

**ELHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**

**Monday 5th February 2018 at 7.30PM**

**ELHAM VILLAGE HALL**

**Present: Cllrs. Geoff Clements (Chairman), Brian Swan (Vice Chairman), Jon Worrall,**

**Stuart Peall (part), Ken Percival, Colin Johnson and Kevin Lamb (part)**

**GOVERNANCE & FINANCE**

**016/18 Apologies for Absence** – none.

**017/18 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations** – none.

**018/18 Co-option of Councillors**

Mr Kevin Lamb came forward for co-option, proposed by Cllr Clements, seconded by

Cllr Percival. **Resolved that Cllr Kevin Lamb becomes a member of Elham Parish Council**

**019/18 Previous Minutes**

**Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2018 were a true and accurate record.**

**020/18 Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

* The Clerk will obtain a breakdown of cost from KCC in relation to suggested highways improvements.
* Wingmore caravan site – It has been noticed that caravans are staying on the site continuously. Cllr Peall reported that he believes the site may now have been granted full year usage and will investigate this with SDC. Many feel that this is a most unacceptable situation, the situation of the bus which is parked there has not yet been resolved by SDC.

**021/18 Finance Report & Approval of Payments**

Payments were made as follows:

Wraights for tree work in the churchyard £ 360.00

C Skinner – clerk salary, office & expenses £ 771.81

Mrs Maher – locum clerk £ 50.00

Friends of St. Mary’s – grant for bin £ 175.00

**Resolved to make payments totalling £1356.81**

**022/18 Social Media Policy**

**Resolved that the attached policy be accepted by the Parish Council.**

Cllr Lamb will act as moderator for the social media interactions on Facebook and Twitter accounts.

**023/18 Vacancies for Councillors**

Two vacancies still exist which can be filled by co-option.

**PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION TIME***– the meeting was adjourned to hear reports and to allow the public to speak.*

KCC Cllr Susan Carey reported that following KCC budget meetings, a 3% increase in council tax is proposed. Care of the elderly and protection of children remain the priorities amid disappearing Government support to KCC. Roads take 3% of council tax paid and current poor weather is causing more potholes to appear. Cllr Carey asked for potholes to continue to be reported to KCC. As part of the group working on the mobile phone signal improvement project Cllr Carey is keen to support wherever she can. Litter is a topic of concern alongside major roads and motorways, a clean-up is scheduled for March this year. Highways England are responsible for maintaining Motorways, and have significantly more funding than KCC.

District Cllr Stuart Peall reported of the Places and Policies consultation which opened today and will run for 6 weeks. The Parish Council has a copy of these documents and will review the content over the next few weeks, also available on SDC website. With effect from 1st April 2018, SDC will be known as Folkestone & Hythe District Council. Stuart concluded by inviting applications for grant funding as he has some member funds available at the moment. Cllr Peall left the meeting at this point.

Community Warden Gary Harrison reported that in some areas tools are being stolen from parked vehicles and that parishioners should be alerted to this. Dog fouling was recently reported and Gary arranged for a visit from SDC’s Dog Warden which has resulted in more signs being put up, offenders can be fined by the dog warden. It should also be noted and shared widely that SDC bins which have a plastic bag liner can also be used to dispose of bagged dog waste.

A parishioner asked what the cost to the Parish was for the meeting on 16th January, this was confirmed as £16 by a Village Hall representative (later amended to £19) for room hire with refreshments being paid for by the organising group.

Defibrillator training – the Clerk will look at alternative trainers as the local ambulance service has still not offered any dates. Insurance/liability needs to be investigated in respect of users/patients.

Mr Stanyon asked Cllr Clements to confirm publically that he had not made any allegation of financial misappropriation against Mr Stanyon. Cllr Clements confirmed emphatically that he had not accused Mr Stanyon of financial misappropriation.

A parishioner thanked Cllr Peall for arranging the siting of a dog bin at The Gore and asked if there were set dates for collecting waste – to be confirmed.

The Friends of St Mary’s are progressing with restoration and improvement works at the North entrance.

**COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT**

**024/18 Parish Meeting – 16th January 2018**

Notes taken by the Parish Clerk are attached to these minutes along with a list of aims received from the organising group. One item of interest is the need for affordable housing and the clear understanding of what that means. It is not social housing for open bidding but it is intended for people with village connections that otherwise would have to move away from the area. Until landowners offer potential sites there is little that can be done to move forward on it.

**025/18 Dementia Friendly Community & Befriending Scheme**

Information regarding an event at Lyminge for potential befrienders on 8th March 2018 has been received and it was agreed to organise a meeting with the Shepway Volunteer group and interested villagers as the scheme brings significant support with it.

**026/16 Allotments**

Following discussions with the Canterbury Diocese the Parish Council, PCC and Allotment Association were asked to make resolutions to request a further 5 year lease.

**Resolved to agree that the Parish Council requests a further 5 year lease on the land**.

**027/18 Mobile Phone Signal**

Mr Andrew Joynes read his report which is attached to these minutes. In addition, Damian Collins MP has referred to the Elham collaboration in the local press. It is believed that the mobile phone operators are taking the issues seriously and that Elham has become a prism in the assessment of issues surrounding poor rural signals. The community is asked to get behind the campaign, which will now be taken forwards by the Parish Council. A survey will be set up shortly which will allow parishioners to state their dissatisfaction with the current services. This will be shared with the mobile operators and Damian Collins to support our objective. The way forward could include modifying current masts or installing new ones.

Geoff Clements thanked Mr Joynes for his considerable contribution in getting us to this point.

**028/18 Dog Fouling**  - Covered in Gary Harrison’s report.

**029/18 Removal of ivy from walls adjacent to Sanctuary Housing**

One quote has been received to date for this work, more will be requested. To be discussed at the March meeting.

**PLANNING**

**030/18**. a. **Application No: Y17/1517/SH**. Location: 1 - 2 Bank Building High Street Elham Canterbury. **Refused by SDC**.

b. **Application No: Y18/0091/SH**. Location: Covert Wood House, Dane Hill Road, Bladbean - Erection Of Detached Timber Framed Garage. **Resolved no objection but requested it be observed that the building seems excessively large in comparison to the property.**

**REPORTS**

**031/18 Chairman’s and Councillors’ Reports**

Geoff Clements reported that work on a new website is proceeding and should be completed shortly.

Jon Worrall reported that the spare traffic mirror has been sold at cost for £32. The 30mph bin stickers have not been well received with little interest shown by parishioners which is disappointing. Gary Harrison has offered to assist and it was agreed to extend to other key roads if necessary.

Brian Swan has looked at the proposed development at Highland Court Farm, Bridge and will meet the Barham Downs Action Group, further reports to follow.

The LR9 designation of areas around Elham will be discussed with SDC, Brian will report again on this.

Ken Percival reported that damaged road signs have been reported to SDC. There is also a car which parks on Vicarage Lane causing larger vehicles to damage the grass at the triangle. Gary Harrison will investigate.

**Meeting closed at 9.10pm**

**Cathy Skinner**

Clerk

**ELHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Social media is a collective term used to describe methods of publishing on the internet. The policy covers all forms of social media and social networking sites which include (but are not limited to):

• Parish Council Website

• Facebook, Myspace and other social networking sites

• Twitter and other micro blogging sites

• YouTube and other video clips and podcast sites

• LinkedIn

• Blogs and discussion forums

• Parish Council Emails

**Who does it apply to?**

The principles of the Policy apply to Parish Councillors and all Council Staff. It is also intended for guidance for others communicating with the Parish Council.

The policy sits alongside relevant existing polices which need to be taken into consideration.

Use of Social Media The use of social media will not replace existing forms of communication. The website and other forms of social media will be used to enhance communication. Therefore existing means of communication should continue with social media being an additional option.

**The Policy**

1. The Council will appoint a nominated member of staff/ Councillor or Councillors as moderator(s). They will be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content ensuring it complies with the Social Media Policy. The moderator will have authority to remove any posts made by third parties from our social media pages which are deemed to be of a defamatory, libellous nature. Such post will also be reported to the Hosts (i.e. Facebook) and also the clerk.
2. The Council will appoint a nominated “Webmaster” to maintain and update the Parish Council Website.

