

NETTLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2023 IN NETTLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL at 19:45

PRESENT: **Cllr Alison Green - Chair**
Cllr Anita van Hensbergen – Vice Chair
Cllr David Meredith
Cllr Emily Corfe
Cllr Jackie Bennett
Cllr Martyn Evans
County Cllr Simon Webb
Borough Cllr Claudine Russell
Parish Clerk Suzanne Seal
Mrs Jean Schofield, Trustee, Nettlestead Village Hall

1. APOLOGIES AND ABSENCE

None.

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

No interests declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND NOVEMBER 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were duly signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

4. EXTERNAL REPORTS

4.1 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Webb was in attendance and had circulated his report in advance of the meeting:

Member report for Maidstone Rural West – Simon Webb - December 2023

This will be the final report for 2023, as we look to welcome in 2024 with better news and wellbeing, hopefully linked for the New Year.

As you will know the past few months at KCC has been simply laborious in focussing on budget cuts, a leadership challenge and new faces within the Cabinet. I am pleased to say that the new Cabinet Member for Highways, Mr Neil Baker, is a breath of fresh air as he has already met with me and has worked to sort out many simple repairs to potholes and other Highways issues. His strategic approach to Highways looks promising for the future.

My time has been taken up with numerous challenging issues for both Nettlestead Parish Council and individual residents, some of whom have children with additional needs, where the County are not appearing to be able to assist swiftly enough to meet those needs.

As a County Member I was very disappointed that both KCC and MBC Planners have sought fit to approve a planning change for the Syngenta Business Park on the borders of Yalding PC and Nettlestead PC. Little notice is being taken of the significant number of resident concerns on Station Road and Hampstead Lane, over the number of HGVs. They cause

significant congestion to both narrow lanes with predominant concerns for any residents who try to walk from their homes along those roads. KCC say that there have been no serious injuries to change their mind on support for the new application. MBC because KCC didn't object, agreed to this appalling planning consent.

Having been removed from KCC Cabinet Committees from June onwards, due to having published a newspaper article setting out my case to challenge the 200+ abusive emails I received from social media over my comments made during a SEND sub-committee meeting in March 2023, I asked to become a committee member of Audit and Governance, which I happily agreed to.

I have recently copied in many parish councils over the proposed expansion of Coxheath Primary School from 2FE (420 pupils) to 3FE (630 pupils) from September 2024; this effectively is seeking to add 30 pupils per year from September 2024. I see no statistical relevance for this large an increase, as data for the 3 latter years is not available as the children have not been born. I have lodged my challenge and I hope those parish councils have too. The greatest risk is to the smaller primary schools in the vicinity, whose viability could be at risk in the years to come.

Thank you for your kindness when I attend your Parish Council meetings, some committee meetings at MBC clash with parish meetings, so I apologise for not attending as regularly as you expect.

Have a relaxing and restful Christmas and New Year break.

Kind regards

Simon

4.2 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Russell was in attendance and had circulated her report in advance of the meeting:

MBC Members Report from Cllr Claudine Russell

Dated: December 2023

Rural England Prosperity Fund

The second phase of funding is now open and grants of £50,000+ are available for groups to apply for and I would encourage as many rural communities as possible to come forward and apply for an REPF grant which could make a difference to their communities to upgrade a facility and improve their local environment and sustainability, supporting the rural economy into the future. For help to apply contact climateandbiodiversity@Maidstone.gov.uk. The application window closes on the 24th January 2024.

Christmas Donation Hub

The hub has been overwhelmed with everyone's generosity and it remains open until the 16th December to receive donations of new toys, food, toiletries etc that are then collected and distributed to local charities in time for them to give them out for Christmas. The hub is on the upper level of the Mall and is manned by volunteers.

Local Plan

We are still aiming for adoption via full council in January/early February as per the published Local Development Scheme.

Current Consultations

The public consultation about Climate Change and what Maidstone should prioritise closes on the 1st January 2024 and its results will be analysed after, the consultation can be accessed by the following link:

[Climate Change Survey 2023 | Lets Talk Maidstone \(engagementhq.com\)](https://www.lets-talk-maidstone.com/engagement/2023-12-14-climate-change-survey)

Boundary Changes

Just a reminder that as we move into 2024, this will be the time that the new borough ward boundaries and MP constituency boundaries alter for the first time, and Maidstone Borough Council run all our elections for a 4 year term. Our ward remains Marden and Yalding and now will include the village of Hunton, whilst our MP constituency is now called "The Weald" and no longer includes the urban areas of Maidstone, instead covering rural villages and including 3 borough councils. On the borough ballot paper this year, you will be selecting 3 rather than the usual 1 candidate as our ward continues to remain a 3 member ward.

