



Ulcombe Annual Parish Meeting

Annual Parish Meeting of Ulcombe Parish to be held in Ulcombe Village Hall
Thursday 12th May 2022 at 6.00pm.

Minutes

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Fiona Kenward, Chairman of Ulcombe Parish Council.
In Attendance: Irene Bowie (Parish Clerk) . 21 Members of the public

Julian Coleman from Manor Cottages, a member of the flood resilience group, gave a demonstration of a flood monitor system he developed. He was thanked by the assembly and congratulated on his excellent demonstration.

1. Welcome by Cllr Fiona Kenward (Chairman of the Parish Council). Cllr Kenward welcomed all residents and guest to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12th September 2021 . The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

3. County and Borough Councillor Reports

COVID remained a priority issue to address and as the Environmental Health Authority/Public Health Authority much time and effort was resourced into various partnerships together with the Emergency Planning resources of County/ KCC and the other agencies.

Its been a massive change at MBC with last Mays Elections results shaking up the mix and personalities at the Town Hall. New Leadership has proposed and Council has agreed:

- a New Constitution returning to a Cabinet and Leader Executive decision making system that means faster turnaround in decision making and changes-to start May 2022
- a new 4 yearly Election system, to save election costs -to start 2024
- A revised membership of 48 Members (now 55) with Ward changes – to be considered by the Electoral Commission hopefully for 2024 to save costs and reflect many changes.
- And with that Corporate Management changes will be required.

A quasi interim Cabinet has formulated several new directions in readiness for May 2022:

A new 5 year Local Plan has been agreed and presented to Inspectors. This will still nonetheless continue to be “work in progress” as Policies will be changed and the work of the Planning Committee will reveal new needs and expectations.

Staffing has been a challenge in most areas, with Planning being the biggest one especially in Enforcement and “application chasing”. This also takes up massive Ward Member time.

This Ward has had numerous problems reflecting “Conditions” amendments and simple non-adherence, plus water/flooding issues.

Community, Housing and Environmental concerns are high. Golding Homes, the biggest community house provider has slowly improved after major problems. A rise in ASB in most parts of the Borough has required new and better partnership working.

The management of the Bin service has been very difficult in the last two years. Labour-Driver shortage and fuel costs means a review of the services and contract.

Post Covid the economy has returned to something like previous levels but in different ways. This calls for a different approach. Thus the ERL Committee have stimulated support through grants and increased events and activities.

Health based issues-to the fore- suggest we need to re-examine recreation, community and leisure needs. A consultation IN HEADCORN will be set up soon.

Maidstone as a town needs a “revamp” . Already the Riverside and Lock Meadow has been spruced up, but there’s more to come. We no longer “live in” rented offices, we’ve bought them! That has SAVED money in rents. It also allows income too.

(We reviewed costs and assets very early in the new Leadership; we made some cuts/savings and put more into other areas whilst seeing opportunity).

We have decided to grasp the nettle of housebuilding, and build 1000 MBC homes for local people. We will reflect a range of needs.

Overall, one of our priorities is we MUST cut our energy use and look at different ways of managing our environment. MBC has made great strides from reducing lighting to going to greener transport. MBC is the 25th Best authority for doing this according to a recent audit, but it needs to be better.

That keeps the report reasonably short, but at this juncture I must thank Parish Councils, their Chairs and their Clerks for their major contribution to local communities.

Martin

Martin Round

CHAIR of Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee

Council Member for Headcorn Ward that includes Hawkenbury, East Sutton, Ulcombe & Boughton Malherbe/Grafty Green

4. Report from the Chairman of Ulcombe Parish Council.

Welcome to our annual meeting of the parish . Following on from our delayed meeting in September 2021, we have reverted to a more traditional style of meeting tonight, which will feature reports from most of the village organisations.

We have moved to holding parish council meetings on a bi-monthly basis - hence since September we have held 3 full council meetings. There has been one extraordinary parish council meeting, and a flood update meeting which was hosted by the parish council.

