

**STELLING MINNIS PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 12 JULY 2023 HELD AT 7.30PM IN STELLING
MINNIS VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Parish Cllr Robert Hubble (Chairman)
Parish Cllr John Haffenden (Vice Chairman)
Parish Cllr Nick Smith
Parish Cllr Ann Day
Parish Cllr Garry Watts
Parish Cllr Sally Morley-Smith
Parish Cllr Max Couch (once co-opted)
KCC Councillor Susan Carey (part of the meeting)
FHDC Councillor Elaine Martin (part of the meeting)

Lee Jones, Internal Auditor (part of the meeting)
Gail Hubbard, Clerk to the Council
There were twelve members of the public present.

The Chairman began by reading out the statement about filming and recording during the meeting then welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES, DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

- 1.1 Apologies for absence received and confirmed by the Council Members who cannot attend a meeting. These shall be tendered to the Parish Clerk prior to the meeting, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted. Apologies received in retrospect for District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee. Cllr Martin & Cllr Carey to arrive later as attending Stanford PC meeting first.
- 1.2 Declaration of changes to the Register of Interests. There were none
- 1.3 To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda. In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers. There were none.
- 1.4 Requests for Dispensations.
- 1.5 Declarations of Lobbying. There were none.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 17 MAY 2023

The minutes from the previous meeting were proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Day and AGREED. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

There was none.

4. CO-OPTION TO FILL VACANCY

The vacancy had been advertised with a deadline of 30th June for applicants. Max Couch had put himself forward for the position. The Cllrs had an opportunity to ask Max any questions, then AGREED he should join the council, the Chairman then declared Max Couch as duly co-opted onto SMPC. At this point Max signed his Declaration of Office form and joined the Cllrs.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES 2023-24

The following roles were AGREED for the year:

KALC area committee – defer for now but circulate meetings to all Cllrs for to attend
Planning – Cllr Hubble/Cllr Watts
Minnis Managers – Cllr Day
Trustees for Stelling Minnis Common Trust – Cllr Haffenden/Cllr Day
Highways – Cllr Hubble/Watts
Windmill – Cllr Morley-Smith
Village Hall – Cllr Couch/Cllr Day
Footpath Warden – Martin Hart
Tree Warden – Cllr Smith
Community Website – Cllr Smith
Responsible Financial Officer - Clerk

6. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items of correspondence had been circulated to the Cllrs;

- 6.1 KALC – list of forthcoming training for Cllrs over the next 6 months
- 6.2 Mazars LLP – acknowledgement of our Declaration of Exemption for the year ending 31st March 2023.

7. PLANNING

7.1 RECEIVED Presentations from residents on current applications listed below.

23/0799/FH & 23/0881/FH

Knowler farm two applications, a single storey extension to main house and then a two storey extension to rear of annexe. These two extensions will allow this property to be divided to create two family homes. Council tax has been billed as two properties from FHDC for a number of years. SMPC had already submitted a stance of no objections with the proviso the annexe is not sold separately, this response is to remain and FHDC can decide if any conditions relating to the separate dwellings status are appropriate.

23/0820/FH

Kinross application, front and first floor extension with replacement garage. This property is adjacent to the village hall and had suffered a water leak prior to the new occupants moving in, this had accelerated the desire to obtain planning permission and create a 4 bedroom family home. SMPC response to be no objection.

7.2 Discussed planning applications received for consideration since the last meeting

23/0799/FH	Single storey rear extension. Knowler Farm, Curtis Lane, Stelling Minnis CT4 6AD	No objections logged from SMPC
23/0820/FH	Front and first floor extension and replacement detached garage. Kinross, Bossingham Road, Stelling Minnis CT4 6AG	No objections logged from SMPC
23/0826/FH & 23/0854 Listed	Proposed extension, outdoor swimming pool and car barn with associated landscaping works.	No objections logged from SMPC

	Butts Farmhouse, Pony Cart Lane, Stelling Minnis CT4 6AU	
23/0881FH	Two storey rear extension Annexe Knowler Farm, Curtis Lane, Stelling Minnis CT4 6AD	No objections on proviso annexe is not sold separately from main dwelling

7.3 NOTED decisions by the planning authority since the last meeting

23/0014/FH	Increase in roof height including a dormer to the rear roof slope and a first-floor front extension and the rebuilding of the existing garage to create annexe accommodation. Tarn Hows, Curtis Lane, Stelling Minnis CT4 6AD	APPROVED with conditions 18/05/23
------------	--	-----------------------------------

8. VILLAGE MATTERS

HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP)

Creation of a HIP for Stelling Minnis to begin, with the first addition being improvements to the Curtis lane junction with Stone Street. Initial thoughts to request for lit bollards and double white lines leading to the junction.