As always, if you need my help, please do not hesitate to email me at claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk

5. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

5.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

Cllr Corfe reported the Crime Report No. 46/208943/23 on Friday 24th November around 21:20. Somebody smashed a window of a residential property in Bryant Close, Nettlestead.

5.2 PARISH MAGAZINE

Cllr Van Hensbergen reported that the magazine went to print on time last month and invoices have been sent to two companies advertising in the December/January edition. The next edition will go to print on 18th January 2024.

5.3 CHATTERBOX AND WARMSPACE

Chatterbox: Cllr Bennett reported that Santa's sleigh will be coming through the village in December and a Christmas lunch will be held at The Hop Pole on Tuesday 19th December.

Warmspace: Cllr Bennett reported that it is quieter at the moment, likely due to the weather and there is a new grant which she is currently applying for by the 17th December deadline.

6. VILLAGE HALL

Mrs J Schofield, the Sole Trustee for the Village Hall, attended the meeting to discuss its financial situation and also the ongoing management issues.

It was noted that the Village Hall has negligible funds and also needs more Trustees and a new Committee to take on the management and day to day running of the hall.

The Parish Council agreed that the Village Hall is an important community asset and would like to see it re-established as a viable facility that is well used and maintained. As such the Parish Council agreed that it is prepared to offer assistance such as by arranging a Village/Community Meeting to seek volunteers for new Trustees and Committee Members. It was agreed to place adverts/send out flyers with the January Parish Magazine, with the aim of holding a meeting in February.

Further to Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Cllr Corfe proposed that the Parish Council provide a loan of £500 to the Village Hall to cover

immediate running costs, with the agreement that the loan is repaid in 18 months. Cllr Van Hensbergen seconded the motion and it was **resolved by all members**.

7. KGV FIELD

7.1 TREE GRANT SCHEME

Cllr Webb to request an update on whether the report about the trees along the back of the KGV Field is available, following his meeting with KCC.

7.2 KGV FIELD – PUBLIC CONSULTATION SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the public survey were not discussed due to time constraints and would be added to the agenda for the January 2024 meeting.

7.3 KGV FIELD – UPDATE ON WORKS

The Clerk had circulated the most recent Works Schedule from Capel Groundcare prior to the meeting and it was noted that the final cut had now taken place.

The Clerk reported that the BMX weedkilling and fence repair works had not yet taken place due to the weather and a personal injury, but the repairs would be carried out week commencing 11th December.

7.4 KGV QUARTERLY INSPECTION REPORT

The Quarterly Inspection Report had been circulated ahead of the meeting and it was agreed by all Councillors that any works needed to be done were low maintenance or previously known about, so no action is required.

Cllr Van Hensbergen had noticed some rotting wood around the tarmac area of the fitness equipment which was a trip hazard. Cllr Van Hensbergen to send photos of this to the Clerk to investigate.

7.5 UPDATE ON TENDERS FOR GROUND MAINTENANCE WORKS COMMENCING FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024

The Clerk reported that tender documents had been sent to 4 ground maintenance companies and 1 company had responded to say they did not have capacity. Clerk to chase up return of the 3 tender documents by 5th January 2024.

8. CHURCHYARD

Cllr Bennett reported that everything was looking good at the Churchyard.

9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

9.1 SPEEDING

The Clerk had circulated results of the KCC speeding survey in advance of the meeting, which stated that on average, there were no speeding occurrences at the points it was measured. Discussions were had as to other ways to improve areas where speeding is taking place and it was agreed that a letter would be written, by the Parish Council, on behalf of Speedwatch to assist with areas to set up their equipment and, as offered by KCC, the word 'SLOW' could be painted on the road in various places. Clerk to contact KCC about painting 'SLOW's on the road and to write a letter on behalf of Speedwatch. It was agreed by all Councillors that the cost of the proposed LED lights for the zebra crossing was over budget, being £5,800 for one set of lights.