The parish council has commented on consultations on the proposed Heathlands village at Lenham heath, the possible demise of the 59 bus service, the role of our pcso, and a local boundary review.

Since September we have received and commented on 27 planning applications - this is a considerable increase in the number of application on the previous year. We have one outstanding application which is still waiting to go to an appeal hearing - the most recent attempt was again delayed by covid.

We have attended several meetings with Kent police and Maidstone Borough Council - we are part of a cluster group along with our fellow parishes of Headcorn and Grafty Green. A recent meeting hosted by our MP Helen Whatley discussed the ongoing problem of speeding traffic throughout the area.

John Boyd our pcso is still in situ, but there is an ongoing review by Kent Police looking at how resources would be best organised.

As John has provided our parish with a lot of support and advice- both at police surgeries and to individuals who have been victims of crime, we feel this would not be a positive outcome for Ulcombe.

Highways - the same concerns continue to be raised by parishioners - the appalling and dangerous state of our roads - including the whole length of road between Ulcombe and Headcorn. Problems with speeding are evident across the whole of the parish - and we have discussed with our Kent Highways partner possible ways of slowing traffic as it comes down Ulcombe Hill and through the village. One of our problems is that the verge at the edge of the roads approaching the village is so narrow that it is impossible to put up gates or further signage as seen in other villages. Kent Highways did carry out a speed survey earlier this year, but it was most unfortunate that the speed wires were positioned by a line

of cones outside Street Farm, this caused traffic to slow down, and thus the results probably did not give an accurate picture of the traffic speed as it comes into the village from the hill end. We will continue to push for speed reduction measures where appropriate.

Our thanks to Richard Pilborough who has been working to set up a Lorrywatch scheme on Chegworth Road. We hope to get this up and running shortly - if you would like to volunteer to be part of the scheme please let us know.

Litter and flytipping continue - although since the introduction of mobile cctv cameras and signage, there has been a marked decrease in the volume of flytipping. Litter is an ongoing eyesore - and our thanks go to the many parishioners who litter pick around our parish.

Following the unprecedented flooding in the parish last August, a flood resilience group was set up. Our thanks to Councillor Matt Lingwood who lead this group. A flood resilience plan is now in place, we have trained flood wardens, and the parish council has agreed expenditure for the resources identified by the group.

The parish council is looking at the feasibility of a neighbourhood plan for Ulcombe Parish. To this end our clerk Irene has submitted an application to Maidstone Borough Council. This follows on from MBC's section 19 of the proposed local plan, which laid out suggest housing figures for the local villages of Maidstone. Ulcombe's figure was 35. The next step in the neighbourhood plan process would be a consultation event for all parishioners. This will be widely advertised.

The recreation ground continues to be used by the Headcorn Football Club, this season they have had two teams playing. it is good to see our facility being used.

You may have noticed a new 3 bay noticeboard on the outside wall of the village hall - this is to display any parish news or events.

Further upgrades for the outside space are in the pipeline.

Over the past 6 months, donations were made to the newly set up community breakfast club, the village hall committee for a Christmas tree and Ulcombe Church to cover the cost of the electricity for the floodlighting. The parish council will be purchasing some trees to be planted by the pupils of Ulcombe primary School to celebrate the Queens Jubilee. This will take place later in the year.

Parish Council finances are managed responsibly. The Council has an agreed a set of financial regulations and also ensures that an independent internal audit is carried out each year. To help control Council finances we also agree an annual budget. Each year we complete an annual return to confirm that everything is in order.

The following figures are unaudited.

Total receipts in 2021/22 were £ 26,408. The precept was 23,606, Bank Interest was £1 (actually 57p), MBC parish Services Scheme was £2,121, and £600 rent from Headcorn Football .

Total payments were £ 22891.46 which was an underspend against budget of £4388.87. The underspend came primarily from planned projects that were unable to be undertaken including the Parish Pump restoration, Honorarium and Road upgrades.

