

Minutes of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 2nd January 2024.

Present: Cllrs: K Howard-Challis (Chair); Cllr M Szabo (Vice-chair); A Groves; T Portman; A Smith
In attendance: Members of the public: 4

1. To receive **Apologies for absence.**

Ann Smith (Clerk) and P C Chittim sent their apologies.

2. To receive any **Declarations of Pecuniary or Non Pecuniary Interest**, and any Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items. (Requirement of the Localism Act 2011.)
None.

3. **Public session**

A resident from Vicarage Lane informed the Parish Council that there is a “Making Space for Nature” nationwide strategy with an online briefing for community groups on 18th January that she will be attending. There is also an event being held of a whole day at the Riverside County Park.

A concern was raised that lighting and signage is non-existent for Orchard View and Stable Mews, the small developments in School Lane.

One of the barges at the wharf has been broken into by a group of teenagers.

The resident also raised the subject that the work for the 20 mph zone does not appear to have been finished. The Parish Council are aware that the work is not what was expected or required and are trying very hard to get KCC to bring the work up to the standard that was agreed at the beginning of the project.

4. **Visitors.** Reports or comments from:

a) KCC Councillors;

None.

b) SBC Councillors;

None

c) Police Officer Jez Chittim reported that there was nothing of note this month.

d) Friends of the Brickfields

Southern Water have left a mess in the area that they have been working in. They have returned to erect some plastic fencing, but in the process have demolished some sheep fencing with a large vehicle. One of the volunteers reported that where they were working there were empty drink cans and food wrappers left. Cllr Szabo will take this up with his contact at Southern Water, he also has some issues that have not been addressed.

Action: Cllr Szabo

5. **To resolve Minutes**

It was resolved that the Minutes of the Monthly Parish meeting held on Tuesday 5th December 2023 are a correct record. As the Clerk was unable to attend, they will be signed at the next meeting.

6. **To discuss any planning applications received between producing the agenda and this meeting.**

None received.

7. **Matters arising:**

a) The draft contract for signature regarding the purchase of the freehold land subject to lease North of The Street, Sittingbourne, Kent for the sum of £1000 plus the seller’s fees of £1500 plus VAT (£1800.00) was approved.

Action: Clerk

8. Finance:

- a) The Parish Council approved to keep the precept requirement to £37,740.00. It has been kept at this level for the past 5 years. The Council tax base for the Parish for 2024/25 is £454.51. Parish Band D Council tax 2024/25 is £83.03

Action: Clerk

- b) The quote for 35 litter pickers was proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis, seconded by Cllr Smith, and agreed unanimously.

Action: Clerk

9. Policies:

- a) Review of Westfield of Westfield Car Park tenancy agreement, terms and conditions. It was agreed to defer to the next meeting.

10. To receive reports on the following:

- a) Parks & Leisure and Planning
No report.
- b) Footpaths and Hedgerow maintenance, Burial Ground.
The brown bins have been collected. Nothing else to report.
- c) Allotments
Cllr Groves has checked on the taps, which are all fine, but otherwise nothing to report.
- d) Parish Highways Plan
No report.
- e) Brickfields and Seawall
The steps at Church Path have now been repaired.

11. Clerk's Report

Payments received during November totalled £561.53. This included £18.75 for allotment rents and £542.78 wharf payments from the barges.

The Clerk made an enquiry to KCC regarding the bridge in School Lane and they replied that the structure in question is comprised of three separate small diameter pipes rather than a traditional bridge/culvert construction. As such it would not have a weight limit imposed or need any warning signs. KCC inspect this structure on a 22-month cycle so that any damage can be monitored and repaired if necessary.

Swale Borough Council contacted me to say that the brown bins had been successfully collected on 14th December. There is still an anomaly as they have three subscriptions in my name, one of which could be for the Church.

Three park benches have been ordered and received for placement at the Recreation Ground.

The bank balance as of 31st December 2023 is £69,126.98

It was agreed that Cllrs Howard-Challis and Szabo would authorise the payments, as per the payment list below, via internet banking.

12. Items for information only:

- a) Items for Website and Village News
To advertise that the Parish Council need more councillors.
Cllr Portman requested an agenda item regarding planting of some young trees for the February meeting.
The street lighting at Stable Mews and the new development will be looked into.

The meeting closed at: 19:49

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 6th February 2024

Payments January 2024

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and Salary	1143.81		573789362
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning November	125.04		357393073
Intelligent Facility Services	CCTV SIM Service Invoice: 08893	30.00	5.00	39404214
DCK Payroll Solutions	Payroll Process Invoice: P4792	36.00	6.00	535951393
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust	Hire of Hall 7/11/23 Invoice:61	21.25		741450524
FuturForm	3 x Park Benches Invoice: 235004	900.00	150.00	10006784
D Pascoe	Grounds Maintenance Invoice: 045	2900.00		378694314
ATS	Repair to Church Path Steps 22 December 2023	1250.00		Cheque 300030
Cllr T Portman	Reimbursement for HP 305 Combo	28.49		142721710

Other Payments: Multipay - Direct Debit 9/1/24

£3.00

Date:

Signed:

**Cllr. K Howard-Challis
Chair**