9.2 TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY ISSUES AT HAMPSTEAD LANE AND STATION ROAD AND BOW HILL JUNCTION WITH THE B2015

Cllr Webb advised that it would cost circa £20,000 to carry out the works for the proposed footpath at Hampstead Lane, which would involve adding expensive drainage ditch covers.

Cllr Webb further advised that he had spoken to a colleague regarding the traffic issue at Bow Hill Junction with the B2015, photos and investigations were undertaken, but it is not possible to carry out the works. The resident has been advised.

Cllr Webb to follow up on the request for a road sign at Bow Hill.

9.3 UPDATE ON REPAIRS REPORTED FOR THE OVERGROWN WEEDS FROM GIBBS HILL TO NETTLESTEAD GREEN, THE BROKEN BUS STOP SIGN, THE BUS SHELTER ADJACENT TO TRADE IN TACKLE AND THE POTHOLE IN THE PAVEMENT OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

Cllr Van Hensbergen advised that the pothole had been repaired and Cllr Corfe advised that part of the works to kill the weeds had been carried out, the weeds are now dying off and would need to be checked in Spring for new growth. Clerk to look into this in Spring. Clerk to chase up the broken bus stop sign and bus shelter works.

9.4 STREETLIGHTS – ENERGY SUPPLY TARRIFF

The Clerk had circulated a quote from SSE provided by Utility Aid, ahead of the meeting and it was resolved by all members to sign up with SSE on this basis. Clerk to action this.

10. OLD SCHOOL HOUSE CLOCK

Cllr Corfe advised that the service is due in December 2023 and the clock is currently working fine. It was agreed by all Councillors to delay the service until April/May into the next budget. Clerk to email service company to postpone the service.

11. PLANNING MATTERS

11.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

23/505192/FULL	The Three Sons Hampstead Lane Nettlestead Kent ME18 5HN Retrospective change of use of the land for the accommodation of one Gypsy and Traveller pitch for personal, temporary occupation for a period of 5 years only. Siting of two Mobile homes, two touring caravans and two day rooms with 2no. ancillary outbuildings. Associated hard and soft landscaping. Expiry Date: 22 December 2023 IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS PRESENT TO OBJECT DUE TO THE AREA BEING A HIGH FLOOD RISK AND IN METROPOLITAN GREENBELT
23/505209/NMAMD	Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ Non material amendment to 22/504426/REM : Approval of reserved matters of scale, layout, appearance and landscaping for

	<p>Phase A being site entrance works, gatehouse building, fencing, construction of the conveyance channel, first section of distributor road, bridge over conveyance channel, and associated landscaping pursuant to 19/504910/OUT including conditions 7 and 12 (Outline application for the redevelopment of the former Syngenta works site to provide a new business park of up to 46,447 sqm of B1(c), B2 and B8 accommodation with associated access, parking and infrastructure works).</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS PRESENT TO MAKE NO COMMENT</p>
23/505172/SUB	<p>Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ</p> <p>Submission of details to discharge conditions 16 - Noise Mitigation Measures and 17 - Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure, Subject to 23/502119/OUT.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS PRESENT TO MAKE NO COMMENT</p>

11.2 DECISIONS MADE BY MBC

23/502119/OUT	<p>Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ</p> <p>Section 73 - Application for variation of condition 21 to allow 14,000m² of floorspace to be occupied prior to the provision of the capacity improvements to the Maidstone Road/Hampstead Lane junction pursuant to 19/504910/OUT - Outline application for the redevelopment of the former Syngenta works site to provide a new business park of up to 46,447 sqm of B1(c), B2 and B8 accommodation with associated access, parking and infrastructure works.</p> <p>APPLICATION PERMITTED</p>
23/503746/FULL	<p>Three Pines Gibbs Hill Nettlestead Maidstone Kent ME18 5HS</p> <p>Erection of a single storey front/side extensions, a single storey porch extension, garage conversion to</p>

	<p>habitable accommodation and infilling of undercroft, upper floor extension to either side of dormer and a two storey rear extension.</p> <p>APPLICATION REFUSED</p>
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11.3 PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE

None.

12. FINANCE

12.1 RESOLUTION TO RECEIVE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2023

Cllr Meredith reported that the Clerk's salary noted on the BM Report for this month was unusually high, due to it being a combination of increased and backdated pay for the current Clerk and for the previous Clerk, in line with KALC issuing the new SLCC salary scales for 2023/24.

Cllr Meredith signed the invoices and advised that the direct debits had been paid.

