

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at Frittenden Memorial Hall, The Street, Frittenden on Tuesday 15th February 2022 at 7.30pm.

Present were: Cllr A Staples (Chairman)
Cllr L Gosbee
Cllr H Cullingworth
Cllr R Vernon
Cllr S Murray

In attendance: Mrs E Nightingale (Clerk), Cllr Holden (County) & 3 members of the public

PUBLIC FORUM:

None

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Riley, Cllr Tuke

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

Cllr Gosbee declared an interest in item 6 on the agenda.

3. BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Cllr Holden reported that Kent County Council had held a budget meeting at which a 3% Council Tax rise was agreed. That increase comprises the maximum 2% rise that can be imposed without consultation, plus the 1% surcharge that is ringfenced for adult social care.

Cllr Holden reported that there was a £27m hole in KCC's budget due to Covid costs. This has led to cuts in funding for homelessness services and transport. KCC does not run the bus services in Kent, but it does provide funding to allow routes that are not deemed to be commercially to continue to be run. That funding will be cut by £2.2m and the bus operators are looking at adjusting their routes accordingly. The price of a Young Persons Travel Saver Card for the bus network will also be increased from £370 to £450 per year. Cllr Holden noted that KCC was the only Council that offered such a scheme and the alternative to increasing the cost was to do away with it entirely.

Cllr Holden noted that TWBC had extended Fusion's contract for the management of the Weald Leisure Centre. £1.7m is going to be spent on refurbishing the Leisure Centre with a view to making it greener.

Cllr Holden also reported that the Boundary Commission's Preliminary Report on proposed changes to Borough Council wards had been published.

Cllr Holden noted that he might have some funds available to contribute towards the cost of community events for the Queen's Jubilee.

20. PLANNING

Cllr Staples advanced the consideration of planning application 21/04248/FULL. The resolution passed in that regard is recorded at item 20 below.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON THE 18th JANUARY 2022

It was proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Murray, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that the Minutes from the Council meeting on 18th January 2022 are a true and accurate record of that meeting. That being so, the Chairman signed the Minutes.

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

KALC Community Awards

The Clerk confirmed that the Council's nominations had been submitted.

Memorial Bench

The resident who asked for permission to site a memorial bench near the War Memorial is in the process of costing a semi-circular seat to go around the tree identified by the Council as an appropriate site.

Incident at the Playground

The Clerk confirmed that she had not been contacted about the incident. The contractor had been informed and had accepted responsibility.

Overgrown footpath from Dig Dog Lane

Cllr Staples confirmed that this path had now been cleared.

Memorial Hall

The Hall is to be closed from early March to allow the next phase of the renovation to take place. Cllr Staples will confirm the availability of the Church for the next meeting of the Council on 15th March 2022.

6. GROUND MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS 2022/23

The Clerk had circulated a summary of the tenders received in respect of each of the 5 Grounds Maintenance Contracts. It was proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Cullingworth, and **RESOLVED** (1 abstention) that Contracts 1, 3, 4 and 5 be awarded to Kent Grasslands Services. It was proposed by Cllr Cullingworth, seconded by Cllr Vernon, and **RESOLVED** (1 abstention) that Contract 2 be awarded to Mr Mike Ashbee.

7. PARISH FIELD/LAUNDRY LANE HEDGE CUTTING

The Clerk reported that she had invited 4 contractors to tender, but had only received a quote from 1 of those contractors for £750. Cllr Staples suggested another contractor to approach but, given the need for the work to be undertaken by 1st March 2022, it was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Cullingworth, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that the quote received for £750 be accepted if a cheaper quote was not received by close of business on 18th February 2022.

8. ACTION WITH COMMUNITIES IN RURAL KENT

It was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Gosbee, and it was **RESOLVED** by all members present to renew the Council's subscription for 2022/23 at a cost of £60.

9. TUNBRIDGE WELLS ELECTORAL REVIEW – WARDING CONSULTATION

Cllr Staples attended a presentation by TWBC following publication of the Boundary Commission's Preliminary Report. His notes are appended to these minutes. It was agreed that the proposed submissions to be made on behalf of the Council would be circulated and agreed at the next meeting of the Council on 15th March 2022.

10. SPRING LITTER PICK

Cllr Cullingworth kindly agreed to once again organise this event, which will take place on Saturday 26th March 2022. The Clerk noted that an updated risk assessment would need to be prepared.

11. FUN RUN

It was proposed by Cllr Gosbee, seconded by Cllr Vernon, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that the Council sponsor the Village Fun Run which is to take place over the Easter Bank Holiday. The Clerk noted that a risk assessment would need to be completed and provided to the Council's insurers in advance of the event.

12. QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

Cllr Staples had circulated a programme of events that was being formulated by the organising committee. It was agreed that a request would be made to Cllr Holden for funding in respect of those events.

