

## DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF DITTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE ACORN ROOM AT  
DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021

PRESENT:   CLLRS. J LOVER (CHAIRMAN), MRS J DEARDEN, MRS K DENNISON,  
              MRS G GODDEN. A LAIDOUICI [FROM 7.10PM], A MULCUCK, C ROOK &  
              MRS A THROSSELL.  
              MRS N GREENAWAY [Clerk of the Council  
              KCC CLLR A KENNEDY & BOROUGH CLLR D COOPER

### 22.    OPENING OF MEETING

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm.

### 23.    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were **RECEIVED** from Cllrs Porter, Mrs Thwaites and Newman. The previously notified reasons for absence were **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED** and recorded in the absence book Ref.467. Apologies were also received from Borough Councillor Cannon and KCC Warden Absolon.

### 24.    DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllr Mrs Dearden declared a personal interest in item 36 Staff Matters as part of the item regards the employment of her husband as a caretaker. Cllr Lover and Cllr Mrs Throssell declared personal interests in item 36(b) plans for comment as there is an application at a property neighbouring Cllr Lover and Mrs Throssell's daughter.

### 25.    CASUAL VACANCIES

The Clerk advised that she had put a notice in the Ditton Column of the KM but no response had been received.

### 26.    CONFIRMATION & SIGNING OF MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021

The minutes of the above meeting were **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true record.

### 27.    MATTERS ARISING

#### (a) Boundary Fence Request [Item 11(a)]

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to the solicitor following the last meeting regarding the existing fence and it was confirmed that as the previous licence with the previous resident had expired the boundary fell back to the Parish Council's responsibility. The Clerk said she felt it would be better to speak to the residents about the possible options before a final decision is made.

**RESOLVED** the Clerk and Open Spaces Chair [or another member if OSA Chair unavailable] will meet with the residents to discuss the options.

(b) Electric Vehicle Charging Points [Item 11(b)]

The Clerk confirmed that they were installed and “live”. She advised that the company would be returning shortly to install a small barrier to prevent damage. It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had been invited to speak at an online event organised by ACRK regarding the installation of the EV Chargers at Ditton via the KCC Scheme. It was suggested information regarding the EV points be included in the next gazette.

(c) Claimed Public Right of Way [New Road – New Road Recreation Ground] [Item 17]

The Clerk reported that she and the Open Spaces Administrator had met with the KCC Officer dealing with claimed rights of way at NRRG. She advised that the officer was happy with the information given and took several photos. The KCC Officer will be doing more research and then report back to the Parish Council.

28. **CORRESPONDENCE**(a) For Noting [circulated by email where possible]KALC: News - May 2021NALC Chief Exec BulletinsTMBC: Waste Services Update ReportTonbridge & Malling Ramblers: Walks June – September 2019(b) For Decision (Copies herewith)

6<sup>th</sup> Formers Malling School: Offer to help around village  
**RESOLVED** to accept offer for litter picking in the quarry. Also to confirm if staff coming into contact require DBS checks and to confirm what the Service Learning Project is.

29. **FINANCE**(a) Accounts For Payment

**RESOLVED** the following payments be **APPROVED** and **RATIFIED**:-

**May Payroll Summary**

|                |              |                   |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <i>Monthly</i> | <i>Gross</i> | <i>£20,567.60</i> |
|                | <i>Net</i>   | <i>£14,061.28</i> |

**Accounts for Payment****May BACS Payments (not previously listed)**

|          |             |                       |           |
|----------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 11.05.21 | N Greenaway | Reimbursement         | £27.48    |
| 11.05.21 | S Craig     | Reimbursement         | £106.83   |
| 14.05.21 | HMRC        | PAYE/NI               | £3,455.77 |
| 14.05.21 | KCC Pension | Pension contributions | £2,474.44 |