5. Reports from Village Organisations and Representatives.

Ulcombe History Society

Ulcombe History Society's first post Covid event of 2021 was a subsidised trip to Parham House in September, which was much enjoyed. We resumed our talks in October with Simon Odam's dramatised presentation of the History of Mining, which was a great success.

Our postponed AGM was held in November, when a number of changes were made to the committee. Chair Molly Poulter, who originally set up the society, and Treasurer John Moore both retired after working

hard in these roles for 19 years. Molly was elected President and John Moore remains Secretary for Trips. Leila Ware was elected Chair, and Derrick Parkes Treasurer. Beverley Martin has become Speakers Secretary. Leila remains Membership Secretary and Bridget Samuelson Secretary

It was agreed to reduce the 2022 membership fee for existing members (to reflect the reduced number of talks which we were able to deliver during Covid) but charge new members £15. This includes eight talks and the opportunity to join an evening outing to Lenham for an historic tour and a day trip. The latter happened last Sunday – a coach trip to Strawberry Hill and Ham House. We are now booking speakers for 2023 and are open to suggestions.

An ongoing membership campaign has brought us 8 new members and attracts several guests to every meeting. Ulcombe History Society is flourishing!

Ulcombe Church of England Primary School

The past year has been a challenge for us because of Covid19 restrictions and school closures as a result. I am pleased to say that we are now fully functioning and all children have had their learning needs assessed and have made good if not accelerated progress in all areas in an attempt to bridge the gaps in learning caused by the pandemic. Aside from that the children are enjoying a range of learning opportunities both in school and as part of the wider Aspire Federation. The school has been lucky to receive some donations and grants all of which are being used to fund projects which will enhance and support the mental wellbeing and health of every child.

Mrs Masters

Head of School April 2022

The Committee of The Friends of All Saints, Ulcombe.

have worked hard to raise money towards the upkeep of Ulcombe's beautiful church. Since 2013 they have given nearly £24,000 to the church. We provided a kitchen and various facilities such as tables, an oven, and sundries like a tea urn. We have paid for the cost of the new glass door, the new notice boards, and some toilet improvements. We have contributed to church music and church flowers. We also, for the last four years, have paid the church insurance of over £2,000 per annum.

The Covid pandemic stopped much of our fund raising activity but we did manage to organise a most enjoyable concert by the Boughton Monchelsea Singers, led by Fiona Kenward.

Then, in October, we launched our new History of All Saints Parish Church, Ulcombe. Following the precedent set at the Millennium, when every resident of Ulcombe received a free copy of Ulcombe's Story, The Friends decided to give a free copy to each household in Ulcombe. The last history of the Church was written in the 1980s by Geoffrey Moorcroft. All the copies, except archival copies, have long since run out.

The present History, written by Molly Poulter, is based in part on Geoffrey Moorcroft's account but contains a lot of new material. It is set in two parts. The first part is a history of the church (as far as it is known) and the second is a numbered guided tour round the church, starting at the main entrance.

Then the Friends decided to place a Blue Plaque on the church wall to commemorate Saint Cardinal Newman's two visits to Ulcombe in 1826 and 1827. He stayed at the Rectory and looked after the parish while the Rector, Samuel Rickards and his family went on holiday. Newman was made a Saint in 2019.

The plaque was placed on the wall leading to the church and it was unveiled by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Lady Colgrain on Sunday 12 December 2022. The gathering then repaired to the church for tea and a talk on Cardinal Newman by Charles Lord Moore of Etringham (biographer of Margaret Thatcher).

The Friends have three events planned for the rest of the year – a Garden Safari on Saturday the 9th of July, a jazz concert in October, and a Bingo session in November.

Molly Poulter

Headcorn Football Club.

Headcorn Football Club would like to extend their gratitude to Ulcombe Parish Council for the continued support in the rental of the pitches for our Junior teams. Without this support we would not be able to fulfil the demand we face given our own site is not large enough to accommodate all of our teams. We look forward to continuing this partnership over the years to come.

Thank you.

