



ACOL PARISH COUNCIL

The Village Hall
The Street
Acol
Kent CT7 0JA

e-mail: clerk@acolparishcouncil.org.uk

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 18th April 2024 at 8.20pm, Acol Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors Richard Steel – Chairman [RS], Sarah Corby [SC], Gavin Winpenny [GW], Wendy Winpenny [WW]

In Attendance: Sara Archer – Clerk, District Cllr Abi Smith, PC Andy Howe plus 3 members of the public.

01/24-25 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Richard Steel was nominated to be elected as Chairman for the forthcoming year, this was proposed by Cllr Gavin Winpenny and seconded by Cllr Wendy Winpenny, all were in favour.

The requirement for a Vice-Chair was discussed and agreed it was not necessary to elect anyone into the position at this stage.

02/24-25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from KCC Cllr Derek Crow-Brown, KCC Cllr Linda Wright, Cllr Chenice Butterworth - unwell.

03/24-25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Steel declared an interest in item 10/24-25 (a).

04/24-25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the last Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 12th May 2023 and the last meeting held on 15th February 2024.

These were proposed by Cllr Corby, seconded by Cllr W Winpenny, all were in agreement and therefore signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

05/24-25 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman had provided a detailed report during the Annual Parish Meeting, there were no additional matters to report.

06/24-25 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk advised of the following:

- Correspondence received regarding litter picking – waste bag collection points. Have approached Matthew Elmer, TDC for designated collection points for the waste bags – Suitable locations to be confirmed.
- Save our buses email – Keith Sansum - A new group set up to campaign for a better bus service. Residents encouraged to get involved and join their Facebook page SAVE OUR BUSES.
- Concerns raised regarding the parking issues at Nursery Fields, as discussed previously.
- KCC Planning consultation - Consultation on Revised Validation and Guidance Requirements for Planning Applications determined by Kent County Council – put on TAC meeting agenda for collaborate response with other Parish Councils.
- Waste bin for village – contacted Matthew Elmer who has advised they are awaiting a delivery of bins. Suggested a site meeting to address both waste bag collection and agree where bin should be sited. Awaiting convenient dates from Matthew.
- Contacted Derek Smith the welder to repair fingerpost sign. Sought permission from Coles to access post from their land.
- Grant application to Lottery Awards for All – heard today unsuccessful. Other funding streams to be explored. KCC members may be approached for assistance with grant.
- King's Portrait received, to be displayed in the Village Hall.
- Highways Improvement Plan Meeting with Lezanne Cesar – HIP updated, inc. moving the village signs
- Contacted TDC to update Clerk details on their records, including the finance department.
- Meeting with the Internal Auditor on 22nd April to audit AGAR, then an extraordinary meeting to be arranged to approve.
- Contacted HMRC re VAT reclaim – previously been filed by paper, no details for online claim – unique reference number required - emailed VAT126 team, awaiting a response.

- Ordered bench for Rec Ground – delivery expected 19th April.
- Planters – to be ordered once dimensions confirmed.
- Neighbourhood Watch stickers obtained and passed to Cllr Corby for distribution.

07/24-25 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr Gavin Winpenny advised he would be analysing the data collected from the Village Appraisal Survey. A positive response had been received with 44 of the 139 surveys being returned. A full report following the analysis would be provided at the next meeting.

Cllr Wendy Winpenny confirmed she had contacted Southern Water via twitter to report the overgrowth at the water pump, however, she was yet to receive a response, and would continue to follow this up.

Cllr Sarah Corby advised residents to be cautious, as a vulnerable resident had recently been approached by a cold caller, who was pressuring them to have some work carried out on their trees. Residents are encouraged to report such incidents to the Police, using 999 if they are vulnerable and feel threatened or at risk by the situation.

Cllr Chenice Butterworth was unable to attend the meeting but advised of the following which had been touched on previously in the meeting.

Village decoration - The Darling Buds of Wade will honour the quote of £15 for perennials per planter and has offered to plant them for us free of charge.

The planters themselves are actually cheaper than I quoted last year and are £18.95 each. 6 to be purchased and the only other additional cost would be compost.

Easter Trail - Acol's first Easter trail was a success with over fifteen children participating, and I received excellent feedback from parents. Thank you again to Acol Village Hall Committee for kindly donating the prizes.

Footpath to Quex – Cllr Steel and I met with Anthony Curwen from Quex Estates in August 2023 to discuss a footpath to Quex. Due to legal proceedings Mr Curwen was able to offer to sow a grass path which was scheduled to take place in the autumn. However, due to unpredictable weather this did not happen. We are awaiting further communication from Mr Curwin.

08/24-25 INDIVIDUAL OFFICER REPORTS

a) **County Councillor Derek Crown Brown** was unable to attend the meeting, however, he submitted the following report which was read by the Chairman:

In terms of my recent dealings. I have been involved in responding to the public's queries, regarding the numerous road closures in the local area, including arranging for highways inspectors to visit areas with inappropriate diversion signage and ensuring utilities companies install better barriers to prevent drivers moving bollards.