**April Accounts (approved and paid 28.05.21 by BACS)**

| <b>Community Centre</b> |                             |     |         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------|-----------|
| Edison Swan             | Electrical Remedial work    |     | 5177.00 |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 1035.40 | £6,212.40 |
| Envirocure              | Monthly Legionella testing  |     | 68.33   |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 13.67   | £82.00    |
| <b>Bar</b>              |                             |     |         |           |
| Lansdell                | Bar Stock                   |     | 45.41   |           |
|                         |                             |     | 84.69   |           |
|                         |                             |     | 4.75    |           |
|                         |                             |     | 33.98   |           |
|                         |                             |     | 45.39   |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 41.47   | £255.69   |
| Kent Boilercare         | Annual service & Gas Safety |     | 357.00  |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 71.40   | £428.40   |
| <b>F&amp;A</b>          |                             |     |         |           |
| KCC                     | OSA Consumables             |     | 137.15  |           |
|                         | Stationary                  |     | 29.85   |           |
|                         | Stationary                  |     | 116.10  |           |
|                         | CC Cleaning Consumables     |     | 6.00    |           |
|                         | Stationary                  |     | 18.50   |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 61.52   | £369.12   |
| Came & Co               | Parish Council Insurance    |     | 8403.44 |           |
|                         | Engineering Insurance       |     | 424.93  |           |
|                         | Motor Insurance             |     | 983.11  |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 67.01   | £9,878.49 |
| Commercial Services     | Vehicle Lease               |     | 302.78  |           |
|                         | Vehicle Lease               |     | 302.78  |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 121.12  | £726.68   |
| JPCTCG                  | Annual Membership           |     | 50.00   | £35.00    |
| <b>OSA</b>              |                             |     |         |           |
| Mower Plant             | Mower spares                |     | 63.41   |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 12.68   | £76.09    |
| Safeplay                | Playground repairs          |     | 400.00  |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 80.00   | £480.00   |
| CPRE                    | Annual Membership           |     | 36.00   | £36.00    |
| Travis Perkins          | Consumables                 |     | 57.94   |           |
|                         |                             |     | 23.84   |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 16.36   | £98.14    |
| Astra Security          | Multisports padlock & keys  |     | 87.17   |           |
|                         | Lock Spray                  |     | 10.36   |           |
|                         |                             | VAT | 19.46   | £116.99   |

(b) Direct Debits - Paid During May 2021**RESOLVED** the following direct debits be **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**:-**May Direct Debits**

|          |                     |                      |           |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 10.05.21 | Commercial Services | Gas Supply           | £2,121.79 |
| 11.05.21 | Rentokil Initial    | Washroom Services    | £274.03   |
| 12.05.21 | Commercial Services | Carpark Light energy | £42.09    |

|          |                   |                       |           |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 17.05.21 | Natwest           | Bankline              | £44.84    |
| 17.05.21 | The Safety Effect | Monthly H & S         | £114.00   |
| 17.05.21 | Sage Software     | Monthly Subscription  | £153.00   |
| 17.05.21 | DHFE              | Till rental           | £117.60   |
| 17.05.21 | WEX               | Fuelcard              | £28.80    |
| 17.05.21 | Payment Sense     | Card charges          | £54.00    |
| 17.05.21 | FDMS              | Card charges          | £47.31    |
| 20.05.21 | Heineken          | Bar Stock             | £2,377.90 |
| 21.05.21 | NEST              | Pension contributions | £463.93   |
| 25.05.21 | WEX               | Fuelcard              | £1.80     |
| 25.05.21 | BOC               | Bar Gas               | £56.05    |
| 25.05.21 | EDF               | Streetlight Energy    | £81.57    |
| 27.05.21 | Host My Office    | IT support            | £350.40   |
| 28.05.21 | Payment sense     | Card Charges          | £17.82    |
| 28.05.21 | Veolia            | Refuse Collection     | £200.39   |

(c) Debit Card Payments – Paid during May 2021

**RESOLVED** the following debit card payments be **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**:-

**May Debit Card**

|          |                  |                       |         |
|----------|------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| 05.05.21 | PGS Gifts        | Long service gift     | £16.23  |
| 07.05.21 | Prestige Flowers | Get Well gift         | £29.97  |
| 07.05.21 | Amazon           | Memorial Plaque       | £15.94  |
| 12.05.21 | Zoom             | Subscription          | £11.99  |
| 18.05.21 | Tesco mobile     | Mobile top up         | £10.00  |
| 19.05.21 | Screwfix         | OSA supplies          | £45.96  |
| 19.05.21 | KM Media         | Job advertisement     | £114.00 |
| 27.05.21 | Sign Holders     | Table talkers – Bar   | £34.44  |
| 27.05.21 | Simply Safety    | Dividing Screen – Bar | £86.33  |

(d) Statement of Accounts for Financial year 2020/2021 (front sheets, policies, RFO statement, balance, income & expenditure sheets herewith)

The Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2020/2021, prepared by this Council's accountants DCK Beavers, was **READ**.