James Beecher

Ulcombe Friendship Club

In December the Ulcombe friendship club met up for a Christmas lunch at the Weald of Kent golf club. It was attended by many of our members who we had not seen since the start of covid. Our club restarted after covid restrictions were lifted in February when we had a meeting at Hythe Crest Lenham Rd to discuss the programme for this coming year. March we had our annual AGM and arrangements were made for a fish and chip lunch in May with outings planned to Tenterden garden centre a river trip with guided tour of Allington castle, tour of the orchards at Brogdale Faversham. At the end of the year in October we have hired a coach for a trip to see the Autumn colours in the Ashdown Forest with an included Ploughman's lunch at Heaven Farm, this trip will also be an outing extended to non members which will be advertised nearer the time.

Melanie Ford

Community Breakfast Report.

We started the community breakfast last November and we have now held 6 events. It is held on the 3rd Saturday of the month in the Village Hall. We have 11 volunteers and me, who run the sessions. We started with 3 generous donations from the Parish Council, All Saints Church and my partners business Classic Filters Ltd for which we are very grateful. This meant we could buy all the equipment and food we needed for the 1st breakfast then after that each breakfast has funded the next one with any monies left over being split between the Church and the community. To date we have given the Church £320.00 the school has had £230.00 to buy games for a club they run and another £90.00 has been given for the next community project so that means we have raised £640.00 to date.

Nicky

Ulcombe Share and Repair

Ulcombe Share and Repair is all about sharing Plants, seeds and Books which I think most people have an interest in one of these, if not, we have the repair Cafe that people of Ulcombe can come with items that need repairing and we have a team who will take a look and repair if possible.

We invite people to come along who may not be interested in Gardening or books but want to join in the Social side of things, so we offer Tea and Cake and a friendly chat. Also outings, one is planned for the 9th July to the Sky Garden in London.

My idea in the first place was to try and offer something that may interest a lot of people not just a few!

Christina Cox

ULCOMBE VILLAGE HALL 2022 REPORT

Our regular hirers are slowly returning to the hall, the badminton club and the history society being the most regular. The small dance group have also returned .

We also have some new groups such as the Ulcombe Share and Repair/Plant, Book, Toy and CD exchange, the Monday night craft club and the community breakfasts; all groups hiring the hall on a monthly basis.

On the 27th November we held the Christmas bazaar which was attended by many. We hope this is going to be an annual event. We were able to make a donation to the Heart of Kent Hospice and thank those that attended the bazaar, as it is thanks to them that we were able to do this.

We have had several bookings for birthday parties and we had our first baby shower this year.

On Christmas Day the hall was hired by a local family of 35 for the day so they could all get together in the same place. They decorated it beautifully for the occasion.

The hall is also being hired as a polling station and by organisations running training events.

The hall still needs more bookings to cover all of the running costs which have all increased, some of them significantly such as energy.

A sound reinforcement system has been installed that includes an induction loop for the benefit of those using hearing aids.

Sadly we have to report that the defibrillator cabinet was vandalised. Why anyone would want to damage a piece of potentially life saving equipment is beyond our understanding. There has also been a theft from a vehicle in the car park.

Quotes have been obtained for the upgrading of the CCTV system and funding for this is under discussion as it will have to be paid for by the village hall; there currently being no other sources of funding.

The parish council funded and arranged external toilets for the use of the football club as the pavilion toilet is no longer usable due to changes in environmental regulations. These toilets take their water and electricity supplies from the hall and also use the hall's sewerage system.

6. Presentation to the recipient of the KALC Community Award 2022

The parish council had unanimously nominated RHIAN BANHAM for a KALC Community Award.

The Chairman of the Parish Council , Councillor Kenward , made the presentation. The citation read:

Rhian is involved with all aspects of parish life. She assists many elderly residents. She has organised many village activities. Nothing is too much trouble for her.

7. Public Questions and Comments through the Chairman.

Questions were asked regarding the Village Newsletter , Flooding Matters, Highways Matters.

Signed : *Rachel Robinson*

Date: 18th May 2023