We also had a few issues with the temporary traffic light system in Tothill Street, Minster, hopefully now resolved.

Detailed in the link below is the Pothole Blitz in the county. In terms of temporary patches, highways will soon be spraying the letter T on the repair so everyone is aware.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/roads/potholes/pothole-blitz#:~:text=We%20will%20be%20delivering%20a,will%20continue%20until%20autumn%202024.>

Details of the soft landscaping programme is sent as an attachment and available via the Clerk.

b) **District Councillor Abi Smith** advised that the maximum fine for flytipping had been increased to £1000.

Thanet District Council have reached the halfway point of their strategic commitment to provide 400 affordable homes in the District.

Cllr Smith would be meeting with the Home Energy Advice Service to discuss the forthcoming implementation of the service to residents.

Grants were being made available for social enterprise groups via the regeneration team, TDC.

c) **PC Andy Howe** reported the following:

We have seen high levels of vehicle crime hitting the villages and these are linked to a spike in theft from vehicles over the Xmas period along with the more recent spike in thefts from vehicles and thefts of Ford Fiesta's and Fiat 500's over the last month.

As previously communicated, we believe that the suspects for the Xmas period have been dealt with for likewise offences elsewhere, but we were unable to link them to the offences on Thanet Villages. This is an ongoing investigation with one person remanded in prison whilst a second suspect is on bail.

The more recent spikes are twofold. One element is believed to be from organised crime and the targeted theft of Ford Fiesta's with keyless technology (years affected are from 2016-2019). There have been county wide operations that have shut down a garage taking possession of broken-down ford parts and we have locally arrested three persons from out of area for going equipped to steal.

Again, we are not yet completely sure that these are linked but it is probable.

The second element is opportunistic thefts from motor vehicles which have so far only hit the St Nicholas at Wade area. We have images of suspects but no facial images. I will be moving to late duties in order to conduct late night patrols of all villages in the hope that I can locate those suspicious persons.

Please call Kent police on 999 if you see suspicious activity late at night, this will likely present itself in the form of hooded youths/young persons looking into cars, trying handles and walking onto driveways. Do not confront or challenge as I would prefer you give me and my colleagues an opportunity to catch them. **DO NOT CALL ME DIRECTLY** as any calls must go through our control to be the most effective.

Please check your vehicles are locked at night. Consider using a Faraday Pouch for any keyless entry fobs and consider a steering lock (the latter being the single best defence against vehicle theft), and don't leave any valuables in your vehicles.

The only other crime of note in Acol was the theft of numbers plates from a van and a Hare Coursing call which ended up just being a dog walker.

I will be focussing on vehicle crime for the next few weeks along with my usual patrols to deter poaching offences.

09/24-25 HIGHWAYS

- a) Speedwatch/Lorry Watch Scheme
- b) Street Cleansing, litter, fly-tipping
- c) Highways Improvement Plan

All of the above had been covered previously during the meeting.

10/24-25 FINANCE

a) The Clerk presented the monthly bank reconciliation between the cash book and bank accounts.

RESOLVED: To approve the monthly bank reconciliation for February & March (Proposed: Cllr Steel, seconded Cllr W Winpenny).

b) The Clerk presented the monthly payment schedule which included the following payments:

Birchington PCC - Village Hall Ground Rent	£200.00
D. Hayfield - CCTV electricity	£60.00
Hugofox - Website hosting	£11.99
Quex Park Estates - Rec Ground rent	£80.00
J9 Barriers Direct - Traffic Mirrors	£264.10
Ionos - Email hosting	£3.00
R. Steel - Repayment	£24.00
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	£269.32
Birchington Printers - Village Appraisal	£138.00
Wicksteed - Safety Inspection	£158.40
Hugofox - Website hosting	£11.99
Ionos - Email hosting	£3.00
Unity Trust - Service Charge	£18.00

Receipts:

KCC - Grant for bench in Rec Ground £300.00

RESOLVED: To approve payment of invoices included in the monthly payment schedule for April. (Proposed: Cllr G Winpenny, Seconded: Cllr Corby).

c) The annual accounts for 2023/24 were to be audited by the appointed Internal Auditor – Tony Kilbee and would be presented at a separate meeting for approval.

d) The Clerk advised that the insurance renewal from Zurich had been received. An inflationary increase to £382.35 had been quoted. This was considered and agreed to renew the policy with Zurich for a further year.

RESOLVED: To approve the renewal of the insurance policy with Zurich for 2024/25 at £382.35. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr G Winpenny)

11/24-25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 20th June 2024, 7:30pm, Acol Village Hall

The meeting was closed by the chairman at 21:14hrs