**RESOLVED** the accounts be **APPROVED**, **ADOPTED** and **SIGNED**.

(e) External Audit/Annual Governance and Accountability Return for Financial Year 2020/2021

## (i) ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR 2020/21

The Annual Governance Statement was **READ** and completed.

**RESOLVED** the Annual Governance Statement be **APPROVED** and **SIGNED**

## (ii) ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS FOR 2020/21

The Accounting Statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 were **READ** and **NOTED**.

**RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** and **SIGN** the Accounting Statements.

(f) Internal Audit

A report of the Final Visit for 2020/21 was **CIRCULATED** and **READ**. It was **NOTED** that the internal auditor had approved and signed the Internal Audit Report for 2020/21. It was further **NOTED** that matters raised in the previous internal audit report had been addressed except for reviewing of hire fees and this would be addressed when the committee meetings recommenced. It was further **NOTED** that this visit focussed on expenditure, risk assessments, budget reporting, Income, Salaries and Wages, Assets and Investments, Bank Reconciliations, VAT and the year end. The auditor suggested Cyber-Security Training would be beneficial and also to itemise equipment in the parish office rather than group together on the asset register.

(g) Grant Funding for Upgrade of Toilets and Shower Rooms

It was **NOTED** that there was an opportunity to apply to FCC Communities Foundation for funding towards upgrading the toilets and shower rooms in the centre. It was **NOTED** that little or no improvement had been made to these facilities since the community centre was built over 45 years ago and complaints have been received about their condition. The Clerk reported that the Business Administrator had started the application and had quotations and letters from hirers. It was noted the amount of grant applied for was £87,067.52 but that the parish council would need to provide some match funding of £9,359.76. It was agreed that this was a much needed and worthwhile project as not only would it improve the facilities but it would help towards making the centre more energy efficient. It was **NOTED** that the Community Centre has a repairs and replacement budget of £15,000.00 plus the council is continuing to receive quarterly dividend payments from CCLA.

**RESOLVED** to approve funding of £9,359.76 towards this project and that the Clerk, as an approved signatory of the Council be authorised to sign the application and make the payment of match funding if the application is successful.

The Community Centre Chair also asked if another additional urgent CC matter could be considered:-

Urgent repairs are required to replace the caretakers entrance door which is damaged and a security risk. A quote from a preferred contractor has been obtained for £1,990.00 +VAT.

Urgent maintenance/repairs are also required to the high windows in the Oaken Hall. A quote from the same contractor was obtained for £1,090.00 +VAT.

It was acknowledged that the security of the building was vital and it was also important to have fully functioning windows to allow ventilation which is essential in being able to allow hirers in currently.

**RESOLVED** to accept both the above quotes from Maidstone Glass to carry out the urgent repairs.

30. **REPORTS FROM BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

**Borough Councillor David Cooper REPORTED** on the following items:

**Planning**

The June Area 3 Meeting was cancelled due to lack of substantive business and the next meeting is scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> July.

### **Local Plan**

Work is continuing on what TMBC calls 3 R's for Local Plan – Revise, Redraft and Resubmit. This is instead of referring to a new local plan when instead it is the same plan that was submitted last year but updated to satisfy the reasons the plan was rejected and to incorporate changes to legislation that have taken place since the first draft. Unfortunately, it will still have to incorporate an uplift of about 3,000 homes to be delivered up until 2038. The current plan has an allocation of 6,800 units and the revised figure gives a target of 885 per year across the Borough. TMBC still has to consider the Planning Inspectorate's response and the council's options going forward.

### **Local Politics**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is carrying out a review of the Borough Council. Phase 1 of the process has been completed and the commission has settled on there being a need for 43 Councillors – a reduction of 11. Phase 2 consultations on the warding arrangements are now taking place and parish and town councils, local bodies and individuals are invited to submit their thoughts on how the Borough as a whole or individual wards should appear. There was an online presentation recently and a copy has been sent to the Clerk.

The Clerk confirmed she had sent on to members.

The reduction in councillor numbers means each councillor will have to represent a greater number of electors. Ideally each councillor should represent 1/43 of the number of electors in the Borough in 2027, but a variance of 10% is allowed. Therefore there is a need to either reduce the size of the ward and have one member or increase it to retain 2. The current conservatives thinking is that Ditton should remain a two member ward and increase in size by incorporating the Holtwood area and South side of London Road between Woodlands Road and the current boundary near Pinions. The ward would be renamed Ditton and Holtwood.

