

Minutes of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 7th March 2023.

Present: Cllrs: K Howard-Challis (Chair); M Szabo (Vice-chair); T Portman; A Smith;
In attendance: 5 members of the public

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs Groves and Woodford and Mrs A Smith

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.)

Cllr Smith declared an interest in item 9(a)

3. **Public session.**

A resident from Wardwell Lane reported that KCC have repaired over 20 potholes in the locality including the particularly deep one at The Stray. He also commented that not everyone in Lower Halstow is able to connect to the ultrafast fibre broadband. Those areas that are served by a pole as opposed to underground cables are still waiting for connection. The Yacht club has raised the issue with BT.

A resident from Heron Close reported that he has had no response regarding his request for information about dwellings being built within a six-mile radius of Lower Halstow from either Cllrs Baldock or Woodford. He has now submitted a Freedom of Information request to both Medway Council and Swale Borough Council. The government website states that a reply should be received within 20 working day and if it isn't it the matter can be escalated to the Information Commission.

It was requested if the Clerk could ask if the stream could be cleared for the Duck Race.

A resident from Westmoreland Drive reported that there is a serious problem regarding admissions to Secondary Schools in Sittingbourne. Westlands is the only mainstream school for which Lower Halstow is in the catchment area and they have had 900 applications for 285 available places. The resident has been offered a place at Oasis Academy. There is a further difficulty in that Medway Council are not offering places to KCC residents as a matter of course. Cases would need to be appealed. Transport to schools out of the catchment area is not supported by the local councils, therefore parents have to foot the whole cost. It was discussed that further new housing would exacerbate the problems with the infrastructure.

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

- a) KCC Councillors;
No report
- b) SBC Councillors;
No report
- c) PCSO
No report
- d) Friends of the Brickfields. See item 12 (e).

5. **To resolve that the Minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 7th February 2023 are a correct record

- a) It was resolved that the Minutes would be ratified at the next meeting.

6. **Matters arising:**

- a) Power at The Green for lighting the Village Sign and Christmas illuminations:
It has been established that there is no power to The Green, however, around The Green there is a lot of gas pipes. Cllr Szabo is speaking to UK Power Networks to see if the power and catenary wire at the lamp post can be used and if a trench can be dug to go across the road. It is more problematic than was first envisaged.

b) Plans for the Coronation. A request for ideas for events was published, but nothing has been forthcoming.

c) An email regarding a Coronation package for funding playground equipment has been received from an accredited organisation. Cllr Szabo will look into this further.

Action: Cllr Szabo

d) Planting a King's Tree for the Queen's Canopy. It was agreed that another tree would be planted, but details would need to be finalised.

Action: Cllr Portman

e) Update regarding the cracks in the wall along Church Path over the bridge. Please see the Clerk's Report.

7. To discuss and agree response (if any) for the following Planning Application:

a) 23/500637/FULL PROPOSAL: Removal of 2no. outbuildings and erection of a two-bedroom dwelling with associated parking and landscaping. ADDRESS: 12 Cumberland Drive Lower Halstow Sittingbourne Kent ME9 7JA Comments due by 22 March 2023. It was decided not to comment at this time.

8. To Discuss any planning applications received between producing the agenda and this meeting.

There were none.

9. Finance:

a) Quote for work to be done to the slope at the corner of the Recreation Ground. It was proposed to accept the quote for £850.00 by Cllr Howard-Challis, seconded by Cllr Szabo. Agreed unanimously.

b) New noticeboard for The Green. The Clerk has contacted the manufacturer and the quote is being adjusted for the additional requirements. The new quote has not yet been received.

c) Proposal for donation to the dog show. Cllr Szabo proposed a donation of £50, seconded by Cllr Smith. Agreed unanimously.

d) EDF quote for 29-month contract. It was proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis and seconded by Cllr Szabo to accept the quote. Agreed unanimously.