RESOLVED by all members to approve the Budget Monitoring report for DECEMBER 2023.

12.2 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PAYMENTS FOR DECEMBER 2023

Cllr Meredith and Cllr Corfe signed the cheques. **RESOLVED by all members** to approve payments for DECEMBER 2023.

It was **RESOLVED by all members** to approve the Bank Reconciliation and this was signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

NPC CHEQUE LIST - DECEMBER 2023					
Cheque No	Gross	VAT	Nett		Details
DIRECT TFR	£680.50	£0.00	£680.50	GROBER LTD	WARMSPACE
622356	£198.00	£0.00	£198.00	HADLUM DESIGN	PARISH MAGAZINE PRINTING - NOV
622357	£212.54	£35.42	£177.12	STREETLIGHTS	STREETLIGHTS - PYMT 3 OF 4
622358	£98.40	£16.40	£82.00	PLAYSAFETY LIMITED	ROSPA AUG INV - NOV
622359	£478.62	£79.77	£398.85	CAPEL GROUND CARE	GM CONTRACT - NOV
622360	£61.43	£0.00	£61.43	SUZANNE SEAL	OUTDOOR PLAY EQUIPMENT INSPECTION - NOV
622361	£826.62	£0.00	£826.62	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S EXPENSES - NOV
622361	£826.62	£0.00	£826.62	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S SALARY - NOV
622362	£636.61	£0.00	£636.61	JACKIE BENNETT	JACKIE BENNETT - SUMMER SPACE - NOV
622363	£152.00	£0.00	£152.00	MICHELLE RUMBLE	MICHELLE RUMBLE - BACKDATED PAY INCREASE
622364	£38.00	£0.00	£38.00	HMRC	HMRC TAX PAYMENT FOR MICHELLE RUMBLE
	£3,382.72	£131.59	£3,251.13		
DD 161123	£9.60	£1.60	£8.00	SAGE PAYROLL	PAYROLL FEE - NOV
DD 271123	£183.33	£8.73	£174.60	NPOWER BUSINESS	STREET LIGHTING ENERGY - NOV
	£3,575.65	£141.92	£3,433.73		

12.3 RESOLUTION TO AUTHORISE SETTING UP A NEW STANDING ORDER TO PAY THE NEW CLERK

Cllr Meredith to arrange once the Santander account has been closed and transferred to Unity Bank.

12.4 INTERNET BANKING

Cllr Meredith to continue to check when the Santander account address has been updated to his address.

12.5 BUDGET FOR 2024/SECOND DRAFT

Cllr Meredith circulated a second draft of the budget for discussion and the following points were agreed by all Councillors:

- An increased budget for streetlight supply and maintenance due to the quote for works received from Streetlights.
- To keep the contingency at £1,000.
- To keep maintenance costs for KGV field as per the previous budget, but possibly to utilise some of the capital costs to help the Village Hall.

Clerk to check the annual service cost of the Clock to add to the budget.

12.6 SCRIBE SOFTWARE PACKAGE

This agenda item was not discussed due to time constraints and would be added to the agenda for the January 2024 meeting. The Clerk to continue to look into this matter.

13. SOCIAL MEDIA

This agenda item was not discussed due to time constraints and would be added to the agenda for the January 2024 meeting.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

14.1 KALC COMMUNITY AWARDS SCHEME 2024

The Clerk circulated the papers ahead of the meeting and it was agreed that the information would be shared on Facebook and has already been in the Parish Magazine. The scheme is for individuals to vote for a resident/group of residents who have made a significant contribution to the local community. Clerk to send information to Becky Pullen.

14.2 RESILIENCE PLAN

Cllr Green stated that Nettlestead do not currently have a Resilience Plan which provides information on steps to take in the parish during an emergency such as a flood or fire. The Clerk to report back on the process of setting up the plan.

14.3 RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND PHASE 2

Brief discussions were had as to applying for the fund. Clerk to look into this further.

15. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Village Hall

KGV Field – Tree Grant Scheme

KGV Field - Public Consultation Survey Results

KGV Field - Tenders for Grounds Maintenance

Traffic and Highways Issues – Speeding

Old School House Clock

Scribe Software Package

Internet Banking

Update on the Budget for 2024

Update on repairs reported for the broken bus stop sign and the bus shelter

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday 11th January 2024 at 7:45pm at Nettlestead Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.25pm