

STALISFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish of Stalisfield held in Stalisfield Village Hall on 16 May 2022

Present: Cllr Cat Horn (Chair), Cllr Jerry Brown and Cllr Nina Williams; and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk)

Also present were six members of the public.

1. Welcome

Cllr Horn welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Apologies had been received from Cllr Tracy Dove, Cllr Chris Norwood, County Councillor Rich Lehmann and Ward Member David Simmons

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2021

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held remotely on 4 May 2021 were read and agreed to be a true copy of the meeting. Cllr Horn duly signed the minutes as a true record.

3. Report of the Chair of Stalisfield Parish Council

Cllr Horn reported that there had been five in-person meetings since the last Annual Parish Meeting. On 4 May 2021, which had been held virtually. Due to the resignation of Holly Andrews, the Council subsequently co-opted Jerry Brown onto the Council for the remainder of the Council term to May 2023.

There were five planning applications which were discussed. The Council helped the Village Hall purchase gazebos to facilitate more events to be held outside in the village and mitigate any Covid risks.

Councillors worked with KCllr Lehmann when our verge cutting was missed and eventually the work was carried out. The Council supported Lenham Parish Council's objection to the proposed Lenham Heath development.

The Council is supporting the Village Hall Committee in trying to get Broadband installed in the village hall; SBCllr Simmons is trying to ascertain why the village hall does not have a post code which is necessary to get a new broadband line installed.

We arranged for a presentation by Stephen Weeks on the ash die back works in Spuckles Wood.

Mr Richard Vant is co-ordinating the manufacture of two new memorial benches from local oak and these will replace the existing ones.

4. Financial report of the Parish Council

2020-21

The Independent Internal Auditor completed the audit of year-end accounts to 31 March 2021 remotely and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was completed at the Parish Council Meeting in July 2021. Under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, the Parish Council certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review and the Certificate of Exemption was submitted to the PKF Littlejohn immediately after the July meeting.

2021-22

The Precept for 2021-22 was £2935, which although was an increase of £6 to the Parish Council there was no increase in the Band D property equivalent which remained at £29.14. The forecast budget requirement for the year was £2935 (ex VAT).

Total receipts for the year was £5779 which includes a VAT refund of £580; and a donation of £2111 from Stalisfield Village Hall.

The Council continues to maintain the village green.

Total payments were £5931 (ex VAT)

The bank balance at 31 March 2022 was £2,682.

The Elector's Rights Notice will be displayed on the Village Notice Board and the Parish Council website giving formal notice that the End of Year Accounts are available for inspection by the public. Viewing is by arrangement with the Chairman.

Donations made in 2021-22

The Parish Council made donations of £150 to the Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Trust; £100 to Swale Citizens Advice Bureau; and £370 to the Church towards a new mower. It also purchased gazebos for the hall with the help of their donation.

2022-23

The Precept requirement for 2022-23 is £2,935, again with no increase in council tax for band D properties in the parish but a slight decrease of £52 to the Parish Council.

Cllr Horn thanked the Clerk for her report.

5. To receive reports from local organisations

Otterden and Stalisfield WI

At the start of the year, the WI gained five new members, three from the village and two from the surrounding area; there are currently twenty-one members. The group meets monthly and there have been several speakers; demonstrations of Tai Chi and also Morris; local history talks; in March the Head Teacher from Maidstone Girls Grammar School gave a talk on the air raid shelters used during World War II at the school, the tunnels have been renovated to give an experience of what happened at that time. There have also been talks about Bunce's Court and how it had been set up as a school for children from the Kinder Transport; a detectorist; a fund-raising evening. There have been visits to several gardens, including The Salutation at Sandwich; the Copper Rivet at the Dockyard and the Gurdwara at Gravesend. Guests are always welcome; it is a good group with lovely meetings and it is a good way to make friends.

Church

The Church Warden said she leads a team of five people keeping the church for the village and families. There are not enough people to have weekly services but the church holds Festival Services and weddings; the next festival is Pentecost.

There is an Art Festival with art classes and tea and cake.

The team which runs the church has teams which support them; the Holy Bloomers, the flower arranging team; Holy Dusters, the cleaning team and the Holy Gardeners, the gardening team. There are regular gardening dates.

The Church has been there for centuries and it is being actively maintained, we want to keep the church going. The maintenance costs means we have to fundraise, eg the harvest festival and the Stalisfield calendar; the open gardens last year were very successful. Fund raising ideas are always welcome. Next year there will be a bluebell walk.

The church is a community resource and it will be open more in the summer.

It is everyone's church; it is our resource and it needs to be funded. Donations are gratefully received and gift aid gives an extra 25%.

Village Hall

This year the hall could get back to normal and the first event of the year was a quiz. There will be a good community event for the Platinum Jubilee with a band and a centre piece cake.

The Treasure Hunt, which is a good family event, might be expanded. This year's fete will have a farming theme with a juggler and stalls to support local businesses in the area and also other stalls and games including splat the rat; volunteers are needed. There are regular bookings including table tennis and art classes.

6. To receive questions and comments from parishioners.

Cllr Horn reported a resident had asked if the roads could be made better, the Council will progress this.

#1- There are also water leaks

Cllr Williams said people must report the leaks.

Cllr Horn said the Council could look at the statutory requirements to repair water leaks.

ITEM FOR COUNCIL AGENDA

#2- The bridleway is still blocked.

Cllr Horn said this needs to be reported to the Public Rights of Way, the Council can report things but is it easier and quicker for residents to do this.

#3- The speed of vehicles through the village needs to be reduced.

Cllr Horn said she had hoped to get someone from KCC Highways to attend the meeting. There needs to be an accident history for KCC to look at the speed limit and if they identify that there is a problem, KCC will deal with it and the Parish Council will not have a say in its remedy.

The Clerk said Parish Councils are encouraged to adopt a Parish Highways Improvement Plan.

ACTION: Clerk to circulate template to Councillors.

#4- The road markings have gone

Cllr Horn said this needs to be reported on the KCC Highways portal.

ACTION: Cllr Horn to put details of the portal on the village WhatsApp group

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.31pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chair

Date: 18 May 2023