Routine maintenance such as clearing of gullies and culverts could not be part of the HIP, they need to be reported through the KCC Highways website in the usual way.

Cllr Hubble to arrange a meeting with KCC Highways for himself and Cllr Watts to meet onsite and discuss possibilities further.

Clerk to prepare HIP and circulate to Cllrs to add further items for consideration.

PHONE BOX

Cllr Smith updated the Cllrs on the current status on the refurbishment. With regard to the use for the box, the previous suggestion for it to be fitted out with shelves should be carried out, whatever the final use the shelves are useful. Mr Hadlow to fit out the box with the wood that has already been provided by Pam Carr.

Cllr Smith to obtain costs for a plastic plaque to go inside the phone box recognising those that have worked on the project and highlighting the box now belongs to SMPC. Further information from Cllr Smith in the Appendix reports.

DORMOUSE POPULATION

Cllr Smith raised this and suggested that a map be displayed on the community website giving the general areas that dormouse activity can be found/where there is provision of natural habitat in the village.

Cllr Haffenden mentioned that the Minnis Managers have a Dormouse Warden and there are nesting boxes provided on The Minnis.

An article for the newsletter on this subject might be worthwhile.

VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Hubble mentioned two projects that the village hall are currently pursuing;

1. Solar panels for the roof of the hall, under the FHDC Solar Together Scheme
2. EV Charge points in the hall carpark via the KCC Connected Kerb Scheme

The hall would be looking for funding towards the solar panel scheme, which SMPC could consider from CIL funds at the September SMPC meeting. More detail would be provided on both schemes for the next meeting.

The majority of the residents departed at 8.35pm

Cllr Martin arrived at 8.40pm

9. REPORTS

Refer to Appendix A at end of minutes for the full reports.

9.1	Website/Facebook reports	Clerk/Cllr Smith
9.2	KCC Report	Cllr Carey
9.3	FHDC Report	Cllr Martin/Cllr Hollingsbee
9.4	Tree Warden	Cllr Smith
9.5	Stelling Minnis Hall	Max Couch

The Chairman asked Cllr Couch to look at the village survey results to follow up the work that began by the last council to see where to take this forward.

10. FINANCE

10.1 NOTED the clerk has submitted the CIL Parish Report to FHDC for the year ending 31st March 2023, remaining balance carried forward £19,750.63.

10.2 NOTED receipts of income

None	0.00
------	------

TOTALS £0.00

10.3 AUTHORISED payments

CHQ427	G Hubbard – reimbursement of expenses (replacement laptop £499.17 plus £99.83 vat & Office 365 annual subscription £59.99)	658.99
CHQ428	FHDC – uncontested election fee	60.13
CHQ429	Zurich Municipal – PC Insurance policy for year	607.77
CHQ430	Cllr Day – expenses (refreshments for APM)	38.31
CHQ431	Anthony Hadlow – Strimming May	55.00
CHQ432	Stelling Minnis Village Hall – Coronation celebrations	300.00
CHQ433	Mr N Onslow – photography fee for 2022 & 2023 Royal events	200.00
CHQ434	Dynamix – payroll services (1 st QTR & year end)	61.20
CHQ435	ICO – data protection fee renewal	40.00
CHQ436	Cllr Hubble – reimbursement of strimming June & repairs to road sign paid to Anthony Hadlow	75.00
CHQ437	G Hubbard – clerks salary May & June	547.20
CHQ438	HMRC – 1 st QTR PAYE	205.20
CHQ439	KALC – planning training for Cllr Morley Smith	60.00
CHQ440	G Hubbard – Clerks salary July (CHQ dated 28 th July)	273.60

TOTALS £3,182.40

The above payments were proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Haffenden so AGREED.

10.4 RECEIVED the bank reconciliation dated 30th June 2023.

Cllr Carey arrived at 8.55pm and gave her report, as attached in Appendix A below

The meeting closed at 9pm.

Dates of future meetings: 13 September, 8 November

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....

APPENDIX A

SMPC REPORTS 12 JULY 2023

Stelling Minnis Community web site report

Individual page maintenance and requested revisions made as required.
No problems with the site observed or reported.

Nick Smith – Webmaster for the community site.
4 July 2023

PC Website

All AGAR and year end documents added under financial pages
Awaiting full update of Councillors following next meeting.

