

**Minutes** of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Present: Cllrs: K Howard-Challis (Chair); Cllr M Szabo (Vice-chair); A Groves; T Portman; A Smith and Mrs A I Smith (Clerk)

In attendance: Members of the public: 7

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

None received.

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**

Cllr Howard-Challis had asked Mr Gates to attend the meeting to give an update on the arrangements for the D-Day anniversary, which is taking place this year. A simple programme has been arranged and a DJ provisionally booked to play some appropriate music. There would be a cost of £150. There will be a reading of the international tribute. A risk assessment has been completed and sent to the Clerk. The Beacon will be lit at the appropriate time. Safety barriers using cones and tape for the edge of the dock and the beacon, fire buckets will also be provided. The Clerk will inform the Fire Service of the event. Marshalls and a first-aider need to be arranged. Mr Gates will register the event with the pageant master and arrange press releases. A contingency plan will be needed to be in place in case of bad weather. Cllr Szabo will check regarding the availability of the hall for this. Cllr Portman will liaise with the event committee. It will be National Fish and Chip day and it was suggested that the Three Tuns may already be providing that.

A resident commended the work done on the steps up to the dock.

At this point in the meeting the Parish Council voted and agreed unanimously to discuss item 9b.

**Report on Allotments**

9b) Cllr Groves read to the meeting the Parish Council letter regarding non-cultivation of an allotment, which refers to an £80 charge if a contractor needed to be employed to clear an uncultivated allotment. The letter was originated some time ago and the £80 charge may not now be correct or appropriate. It was agreed to remove the cost from the letter.

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

a) KCC Councillors;

There is some good news that there is an agreement that bus service subsidies will not be cut this year. Cllr Baldock had met with the bus companies and they reported that they are not getting development money for new services where there are new developments. Parents are now choosing schools for their children and they need good advice regarding not applying for unrealistic outcomes, to avoid a repeat of last year. It is a complex system.

b) SBC Councillors;

None

c) Police Officer Jez Chittim.

**Incidents of note:** There were an unusual number of road traffic collisions on 10/01/2024 in Lower Halstow on Sheerness Road, three in total. These were all attended by police and investigated and only one minor injury reported. These incidents were all attributed to there being black ice on the road.

**Good work story/stories:** Whilst conducting a police surgery at an UpARA event in Upchurch in January, a Lower Halstow resident approached me and stated that he was concerned of speeding vehicles along The Street. On Monday 5th February, I conducted

some speed checks. Having checked numerous vehicles in a fairly short period of time, the majority of vehicles were travelling between 17mph and 22mph, however there were two vehicles travelling at 30mph. These vehicles were both pulled over and the drivers given words of advice. One driver was local to the village; one uses it daily as a cut through to and from their place of work. Please advertise the fact I will be conducting random speed checks each month in Lower Halstow and if required, I will take enforcement action.

d) **Friends of the Brickfields**

Cllr reported that Southern Water are yet to repair the fencing that they removed on the brickfield near the broken pipe, they did put in some temporary stakes on another bend, but the area is still a sludgy mess. Southern Water will be contacted again in regards to this. The next work party will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

5. **To resolve the Minutes**

It was resolved that the Minutes of the Monthly Parish meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 are a correct record and were signed accordingly, together with the Minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

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

Application Ref: 24/500312/FULL. Erection of first-floor rear extension and side porch. Address: 49 Landrai Road, Lower Halstow. ME0 7DJ

The Parish Council agreed to submit a comment that they support this application on the Swale Borough Council portal.

7. **Matters arising:**

a) **To approve planting of young trees in the village.**

Cllr Portman has two Birch; two Conifers; one Yew tree and one Oak tree that she would like to plant. The Yew tree, which is currently very small, was suggested that it be planted near to the Queen's Jubilee Oak on Britannia Green, as there is room there. The Birch trees could go on the Recreation Ground in the line of trees already there. Cllr Portman asked for ideas as to where the Oak tree and the conifers might go. Conifers are the best trees to combat pollution.

b) **To approve plans for 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D Day 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024.** Cllr Howard-Challis proposed to accept the Risk Assessment that had been circulated. It was seconded by Cllr Szabo and agreed unanimously. It was also proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis, seconded by Cllr Smith that the fee for the DJ at the event is paid for from Parish Council funds. Agreed unanimously.

c) **Pre-Submission draft of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039.** The Parish Council does not have the resources to have anyone to read all the referenced material in this document, and then report the findings back to the Parish Council with any understanding and authority. It was agreed to make this comment back to the public consultation.