13. HIGH WEALD ACADEMY

Cllr Staples noted that Kim Fletcher was seeking to co-ordinate activities aimed at trying to save and/or ensure the future of non-selective education in this part of Kent and was looking for someone in each Parish to act as a point of contact. It was agreed that Cllr Cullingworth would put a post on the Community Facebook page to see if anyone volunteered. Cllr Staples will also speak to a resident who might be interested in that role.

14. FRITTENDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROPOSAL RE: BUILDINGS OF INTEREST IN FRITTENDEN

Cllr Staples closed the meeting in order to allow a representative of the Historical Society to explain its proposal.

The Historical Society had noted that there was a great deal of information in the public domain about properties of historical interest in the Frittenden area. The information could be accessed via various sources and the Historical Society was considering drawing it all together into a single database. The Historical Society foresaw that there might be some issues around privacy and was therefore considering whether the database could be made available to the public on its website or only to bona fide researchers by application. The Historical Society sought the Council's views as to whether such a database would be of use to the Council and its thoughts on the proposal more generally.

Cllr Staples then reopened the meeting.

Councillors felt that if all the Historical Society was doing was collating information that was already readily available to the public there would not be any issue with that in principle. However, Cllrs Vernon and Murray expressed the view that information such as interior photographs and prices taken from sales particulars was potentially sensitive and should not be included or, at the very least, the homeowners be consulted and given a right to request that information be removed. It was proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Vernon, and **RESOLVED** by all members present to recommend to the Historical Society that all owners be consulted before information about their properties are placed on the database and that access be restricted to bona fide researchers.

15. COVID HARDSHIP FUND

There was nothing to report

16. SPEEDWATCH

Cllr Staples reported that there had been 5 sessions in the last month. 21 vehicles had been recorded exceeding the speed limit, although those were moderate transgressions. There were currently only 9 active members of Speedwatch and new volunteers would be warmly welcomed.

17. PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS

Cllr Gosbee is undertaking the inspections in February. The only issue of concern he has noted is that the wood on the right-hand side of the small side is rotting and will need to be repaired or replaced in the future.

Cllr Gosbee noted that the dog poo bags had not been taken from the dispenser at the Parish Field in large numbers, although Cllr Cullingworth reported that this remained a problem. She had filled the dispenser at the War Memorial only to find that it had been emptied by the following day.

Cllr Gosbee noted that the issue of dog mess not being picked up by owners, notwithstanding the provision of bags, would be raised in the Parish Magazine.

It was reported that a pick-up truck with a tow bar had reversed into the new wire fencing between the Bakery Close car park and the parish field.

18. COMMUNITY SHOP UPDATE

There was nothing to report.

19. ROAD REPORT

Cllr Gosbee had reported to Paul Catt from KCC a large hole that had opened up by the bridge on Cranbrook Road. The road was closed and engineers discovered that it had been undermined by water with the road only being held up by the tarmac itself. The work required to resolve this caused the road to be closed for some time.

Cllr Gosbee suggested that the Council's thanks be given to Paul Catt for his diligent work.

A chevron on Buckhurst Bridge had been hit. This had been reported. A 'Narrow Bridge' sign has also been hit because it was now in the hedge. This had also been reported.

New chevron signs had now been erected at the sharp bend on Frittenden Road, by the old Frittenden Road Station.

The fly tipping of tyres and building materials on Grandshore Lane had been reported.

Cranbrook Road is scheduled to be closed for repairs, along with Grandshore Lane. The Council expressed the hope that adequate notice would be given of these closures and that the two roads would not be closed at the same time.

There was a water leak by Poplar House and water was now running down Mill Lane. This had been reported.

Cllr Gosbee had established that it would cost £1,023.20 (inc. VAT) to purchase plastic pavers to make a parking area on Biddenden Road. However, the total cost would be higher as the area would have to be levelled before the pavers could be laid.

Cllr Cullingworth reported that the streetlight at Chestnut Close had failed and that the bridge on Dig Dog Lane appeared to have been hit as one of the supports for the railing was loose. This would be reported.

