

STANSTED PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2023
AT STANSTED VILLAGE HALL AT 8PM**

PRESENT: Cllr Jack Saunders Chairman
Cllr Kelly Curtis
Cllr Daren Sefer
Cllr Yvonne Tisson
Cllr Greg Whitaker

Mr David Rice Clerk
Six members of the public

Item *Action point*

Minute no

1 APOLOGIES

322 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Brooker and were accepted.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

323 There were no declarations of interest.

3 PROPOSAL TO CO-OPT A NEW PARISH COUNCILLOR

324 The appointment of new Parish Councillor was discussed in private after the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2nd OCTOBER 2023

325 It was proposed by Cllr Saunders, seconded by Cllr Sefer that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October be signed as a true record.

5 MATTERS ARISING

326 There were no matters arising.

6 COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow KCC Cllr Rayner to update the Parish Council.

Cllr Rayner emphasised the financial pressures faced by Kent County Council. The Council was experiencing funding demands from the increase in the number of migrants requiring assistance and, in particular, from unaccompanied children of which there were currently over 600 requiring care in Kent which was placing further demands on an already stretched budget.

There are national proposals to devolve the organisation of local government. In Kent there are currently 12 boroughs and 14 individual councils. Medway, however, as a unitary authority, was an example of the future structure which had greater autonomy to take decisions which were usually made by government. In an effort to streamline operational costs there could be a move towards to the unitary structure in future.

The cost of living crisis was having an impact on local authorities and the example of the expense of transporting children in special needs education was given which had seen a rise of 35%.

In response to queries from the Parish Council regarding the lack of response from the Enforcement Team, Cllr Coffin noted that this was partly due to long-term sickness of the staff and this was being followed by a new director, Mike Taylor, who had been recently appointed. Cllr Coffin also noted that there had been problems with the implementation of the Agile software which meant that access to planning applications it had not been available to the public for an extended period.

The Chair thanked Cllrs Rayner and Coffin and reconvened the meeting.

7 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

327 It was agreed that the Parish Council would review the draft Climate Action Plan so that it could be formalised.

Clerk

8 WAR MEMORIAL

328 The Parish Council discussed the damage to the war memorial and Harry Bott had been contacted to ascertain the material used in order that a suitable repair could be arranged but this had yet to be confirmed. It was agreed that Harry Bott should be contacted again to confirm the material so that a repair could be arranged.

Clerk

9 REMEBERANCE DAY

329 It was agreed that the Parish Council would be represented on Saturday 11 November at 11am and that the Clerk would order a wreath.

Clerk

10 MEMORIAL TO PILOT OFFICER COLIN FRANCIS

330 There was a further discussion following on from the presentation in July from the Stansted and Fairseat History Society (the "History Society") and the Shoreham Aircraft Museum (the "Museum") regarding a proposal for a memorial to Pilot Officer Colin Francis, who was shot down in Stansted in 1940.

331 It was noted that following a site visit, agreement had been reached between the History Society and the Museum that the memorial should be sited on the bank opposite the war memorial. The existing seat would be replaced with a new one. The ceremony for the unveiling of the memorial would be accompanied with a fly-past to be arranged by the Museum and all costs of installation would be met by the Museum.

332 Following a discussion, it was agreed that £100 donation would be provided to the Museum which was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr Sefer. The Clerk was instructed to arrange payment.

Clerk

11 HEARING LOOPS

333 The installation of hearing loops in both Stansted and Fairseat Village Halls was discussed. It was agreed that hearing loops would significantly assist those with hearing-aids. The Parish Council agreed to fund the installation of the hearing loops although the decision to install them was taken by those responsible for the fabric of the village halls. The total cost for both halls was £3,000 and this was proposed by the Chairman

and seconded by Cllr Sefer. The Clerk would arrange payment on receipt of an invoice. It was agreed that, once installed, this should be included in the Parish Notes.

Clerk

12 ASH DIE-BACK & BROWN'S FIELD COPPICE

334 It was noted that the Chairman had met with Nick Connell to discuss the fact that the memorial oak tree had been cut down in error.

335 Mr Connell maintained that as the oak tree had started sprouting that it would revive and the replacement tree required by the Parish Council was not needed.

336 Following a discussion it was agreed that, despite the oak tree having grown since being cut, a significant tree of at least twenty years had been lost and therefore Nick Connell should arrange for it to be replaced before the final invoice was settled. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Mr Connell.

Clerk

13 HEDGE-CUTTING

337 It was noted that the hedge-cutting would be carried out between 15 and 30 November and that Cllr Brooker needed to provide a quote for the work.

Clerk

14 MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL PATHS

338 There were no specific items discussed.

15 HIGHWAYS

Traffic Plan, Highway Improvement Plan, Signage

339 The Parish Council was still waiting for a response from Nigel Rowe from KCC Highways regarding the specific project requests and asked the Clerk to follow up.

Clerk

Other Highways issues

340 The project to site gates at the six entrances to the parish had stalled and needed to be continued with the aim of it being completed by the end of 2023. It was noted that for gateways on the land owned by Lucy Clampin, Harry Bott and Polly Falconer agreements had been signed and 'what3words' marks agreed for the placement of the gates. The permission for the gateway on the Vigo Road still required the Gilroys' permission.

341 The land designated as village green in Hatham Green Lane needed to be built up to form a bank to prevent parking and disturbance to the neighbouring properties. The three quotes for the work had originally been considered and one eliminated at the previous meeting.

342 Following a discussion and confirmation that the cheaper quote was from Cllr. Brooker of £4,450, it was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr Sefer that the contract be awarded to Cllr Brooker provided the quote was not increased before the work was carried out. The Clerk was asked to inform Cllr Brooker of the decision and for this work to be arranged for March-April 2024.

