for example for staff and/or visitors to Larchmere House might be provided elsewhere. Cllr Staples had discussed this with the matron at Larchmere House and the Council had investigated this issue in some depth in the past, but the fact remained that there were not any viable sites for additional car parking to be provided in the village.

11. VILLAGE CLEAN UP

The event was well attended with 33 people including a large number of young people volunteering their time. This allowed all the roads and lanes around the village to be covered. Unfortunately, the ground was too hard for bulbs to be planted at this time. TWBC had collected the rubbish efficiently. The Clerk will write to Rosie and Sean Croucher, Ivor and Carole Jauncey and Dick Munton to express the Council's thanks for their continuing support of this event.

Cllr Riley expressed thanks to Cllr Cullingworth for all her hard work in organising the clean-up events.

12. SPEEDWATCH

There were now 11 active volunteers and 5 sessions had taken place during the last fortnight. 34 offenders had been recorded, being a 14% offending rate. The highest speed recorded was 48mph on the Street. Letters had been sent to 7 offenders who had been recorded exceeding 45mph in a 30mph zone, some of which were repeat offenders.

13. PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS

Cllr Gosbee had undertaken inspections in September. Cllr Murray will take over for October.

Cllrs discussed the relatively few items which were identified as requiring attention in the Annual Inspection of the playground equipment that was carried out by RoSPA Playsafety in July. The Clerk had set those items out in order of priority. It was agreed that enquiries would be made of Cllr Gosbee as to what items had already been attended to. The Clerk would then approach Capel Groundcare to ascertain the cost of attending to any outstanding issues for discussion at the next meeting of the Council.

14. COMMUNITY SHOP UPDATE

It had been decided to end this project due to insufficient funding and increased costs.

15. ROAD REPORT

Cllr Gosbee had provided a road report notwithstanding that he had been unable to attend the meeting due to ill health.

He reported that potholes on Grandshore Lane had been mended and that soil had been moved to fill in the steep drops around the repairs made to the road edges. However, Grandshore Lane would continue to be closed until early October due to works to a gas main.

A broken manhole cover outside Park Cottage on Cranbrook Road had been reported, as had the water leak at the junction with Dig Dog Lane. Cllr Gosbee had been told that repairing that leak as not a priority, but he felt that this work should be done as soon as possible because the road would become very slippery as soon as there was frost.

The poor surface to Green Lane (between Bettenham Lane and Hareplain Road), notwithstanding recent repairs, had been reported and most flytipping that had been reported had been collected.

A resident had raised contacted the Council raising issues around the state of Bettenham Lane, the formerly green triangle at the junction with Green Lane and the state of Green Lane as referred to above. Their correspondence had been referred to Cllr Gosbee who had confirmed that all issues had been reported to KCC Highways, in some instances on multiple occasions. It was not possible for the Council to discuss this matter further in the absence of Cllr Gosbee.

16. PLANNING

New Applications

22/02440/FULL	Broadlake Cottages, Mill Lane, Frittenden Alterations to internal layout and fenestration Proposed by Cllr Vernon, Seconded by Cllr Riley RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL
22/02636/FULL & 22/02637/LBC	Gate House, Cranbrook Road, Frittenden Erection of extension to existing outbuilding, Removal of part of south-west wall to create larger usable space. Proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Murray RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL subject to a planning condition preventing independent residential use of the building (Vote: 3 For, 1 Against)

Outcome of Previous applications

22/02044/FULL	2 Junkyard Barn Cottages, Staplehurst Road, Frittenden Proposed two storey side extension PERMISSION GRANTED
22/02177/FULL	Poundlands, Biddenden Road, Frittenden Erection of side extension PERMISSION GRANTED
21/01638/FULL	Land at Four Acres, Cranbrook Road, Frittenden Erection of 23 dwellings together with all necessary infrastructure. PERMISSION GRANTED