Action: Clerk

e) Quote to pollard the Willow trees at the Gibbs amenity land and agree to maintenance contract for Treecraft for the next financial year. It was discussed to ask for the Memorial Hall allotments grass cutting to be added to the contract. It was agreed to accept both quotes.

10. Policies:

a) Policy and disclaimer for the website regarding outside content. Cllr Howard-Challis will ask the Clerk to look into the policy provided by the provider, Hugo Fox, to see if it covers the Parish Council.

Action: Cllr Howard-Challis and Clerk

11. Correspondence:

a) Email regarding the slope and handrail at the Recreation Ground. The Clerk has replied to the resident and the quote has now been agreed for the work to be done. (Item 9a above)

b) Email regarding Coronation Mugs, decorative and display products. The Parish Council already has plenty of bunting and do not require anything further.

c) Email regarding "No Horses" reminder.

It was agreed to put a sign near the kissing gate and another at the Burial Ground end of Church Path to say that horses are not allowed.

Action: Cllr Szabo

d) Email regarding Litter Picking, particularly along Wardwell Lane.

It was agreed to ask the Parish Council litter picker if he would be comfortable in going further up Wardwell Lane as a one off. It was discussed if the Scouts might do a litter pick.

- e) Email overgrown path, Cygnet Close and Westfield Cottages.
Cllr Howard-Challis will ask the Clerk to contact KCC.

Action: Cllr Howard-Challis and Clerk

- f) Email Tiller & Wheel Sound Walk, permission and donation sought.
It was agreed to ask them where the posts for the QR codes would go as the Friends of the Brickfields would need to know and what are the costs involved.

Action: Clerk

12. To receive reports on the following:

- a) Parks & Leisure & Planning (MS)

b) No report.

- c) Footpaths and Hedgerow maintenance, Burial Ground and Allotments.

Cllr Portman asked if Cllr Smith had managed to have a look at the fence at the Burial Ground. There was some confusion as to where the problem is, but Cllr Smith will go and look again.

The tap has been fixed at the allotments.

- d) Parish Highways Plan

No report.

- e) Brickfields and Seawall

The Friends of the Brickfields has an AGM on the 21st April and they are looking at a talk by George Peters at the Church. They are having lots of work parties, cutting, clearing and litter picking. Unfortunately, there have been some bottle diggers seen around the Brickfields and they have been challenged. There have been some bonfires reported at the edge of the Brickfields near some people's homes which is very worrying and dangerous. An item will be put in the Village News regarding this. There are some dead trees that need felling along The Avenue, but this is not urgent at the moment.

The Environment Agency have invited the Parish Council to have a look at the Sea Wall to see progress.

13. Clerk's Report:

Payments received during January total £587.74, which includes payments from both barges docked at the wharf and allotment payments.

An item was sent out on Facebook and in the Village News asking residents for any further ideas regarding the Coronation celebration, but no replies have been received.

The Clerk has made enquiries regarding who is responsible for the wall over the sluice and the Environment Agency has said it is not them and suggested that it is Peel Ports. Peel Ports at Sheerness are currently looking into the matter. Their initial thoughts are that the sluice would be the Environment Agencies responsibility but are making further enquiries to Peel Ports at Liverpool regarding ownership.

The bank balance as of 28th February 2023 is £59,674.50

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

14. Items for information only:

- a) Items for Website and Village News.

Commencement of Sea Wall work

- b) To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.03pm

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 4th April 2023

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
DCK Payroll	Payroll Services Invoice:	36.00	6.00	8682888971
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning	190.00		46564663
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and. Salary	907.09		275278928
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust Fund	Hall Hire Invoice:88	21.25		615078834
Intelligent Facility Services	CCTV SIM Service February and March Invoice: 7776 and Invoice: 7787	60.00	10.00	635796174
Business Stream	Water Services Invoice:19	19.45		719166191
S & R Parker	Repair to Leaking Tap at allotments	45.00		137208852

Other Payments:

Multipay Direct Debit - 09/02/23

£3.00

Date:

Signed:

**Cllr. K Howard-Challis
Chair**