**Action: Clerk**

8. **Finance:**

a) **Grounds Maintenance Contracts**

The Parish Council considered the estimates provided. Unfortunately, they were not like for like. The Clerk will ask the contractor to supply some further information to enable the Council to come to a decision.

**Action: Clerk**

9. **Policies:**

a) **Review of Westfield of Westfield Car Park tenancy agreement, terms and conditions.**

It was agreed not to make any changes to the tenancy agreement including the fees.

b) **Review Allotment Tenancy Agreement**

As discussed above.

10. **Correspondence**

a) **Email received requesting bigger, brighter lights for the Christmas tree.** The Parish Council has previously looked into having power put into the area around The Green. There are gas

and telephone cables on all three sides. Any trenches would have to be hand dug, the bus stop temporarily moved and the quote came in at £7500 just for some cabling and the Parish Council do not have the funds to justify this expense. Cllr Szabo is still trying to source suitable battery operated commercial grade that are nice and bright.

Cllr Groves left the meeting at 19.40.

**11. To receive reports on the following:**

- a) Parks & Leisure and Planning  
Nothing to report.
- b) Footpaths and Hedgerow maintenance, Burial Ground.  
Cllr Portman had been asked if there should be more signage to say "Keep dogs on leads" particularly on footpaths and around livestock. It was discussed that dogs must be kept under control, but not on leads on a public right of way. Cllrs Smith and Portman will look into this further.  
Cllr Portman has checked the tap at the Burial Ground and it is leaking very slightly. A plumber has been contacted. The collection of the Brown bins is very hit and miss. Swale Borough Council have new contractors starting and it hoped there will be an improvement in this service.
- c) Allotments  
No report
- d) Parish Highways Plan  
Lower Halstow Parish Council are still not happy with the 20 mph zone. It was noted that there were three accidents in Lower Halstow this month. There are many walkers, dog walkers and parents with children using Lower Halstow roads and not all of them have pavements. It appears that there are two different schemes and the buffer zones or lack of buffer zones are not consistent with other schemes locally.
- e) Brickfields and Seawall  
Cllr Portman together with a member of Friends of the Brickfields have been travelling around looking at the various country parks and their signage.  
The Noticeboard at The Green is difficult to use and is leaking.

**12. Clerk's Report**

Payments received during November totalled £577.78. This included £35.00 for allotment rents and £542.78 wharf payments from the barges.

The litter picking equipment for the School has been ordered and received, as has the reflectors for the car park.

The Clerk has requested a street clean for Lapwing Drive and reported the fly tipping at Raspberry Hill.

The Parish Council solicitors were asked for an update regarding the purchase of the land at the Brickfields, but as yet, there has been no response.

The bank balance as of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 is £60,853.26

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

**13. Items for information only:**

- a) Items for Website and Village News
- b) To receive agenda items for the next meeting  
Badly parked cars.

The meeting closed at 19.57

**Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Payments February 2024

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and Salary	777.80		771837875
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning November	125.04	214.24	832732400
Intelligent Facility Services	CCTV SIM Service Invoice: 08893	30.00	5.00	189064907
DCK Payroll Solutions	Payroll Process Invoice: P4792	36.00	6.00	46394883
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust	Hire of Hall 7/11/23 Invoice:61	21.25		762964917
R H Parker	Emergency Work for leak at Westfield Allotments.Invoice: 0989	1500.00	250.00	685857806
Business Stream	Water Services Invoice: 4163209	53.80		4163209
HMRC	PAYE Oct – Dec 2023	297.92		278126609
Rexel UK Ltd	249.00	41.50		485485739
Mazars	External Audit Invoice: 2294435	378.00	63.00	140519363
L Stevens & Son	Rent for Westfield car park and allotments Oct 2023 – Octo 2024 Invoice 0627	200.00		75069643

Other Payments: Multipay - Direct Debit 9/2/24  
EDF – Direct Debit 16/1/24

£3.00  
£364.91

Date:

Signed:

Cllr. K Howard-Challis  
Chair