The social media may be used to;

• Post minutes and dates of meetings

• Advertise events and activities

• Good news stories linked website or press page

* Vacancies
* Retweeting or ‘share’ information from partners i.e. Police, Library and Health etc.
* Announcing new information.
* Post or Share information from other Parish related community groups/clubs/associations/ bodies e.g. Schools, sports clubs and community groups
* Refer resident queries to the clerk and all other councillors

Facebook will be used to support the website information above.

Emails will be used to distribute information of council business.

**Guidance for Councillors using the Council’s Social Media Presence**

Individual Parish councillors are responsible for what they post. Councillors are personally responsible for any online activity conducted via their published e-mail address which is used for council business. Councillors are strongly advised to have separate council and personal email addresses, and adhere to The Members’ Code of Conduct, see Guidance for Councillors at the end of this document.

1. All social media sites in use should be checked and updated on a regular basis and ensure that the security settings are in place.
2. When participating in any online communication; a. Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent. b. Always disclose your identity and affiliation to the Parish Council. Never make false or misleading statements. c. Parish Councillors should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment. All Parish Councillors need to be mindful of the information they post on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Council or bring the Council into disrepute or is contrary to the Council’s Code of Conduct or any other Policies. d. Keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or “loud.” Use sentence case format, not capital letters, or write in red to emphasis points. e. Refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief should not be published on any social media site. f. Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications. g. Never use an individual’s name unless you have written permission to do so. h. Permission to publish photographs or videos on social media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded.
3. Respect the privacy of other councillors and residents.
4. Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations, see below libel and copyright.
5. Residents and Councillors should note that not all communication requires a response.

a. There will not be immediate responses to communications as they may be discussed by the Parish Council and all responses will be agreed by the Parish Council.

b. The Parish Clerk and the moderators will be responsible for all final published responses.

c. If a matter needs further consideration it may be raised at either the open forum or as a

full agenda item for consideration by a quorum of Councillors. Again the poster shall be informed via the page or direct message that this is the case.

d. If the moderator feels unable to answer a post for example of a contentious nature this shall be referred to the Parish Clerk. The poster will informed by way of response to this fact and also be invited to correspond with the Parish Clerk directly.

e. Some communication from residents and other third parties may be required to be discussed at a Parish Council meeting. When this is necessary the item will be placed on the next available agenda. Any response will then be included in the minutes of the meeting.

8. The nominated moderator or moderators shall remove any negative posts which may contain personal and inflammatory remarks, libellous or defamatory information without further comment or notification. a. Spell and grammar check everything. b. Correct any errors promptly.

9. Councillors or parishioners who have any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should report them to the Clerk of the Council. Misuse of such sites in a manner that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.

10. The Policy will be reviewed annually.

**Date of Approval by Council**

**5th February 2018**

**Minute number 022/18**

**ELHAM PARISH MEETING**

**16th January 2018**

**7.30pm at the Village Hall**

Chairman: Cllr Geoff Clements (Chairman of the Parish Council)

Minute taker: Cathy Skinner (Clerk to the Parish Council)

Geoff Clements opened the meeting by welcoming the large gathering.

Angie Scott gave an outline of the running order and stated that she believed most were aware of the circumstances surrounding the previous Chairman of the Parish Council’s resignation but this is not the forum for further discussion on that subject. The aim of this meeting is to have subjective discussion on an open and non-confrontational manner. There would be a Q&A session at the end of each agenda item. The group calling this meeting believe that the Parish Council should work for, and with the community. There is concern that the parish will decline if action is not taken.

Kevin Scott – Reiterated that we can do more and that the Parish Council can also do more.

Pippa Hope- Highlighted the loss of retail facilities e.g. post office and butchers.

Clive Stanyon – Believes that the current Parish Council is like a used car and needs to be replaced by a newer model. Elham deserves better.

Sylvia Scott – A previous Vice-Chairman of the Parish council is seeking to develop connecting partnerships.

Tony Rossi – We need a council which proactively supports the community.

Sharon Jacob – Would like to see more engagement and better use of funds from the Parish Council.

Peter Swain – Concerned that respect is not shown to parishioners by the Parish Council.

Valerie Swain – Appreciates the work done by volunteers.