Planning appeals

- None

17. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- KALC AGM – 19th November 2022 – The Clerk will circulate the agenda as soon as it is available
- Love Where You Live Awards 2022 – Nominations have closed.
- Weald of Kent YFC Open Evening – This event is taking place between 8 and 9pm on Thursday 29th September 2022. An invitation to attend had been extended to all Councillors.
- Santa Dash Fun Run – The Clerk had been approached by a resident who was hoping to organise a Santa Dash Fun Run to coincide with the Christmas Fayre on 3rd December 2022. This event would be to raise funds for Sissinghurst and Frittenden Primary Schools. It had been asked whether the event could be run under the auspices of the Parish Council in the same way as the Easter Fun Run. The Council were open to this, but needed to receive a proposal which addressed the requirements of the Council's insurers. The Clerk will liaise with the organiser and invite a proposal for consideration at the next meeting of the Council.
- Informal Meeting – Headcorn Parish Council was arranging a formal meeting of the Clerks/Chairmen from its neighbouring parishes. The meeting will take place on the evening of 30th September 2022 and will be attended by Cllr Staples.

18. FINANCE

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

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – August 2022					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£8.00	Nil	£8.00	Memorial Hall	Room Hire – Meeting Room (1 hour)
BACS	£50.40	£8.40	£42.00	Urbaser Ltd	Rubbish Collection – Litter Bins - July
BACS	£558.40	Nil	£558.40	Memorial Hall	Tent Team Donation
BACS	£149.99	£25.00	£124.99	Gala Tent Ltd	Tent Team – Replacement end walls
BACS	£213.00	£35.50	£177.50	Kent Grasslands Services Ltd	Grounds Maintenance – July
DD	£46.57	£2.22	£44.35	Npower	Street lighting energy – July
Total	£887.57	£65.67	£821.90		
FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – September 2022					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£58.00	nil	£58.00	Memorial Hall	Room Hire – Meeting Room (1 hour) & Main Hall (2 x sessions)
BACS	£50.40	£8.40	£42.00	Urbaser Ltd	Rubbish Collection – Litter Bins – August
BACS	£109.00	nil	£109.00	Mrs Emma Nightingale	Clerk's Expenses – August & September
BACS	£121.05	nil	£121.05	Mrs Emma Nightingale	Clerk's Salary – August & September
BACS	£80.80	nil	£80.80	HMRC	PAYE
BACS	£213.00	£35.50	£177.50	Kent Grassland Services Ltd	Grounds Maintenance – August
DD	£46.63	£2.22	£44.41	Npower	Streetlighting Energy - August

Total	£678.88	£46.12	£632.76		
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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Riley provided an update on the Memorial Hall in her capacity as Trustee and Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee.

The opening event that was postponed due to the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II will now take place on 14th October 2022.

The Hall has been equipped with internet which can be used by those hiring its facilities. This will be particularly useful for those using the meeting room. It also now has a large screen on which films can be shown. The Committee is looking into running a film club like in Egerton and Lenham. This could bring in younger people and provide an opportunity for revenue from the sale of refreshments. The cost of motor fuel might also mean that people will be more interested in locally-provided entertainment. Mike Fitzgerald has suggested trying out a one-off Film Night to assess how much support there might be from the Community

The Committee are mindful that they don't want the Hall to be in competition with the Bell & Jorrocks pub and will therefore, as far as possible, plan events to avoid clashes with their busy nights and sports showings.

CAMEO will again be meeting at the Hall. This has raised the possibility of the Hall becoming a "warm space" if needed this winter in light of the current cost of living crisis. This could include after-school or homework clubs, especially now the Hall has internet connectivity. There is also the possibility of showing TV programme on the Historical Society's screen which will be in the new Meeting Room. This will require the purchase of a TV licence.

A warm space or homework club would need to be paid for, in rent and heating, and could need a CRB-checked or trained volunteer, which would also cost money. Thought will need to be given as to how this could be funded.

The Hall insurance costs have doubled and, notwithstanding the welcome cap that was recently announced, and energy-saving improvements undertaken as part of the renovation works, there will still be bills pay. Fundraising continues for future phases of the refurbishment works.

The Hall's website is being improved and they are undertaking some marketing work to sell the Hall as a venue, especially at weekends, and the facilities provided by the new Meeting Room.

Cllr Riley was grateful to Mike Fitzgerald and Geoff Smith for the work they are doing to instal a Hearing Loop. This will be finished soon. Mike will also be providing training on the use of the new sound system and audio-visual equipment.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:55 pm.

Chairman's Signature: _____

Date: _____