Cllr Mulcuck asked if the borough councillors would have to attend Aylesford PC meetings for planning applications. County Cllr Kennedy said parish boundaries will not be affected it just means borough councillors will have to attend more meetings.

Cllr Muluck said he was also concerned about the proposed parliamentary boundary changes. Cllr Cooper reiterated that parish boundaries will not be affected. He added that boundaries are reviewed every 10 years.

Submissions for changes should be evidenced. The deadline for presenting a submission is 18<sup>th</sup> July and it can be done using a proforma on the LGBCE website. He added that as mentioned, the Boundary Commission is starting a review of parliamentary constituencies this year but this is totally independent of the Borough Council review.

### **Waste Collection**

The SSEAB met last week and received a report on the status of the Urbaser contract. The waste services manager was left in no doubt that the members were unsatisfied with the current state of affairs, especially since the loss of manpower due to covid seems to have disappeared. The main issues were:

- The Saturday freighter service - members think this should be reinstated asap
- The rollout of recycling facilities to flats as occupiers of flats have not had the benefit of recycling bins
- The litter caused by waste crews that is not swept up and the way they "throw" bins back on people's drives blocking them sometimes.

Cllr Mulcuck asked if the household waste site at Allington was still going ahead. Cllr Cooper replied yes as far as he was aware.

**Other**

Following a request from a resident Cllr Cooper asked the site manager at the Lidl development if the overgrown weeds on the site's border with Bradbourne Lane could be cut and this has been done.

Cllr Mulcuck asked about the opening hours as it states 5pm closing on Sundays whereas most shops close at 4pm on Sundays. It was confirmed that shops can open for 6 hours and can choose if it is 10 - 4 or 11 – 5.

Cllr Rook asked about the TMBC response to the Local Plan and Cllr Cooper said the comments were not available yet.

Cllr Rook said that at a recent meeting attended by Borough Cllr Lettington he mentioned a possible further call for sites – Cllr Cooper said he was not aware of this.

Cllr Rook said there was concern about the area being “swamped” with housing applications and asked what parishes can do to stop TMBC imposing more planning applications on local parishes.

Cllr Cooper said it was difficult and would continue to be until the 5 year housing plan was in place through the Local Plan.

**KCC Councillor Kennedy** then **REPORTED** on the following items:

**Planning**

The law is against local councils on planning and he would suggest the Parish Council should lobby their MP for changes in Planning Law.

**KCC Matters**

He advised it is early days and he has been attending various training sessions.

He will be attending a half day meeting with KCC Highways in early July at which he will raise various issues including:

- flooding on the A20;
- recent roadworks at the Priory Grove/Station Road junction [he had recently met with 26 residents about this issue] – two drainage grids have been removed causing flooding, the road narrows, an issue with 2 dropped kerbs which do not comply with a safe site line and a kerb that blocks a residents access. Cllr Mulcuck said that a footpath in this location had been suggested as part of s.106 for the Aylesford Newsprint development;
- Quarry Wood junction works delayed;
- Footpath between Aylesford and Allington remains closed. PROW Officer is seeking extra money for the very expensive repairs

Every KCC Member has been allocated a £6,000.00 Covid Recovery Fund to assist small business recovery after the pandemic. Cllr Kennedy said he would like to hold an event at Aylesford Priory that all local business could attend to promote what they do. PC members agreed this was a good idea.

31. **REPORT FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM**

**NOTED** no full reports available. The KCC Warden had advised that there were door to door sellers in the area and she was advising vulnerable people to be cautious.

## 32. DATE SENSITIVE PLANNING & HIGHWAYS MATTERS

### (a) Election of Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Mrs Godden was nominated by Cllr Mrs Throssell and seconded by Cllr Laidouci. Cllr Mulcuck was nominated by Cllr Rook and seconded by Cllr Dennison. Voting took place resulting in a majority vote for Cllr Mrs Godden. Cllr Mrs Godden was duly elected Vice Chair of the Planning Committee for 2021/22.

### (b) Plans Received for Comment

The Chair asked that an application received via today's B list be considered:

|                  |   |                  |
|------------------|---|------------------|
| TM/21/01601/TPOC | works to dismantle an Ash tree T1 due to the nature and impact of advanced decay at the base                    | 36 St Peter's Rd |
| <b>RESOLVED</b>  | NO OBJECTION SUBJECT TO THE TIMBC TREE OFFICER'S APPROVAL AND THAT A SUITABLE TREE IS PLANTED AS A REPLACEMENT. |                  |

### (c) Plans dealt with under delegated power

No plans dealt with.