Dr. Karen White – Has observed that most good initiatives have been completed by volunteers, not the Parish Council. Elham Parish deserves better and is confident that after this meeting it will get better.

Anna Leva – The Parish Council has not helped with the mobile phone signal problem or poor broadband. Again, Play for Elham was created by keen volunteers with little help from the Parish Council.

**What Do We Think the Parish Council Should Provide/Support?**

From the floor, copies of presentations were requested as they were hard to read.

Clive Stanyon - Recently, only the parish survey was delivered. The Parish Council should be leading the call for improved mobile signal, this was first talked about 3 years ago and still nothing delivered.

SDC Local Plan – It is important that these are examined closely, the Parish Council did not respond to the Places & Policies consultation which offered a chance to protect recreation areas. Speeding outside of the school was an initiative led by the school, not the Parish Council. Churchyard and churchyard wall – discussions started 2 years ago regarding who is responsible for the wall and there is still no documented proof and £2,000 has been spent with a further £10,000 ring fenced for future costs. The Gore, used for dog walking and informal sport. The lease has been under negotiation for 2 years and only made progress when parishioners stepped in. Defibrillator – project took 3 years to implement.

Tony Rossi – Budget: Major items are road safety £6.000 (a good idea), £6500 for grounds maintenance, £11,000 for clerk/office/administration. In summary, a care and maintenance budget.

£41,728 available with expenditure of £36,200. 60% is spent on administration and 30% on grounds maintenance. With no new initiatives pending, the £5000 surplus will inevitably bring a future deficit.

**Q&A**

Geoff Clements - Mobile phone signal, a meeting is scheduled with Damian Collins MP and representatives of mobile phone companies. The Gore is privately owned and since a football club used it the lease issue has not been resolved. At present there are 3 vacancies for councillors who could join the Parish Council by co-option. In 2019 there will be an election when all seats become available.

Brian Swan – commented that he had met interested parishioners and trustees’ representative to discuss the future of The Gore. This included a suggestion that a shared project with Play for Elham could be advantageous. This took place 9 weeks ago and since then no further contact has been made.

Mike Donnelly – A defensive interchange is not constructive. Parishioners have allowed the situation to arise as when a vacancy on the Parish Council arises, there is an opportunity for 10 electors to call for an election. Suggests that the current Parish Council stands down to allow for an election.

Frank Hobbs (KALC Area Committee Chairman) advised that elections costs are high if there is a by—election.

**What Do You Want From Your Parish Council?**

A video was shown of a community which has taken over many local services in their area. (Upper Dales Community Partnership). It was noted that preventing loss of local facilities is very hard to accomplish. Judy Ufton called for support for the village shop which is struggling, if everyone spent £5 a week there, success would be ensured.

Sylvia Scott spoke about the parish survey – 700 leaflets were delivered but only 74 returned. From the survey, 41 parishioners showed interest in participating in projects. The results of the survey were not fed back, nether were they actioned. A key request was for better joint working with the Parish Council.

**Open Discussion – Ideas and Wishes**

* Connect & Care Day – support for older people.
* Want value for money
* Volunteers are needed but it is usually the same people who come forward – new faces needed.
* Would new councillors be welcomed? Geoff Clements confirmed that they would be and commented that the Parish Council has always been short of members.
* Tony Rossi – what do parishioners want? For example, affordable housing?
* Defibrillator training – The ambulance service has been asked to provide this, 10 volunteers needed.
* Jan Stanyon – the War Memorial has become an eyesore and needs cleaning and maintenance – Derek Boughton responded by saying that it is usually done by volunteers, in addition the memorial was refurbished a couple of years ago at considerable cost. The memorial will be cleaned this year for WW1 commemorations.
* Problems with road signs – the Parish Council is not responsible for these and reports any issues to SDC.
* More dog bins needed.
* No. 18 bus service may end – Stuart Peall explained that KCC are responsible for the bus service subsidies but if necessary SDC and the Parish Council will step in and look at alternatives.
* Tony Rossi will take a summary of this meeting to the February meeting of the PC. A show of hands was requested to the question “Do you have confidence in the Parish Council”, by a majority ‘no’ was recorded. The meeting agreed that ‘this group’ should continue to liaise with the Parish Council going forward (85 agreed)

**Options:**-

1. Wait for 2019 elections : VOTES 75
2. Co-opt new members to the Parish Council : VOTES 9
3. For a Residents Association : VOTES 78
4. Call for a Parish Poll – cost is estimated at £2500 and would not be mandatory on the PC, it could also divide parishioners : VOTES 0

A parishioner asked for a 5th option, that a by –election is called now. It was commented that if an election is called now it can only be for the 3 current vacancies.