20. PLANNING

- Maplehurst/Folly Farm – Cllr Vernon noted that he had been approached by a resident who had raised concerns about the occupancy of some of the units on this site. He had been provided with information which suggested that units were being let to non-travellers and/or advertised as holiday lets. As the site was not in the Parish, it was proposed by Cllr Vernon, seconded by Cllr Gosbee, and **RESOLVED** by all members present that he raised this with Staplehurst Parish Council and the Head of Planning Enforcement at Maidstone Borough Council

New Applications

21/04220/FULL	The Forge Garage, The Street, Frittenden Demolition of the former garage building to the front of the site and erect a new two storey dwelling, whilst retaining the existing forge building to the rear of the site and incorporating it into the swelling, with a single storey linking the old and new buildings. APPLICATION WITHDRAWN
21/04248/FULL	Agricultural Barn at 2 Kenward Cottages, Bubhurst Lane, Frittenden Proposed conversion and extension of rural building (with deemed consent for single dwelling), change use of land, and proposed access to form single dwelling, along with demolition of existing outbuilding and landscape/biodiversity Proposed by Cllr Vernon, Seconded by Cllr Gosbee RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL
22/00145/NMAMD	Pearsons Cottage, Cranbrook Road, Frittenden Non-Material Amendment in relation to reference 20/01457/FULL; reduction of footprint, removal of ground floor window and addition of first floor obscure glazed window on the east elevation NOTED

Outcome of Previous applications

21/03927/FULL	Great Water Barn, Knoxbridge, Frittenden Proposed ancillary three-bay carport with missed used space above PERMISSION GRANTED
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Planning appeals

- APP/M2270/W/21/3275924 – Broadlake, Mill Lane, Frittenden – Replacement of existing barn with a new barn building to comprise a 3-bed dwelling with associated car parking and landscaping – **APPEAL ALLOWED**

21. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- The Clerk had received details of a survey being carried out by TWBC entitled “Planning for the Future”. The clerk will forward it to Cllr Tuke so it can be advertised via the Community Facebook page.

22. FINANCE

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

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – FEBRUARY 2022					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£20.00	Nil	£20.00	Frittenden Memorial Hall	Hall Hire – February
BACS	£18.00	Nil	£18.00	Frittenden Parish Council	Refund of bank charges – Hardship Fund
BACS	£387.60	£64.60	£323.00	TWBC	Queen’s Green Canopy Trees
BACS	£810.00	£135.00	£675.00	Capel Groundcare	Playground Repairs
BACS	£120.00	Nil	£120.00	Mr M Ashbee	Grounds Maintenance 21/22 – War Memorial
BACS	£29.70	£4.95	£24.75	Cleaning Supplies 4U	Refuse sacks
BACS	£60.00	Nil	£60.00	AWCRK	Membership 2022/23
BACS	£67.99	Nil	£67.99	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk’s Expenses – February
BACS	£92.65	Nil	£92.65	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk’s Salary – February
BACS	£61.60	Nil	£61.60	HMRC	PAYE
BACS	£42.00	£7.00	£35.00	Urbaser Ltd	Litter Bins - February
BACS	£160.00	£26.67	£133.00	Kent Grassland Services Ltd	Grounds Maintenance – January
DD	tbc	tbc	tbc	Npower	Street lighting energy – January
Total	£1,869.54	£238.22	£1,631.32		

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:22 pm.

Chairman's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Consultation on Tunbridge Wells Electoral Review

Attended TW Town Forum on Jan 20 for presentation by two members of the Commission working on this review.

Key points:

Timetable

First consultation 11 Jan to 21 March

Publish draft recommendations 5 July

Second consultation, on the draft recommendations 5 July to 12 Sept

(occasionally a third round of consultations can take place between this stage and publication of final report)

Report published 29 Nov and is then fixed.

Goes to Parliament for a YES/NO decision: Parliament cannot change details. If no objection during 40 sitting days in Parliament report is implemented. (Under present procedures, which started in 2010, no report has been rejected do far)

The first election under new warding arrangements will be in 2024.

Process

The process covers municipal wards within Tunbridge Wells only: it does **not** affect:

- Parliamentary constituency boundaries
- Borough boundaries
- Parish boundaries

Responses to the consultations can be made by:

- Email review@lgbce.org.uk
- post LGBCE PO Box 133, Blyth NE24 9FE
- BC website www.lgbce.org.uk
- BC portal <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>
- social media (Twitter/Facebook) @lgbce
- phone 03305001525

Points to note:

There are only 3 valid considerations for determining ward boundaries:

- Electoral equality (based on projected electorate in 2027 +/-10%)
- Community interest (shops, schools, residential associations, sports facilities, places of worship, etc)
- Convenience for effective local government (ie strong and identifiable local boundaries)

Any comments on consultation should relate to one or more of these issues.

The following are **not** valid considerations:

- Political effects
- "If it ain't broke don't fix it"

- Parliamentary boundaries
- Post codes
- House prices
- Insurance costs

The recommended total of 39 councillors in some circumstances and the 3-member wards could possibly be changed if it makes for more logical local boundaries but this will depend on what feedback comes back during the consultation.

Ward boundaries can cut across parish boundaries, in which case the parish will have separate wards. If so parish councils will be notified before the report is published.

After the first draft if we are happy with the recommendations tell the EC – negative voices tend to be far more vocal, potentially giving a distorted impression of local feeling.

The whole presentation is available on [youtube.com/watch?v=HO-YAHik-vk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HO-YAHik-vk)