### (d) Decisions from TMBC Area 3

The following plans, dealt with by Area 3 were **READ** and **NOTED**:-

|                |   |                          |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|
| TM/21/00831/FL | Single storey front extension<br><b>APPROVED 19.05.2021</b>   | 3 Cyril West Ln          |
| TM21/00925/FL  | Proposed annex in rear garden<br><b>APPROVED 21.05.2021</b>   | 456 London Rd            |
| TM/21/00648/FL | Installation of plant and machinery for water transmission and treatment purposes. Construction of temporary water treatment infrastructure and security fencing. Installation of 1.8m security fencing around site and associated works.<br><b>APPROVED 04.06.2021</b> | Land East of Cobdown Clo |
| TM/21/01015/FL | Single storey rear extension<br><b>APPROVED 02.06.2021</b>  | 458 London Rd            |

### (e) Ditton Edge Proposed Development

It was **NOTED** that nothing had happened since the outline application had been approved and Cllr Cooper confirmed the only aspect of the site approved in this was the entrance. The next stage would be when a developer is engaged to design the properties and then there would be the opportunity to be consulted further.

Cllr Mrs Godden advised that several residents had referred the matter of the application being granted to the Ombudsman and were awaiting a response.

Cllr Cooper advised that if more sites are to be called for, there was an area of land between Franklin Kidd Lane and Hermitage Lane that had previously been identified as an area of opportunity.



It was suggested KALC be contacted about the current value of Neighbourhood Plans.

(f) TMBC Local Plan

Comments made previously in the meeting were noted.

(g) Regular Joint Parish Meetings [MGGP]

Cllr Rook said he had circulated minutes of the last meeting and suggested everyone read them. Cllr Mulcuck suggested Cllr Mrs Godden might like to replace him on this committee.

(h) S.106 – Information from TMBC

Various documents about s.106 and how it should be considered were circulated. The Clerk will try to look at this in more depth and if necessary seek advice.

33. **BOUNDARY REVIEWS**

(a) TMBC Wards

Further to previous discussions and correspondence members agreed that the suggestion of including Holtwood and part London Road within a new Ditton and Holtwood Ward seemed the best solution.

**RESOLVED** to put forward this council's agreement to the revised ward to the Boundary Commission.

(b) Parliamentary

It was **NOTED** that a parliamentary boundary review was also to take place and this could mean Ditton being in Maidstone and Malling as opposed to Chatham and Aylesford. Members will keep an eye on any further suggestions in this review.

34. **QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE – 2<sup>ND</sup> – 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022**

It was **NOTED** that there would be two bank holidays for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June. The Community Centre Chair advised that it was already proposed to hold the postponed outdoor music event on that weekend, so it would be good to have the Jubilee as a theme. Members were in agreement to this event being the Council's celebration of the jubilee.

35. **MATTERS ARISING FROM "CORRESPONDENCE FOR NOTING"**

Cllr Mulcuck expressed concern about the paths in the quarry and the need to update the Management Plan. Cllr Mrs Dennison confirmed she had asked for these matters to be put on the next Open Spaces Committee Agenda. Cllr Godden asked that the provision of bin also be included.

-----  
Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and Standing Orders 27 & 50 the Chairman moved that due to the confidential nature of the next item the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting.  
-----

36. **STAFF MATTERS**

The Personnel Committee Chair confirmed the resignation of a member of Grounds Staff. She advised it was imperative to get the right new members of staff for this team and it would be preferable to use a specialist agency.

**RESOLVED** to use an agency to aid the recruitment of a new groundsman and to approve the payment of fees of up to 13% of salary.

The Clerk advised that a new caretaker, had been engaged initially on a casual basis but as he was undertaking regular shifts previously undertaken by a contracted members of staff it would be preferable to offer a contract to the new staff member.

**RESOLVED** to offer the new caretaker, a permanent contract for 12 hours per week.

The Personnel Chair advised there were several urgent staff matters requiring more discussion and that a Personnel Committee Meeting was necessary.

**RESOLVED** to hold a Personnel Committee Meeting on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June at 7.00pm.

Cllr Mulcuck asked about the summer gazette. In view of restrictions remaining in place it was felt better to defer this until the next meeting in July when more may be known about lifting restrictions.

37. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 9.18pm.

Chairman  
12<sup>th</sup> July 2021