**Update on Mobile Phones Meeting 26.1.18**

In recent months an informal group of Elham residents have been liaising with Damian Collins MP, Elham Parish Council and Susan Carey of KCC to lobby for an improvement in the local mobile phone signal. On Friday 26th January the group met representatives of EE, Telefonica/O2, Vodafone and Arquiva for a wide-ranging discussion of possible solutions to Elham’s mobile reception problems.

The meeting was chaired by Damian Collins, whose insights as Chair of the parliamentary Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee have been particularly useful. It is clear that, following the recent Ofcom report *Connected* *Nations*, which indicated that one--third of the UK is without an adequate mobile phone signal, the phone operating companies are more disposed to take customer complaints about poor service seriously.

It is most likely that some kind of new mast or relay facility will be necessary to improve the Elham signal. The serpentine topography of the Elham Valley means that signals from Etchinghill (to the south) and Wingmore (to the north) do not reach most of the village conurbation because the line of sight from these two masts is obscured by intervening hills. The companies all promised to undertake new appraisals and site visits, and to report back soon. Following the meeting, the range of options would appear to be:

* An ‘out-of-village’ approach, involving a possible enhancement of the Arqiva television relay at Holly Hill to carry the signals of the phone operating companies; or possibly reappraising the site at Lickpot Hill for which Orange (now part of EE) secured planning approval for a transmission mast in June 2004 - although this was not followed through at that time.
* An ‘in-village’ approach, perhaps utilising the new slimline design of ‘monopole’ transmission masts which have the advantage of being unobtrusive, and which are now a common sight in many urban and semi-urban areas.
* A combination of masts – one ‘in village’/one ‘out of village’ – to serve the north and south ends of Elham village.

The operating companies said that, following their respective appraisals, they would report back jointly through Damian Collins and the Parish Council. Any specific proposals made as to the location of telecommunications masts or relays serving Elham will go through the formal planning and community consultation process, which will involve SDC and the Parish Council. The informal Elham residents’ group, which has been involved in a protracted lobbying exercise during the last year, will now stand down from direct involvement in progressing this issue.

It is very important for the Elham community as a whole to maintain pressure on the operating companies and to keep this issue at the forefront of our parliamentary and civic representatives’ attention. It is hoped therefore that all users of mobile phones in Elham who are dissatisfied with the mobile signal will write to the customer relations departments of their respective phone operators – perhaps sending copies of their letters or e-mails to Damian Collins MP and Cathy Skinner the Parish Clerk. Elham’s concerns are at last being taken seriously by the telecommunications establishment – but the pressure must be maintained!

**Andrew Joynes**

**01303 - 840162**

To: Elham Parish Council  5th February 2018

Elham Parish Meeting

At the Parish Meeting held on the 16h January, 2018 the parishioners requested that the Parish

Council take note of and respond to the following requests:

1.Provide more effective communication with the parishioners in listening, responding and sharing

information to reflect a variety of communication systems e.g. improvement of the  website,

Facebook etc. and openness with information respecting parishioners wishes and  ideas.

2. Address the urgent need for affordable housing.

3. Provide protection of the Gore as a recreational facility for the whole parish.

4. Discuss with the Parishioners how to obtain value for money from the precept.

5. Respect and use offers from residents to become involved with projects etc.

6. Address the issue of parking to enable businesses to thrive.

7. Provide training for the use of the defibrillator.

8. Take forward the actions from the Connect and Care Age UK event.

9. Facilitate and support protection of our bus services.

10. Maintain the care of the village of Elham e.g. the War Memorial, dog bins.

11.Work to facilitate the provision of improved Broadband for the growing number of parishioners  working from home.

We therefore request that the Parish Council take note of the above and respond by listing this

 matter for discussion at its next meeting which is due to be held on Monday 5th March, 2018.