Clerk

16 PLANNING

a Applications

As access to the Planning Application website was not open there was a limited discussion on planning matters.

- 343 (i) 23/01194/FL | Extension of an outbuilding to create new accommodation | North Down Plaxdale Green Road Stansted Sevenoaks Kent TN15 7PB – Awaiting a decision

The Chairman had visited the owners at the property and the existing external lighting had been reduced. It was suggested that the Clerk could contact the owners to request that, given the Parish Council had not objected to the new outbuilding, that the overall lighting at the property be not increased.

Clerk

b Decisions

- 344 (i) There were no decisions for noting at the time of the meeting.

c Appeals

- 345 (i) There were no new appeals at the time of the meeting.

d Enforcement

- 346 (i) There were no enforcement updates at the time of the meeting.

e Other Planning matters

- 347 It was noted that work had been carried out at the perimeter of the garden at Goodman's Farm in Tumblefield Road. A letter had been sent to TMBC to investigate further but no response had been received at the time of the meeting and the Clerk was asked to follow-up.

Clerk

- 348 The development of Stansted Lodge Farm Buildings (Oak View Barn, Treetops & Highcroft) was discussed and it was noted that a response had been received from Enforcement at Tonbridge and Malling and that this was being rated as 'medium' in terms of the urgency required for a response. (The Chairman noted that he was a relative of the owners responsible for the development and did not take part in the discussion).

- 349 The campsite at Lucy's Barn was discussed and it was noted that Enforcement at Tonbridge and Malling had been informed but as at the date of the meeting no response had been received.

Clerk

- 350 It was noted that a number of trees had been removed on the edge of the bridlepath next to Oaktree Farm where the new building work was being carried out and was

contrary to the planning permission granted for the development. It was agreed that the Clerk should email Enforcement.

Clerk

17 FINANCE – Appendix A

351 a Bank Balances

The bank balances as listed on Appendix A and as shown on the bank statements were noted.

352 b To approve payments made since last meeting

Cllr Saunders proposed and Cllr Sefer seconded and it was agreed that the payments made since last meeting as Appendix A be approved.

353 c Accounts for payment

Cllr Saunders proposed and Cllr Sefer seconded and it was agreed that the accounts for payment listed on Appendix A be approved.

354 d Bank mandate and signatories - dual authorisation

It was agreed that Cllr Saunders, Cllr Sefer, Cllr Tisson and Mr Rice would be set up as dual signatories and that they would each follow up to ensure they were duly authorised.

355 e CCLA deposit fund

Following the setting up of the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account which was in progress, the Landlord's deposit monies would be moved to this account.

356 f. Grange Park School – rent review

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the Head Teacher to arrange a meeting between her and the Chairman and Tom Sheldon Robin to discuss the rent review. It was agreed that the meeting should discuss the annual inspection of the school to ensure that repairs were being made by the lessee under the terms of the lease.

Clerk

357 g. Other Finance issues

It was noted that a budget needed to be agreed at the December meeting.

Clerk

18 MANAGEMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND PROPERTY

358 i Recreation Field

It was noted that the tree to commemorate the passing of Mr and Mrs Goring had died and would be replaced with a beech tree.

359 ii Play park

There were no matters to note.

- 360 **iii Brown's Field**
This item had been discussed under minutes 334- 336.
- 361 **iv Telephone box in Plaxdale Green Road**
There were no matters to note other than the bench alongside needed to be repaired.
- 362 **v Maintenance and handyperson**
There were no matters to discuss.
- 363 **vi Other issues**
The Chairman noted that the soak-away alongside the Stansted Village Hall was full and the Clerk was asked to contact Kent Highways to see if they could arrange for it to be unblocked. **Clerk**

19 VILLAGE HALLS

- Stansted Village Hall**
- 364 **i** It was noted that the car park light had been fixed.
- 365 **ii Fairseat Village Hall**
There were no issues to discuss.
- 366 **iii Village Hall and Churchyard grants**
It was noted that both Stansted and Fairseat Village Halls applied for annual grants. It was agreed that this should be investigated by the Clerk. **Clerk**

20 WILDLIFE CAMERAS & SIGNS

- 367 It was noted that Cllr Brooker needed to provide a date for when this project could be completed.

21 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS ATTENDED BY THE COUNCILLORS/CLERK

- 368 There were no reports at this meeting.

22 CORRESPONDENCE

- 369 Cllr Tisson noted the correspondence to donate hedgehog boxes and this was to be considered.
- 370 Cllr Tisson also noted that the delivery of large park homes to Thriftwood was sometimes causing problems for local residents with traffic congestion and damage to gardens. It was agreed that the Clerk should write a letter to the manager of Thriftwood to express residents concerns. **Clerk**

371 Cllr Tisson suggested that Hilly Withenshaw should be thanked for the considerable effort she made in producing the Parish Notes. It was agreed that the Clerk should send her a thank-you.

Clerk

23 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were further items of business for discussion.

PUBLIC SESSION

Mr Barry noted that he had written to David Munns from the Rights of Way Group regarding the change of public right of way following the development at Stansted Lodge Farm.

Mr Munns maintained that the current footpath was correctly routed as the previous route used prior to the development was not on the map although this new route was contrary to the planning permission granted.

Mr Barry noted that kissing-gates were available from the Rights of Way Group at a cost of £30 although they would not meet any installation costs.

Mr Barry noted that the school warning sign near Martin Hill Cottage was obscured and it was agreed that Peter Morris would trim this back.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.20 pm.

PRIVATE SESSION

A discussion was held on the appointment of a new Parish Councillor and following an expression of interest from Peter Morris it was decided to ask him to join the Parish Council.

SignedChairman

Dated.....