Gail Hubbard
Parish Clerk

KCC County Report

Report for Stelling Minnis Parish Council 12 July 2023

KCC plans to hold a number of public consultations over the next few months and the best way to take part is to register via letstalkkent.gov.uk There's currently a consultation on the early stages of our new Local Transport Plan, the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, a new cycling route in Cheriton to Folkestone Central Station and a review of the Community Warden service. We will soon be asking for views on the 2024/25 budget which may seem very early indeed but the intention is to have savings plans more fully developed by the time of the budget meeting in February 2024. (This is an especially influential consultation as it helps us decide which services to prioritise.) There will also be a consultation on proposed savings from the Household Waste Recycling Centre network.

Council tax has risen by 5% but inflation is much higher than this (some examples - road repair costs have increased by 30%, waste incineration by 11%, care home costs by over 10%). The priority given to social care means other services need to make a larger share of the necessary savings. We must by law set a balanced budget and if we do not make the necessary savings, the Government will send commissioners to do so. (Where this happened in Croydon, the commissioners both made savings and imposed a 15% council tax increase.)

Despite the grim financial situation we have been successful in winning Government grants that are 'ringfenced' for particular purposes. The Bus Service Improvement Plan

(BSIP) is an example of this with £16.1m awarded in June by the Government for initiatives to boost ridership on Kent's buses. A large part of this funding is being used to freeze the cost of the Kent Travel Saver bus pass for young people. (Currently £450 for standard pass and £120 for low-income households.) The 16+ Travel Saver Pass is also frozen at £500. BSIP funding was also used for the free travel weekend (24/25 June) and this led to an increase of around 34% in the number of people travelling. Bus ridership has not yet returned to pre-lockdown levels and initiatives such as this and the Government's £2 cap on fares are designed to encourage people back on the buses. (Just a reminder that 95% of bus services in Kent are commercial and not run by KCC.) KCC also won grant funding for tree planting (we planted around 50,000 last winter) and we expect to do even better this winter. If you know of suitable sites (public or private) where the owners would like to plant more trees then do please let me know. I am working with Elham Parish Council on a community orchard.

A paper on new nuclear at Dungeness went to the KCC cabinet meeting 29 June where there was strong support for continuing to make the case to Government for Small Modular Reactors. Apart from the benefits of carbon free energy and the jobs such investment would bring, there is also a strong case for reducing our dependence on energy from unstable regimes. Renewable energy also has a part to play in energy resilience and I'm pleased to report that over 6,000 Kent households signed up for the most recent round of our Solar Together collective buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. We intend to open a further round at the end of August.

Susan Carey
Member for Elham Valley

FHDC Report

Cllr Martin spoke on several matters currently effecting the area;

- Bus situation, some route closures, not affecting Stelling Minnis
- Otterpool Park, review under progress, new council trying to make the scheme as 'green' as possible.
- Missed bin collection – now a dedicated phone line 01303 853660
- Operation Brock will be back for the summer, should be in place by Friday.

Cllr Elaine Martin
District Councillor

Stelling Minnis Ward Councillor Report

As Leader of the Conservative Opposition Group, I have regular monthly meetings with the Chief Executive and the Leader. At the full Council on 21 June I asked the Leader to confirm the Administration's position on Otterpool Park. He confirmed the project would go ahead and 'at pace'.

On Nuclear Energy, I attended a presentation by EDF at Dungeness where they outlined the current position and talked about the future of Dungeness. At the moment they employ 945 people. They talked about the Small Modular Re-actors that are being developed and the discussions that were taking place with Government. We await further news.

I was pleased to be co-opted to the Kent & Medway Police & Crime Panel – a panel I served on for quite a few years when I was the representative of the District Council.

Otterpool Park – The Zest Festival and Otterpool Gallops were very successful and other events are planned. To find out more and to see the Learning Programme do check the website regularly www.otterpoolpark.org. On 11 July I attended the launch of the consultation for Phase 1b of the development relating to Barrow Hill Sellindge: a 'Creating a Vision for Hill Top and Woodland Ridge' will take place on 9 September 11am-4pm at Sellindge Village Hall. This is open to anyone who would like to get involved or have an influence. JTP Architects Masterplanners Placemakers have been appointed to undertake this work.

Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee
District Councillor

Tree Warden Report

On 6 June I received a phone call from a resident in Crown Lane regarding a tree being removed on the edge of the Rose Lane development near Crown Lane. After speaking with the tree surgeon concerned and the resident who contacted me, it transpired that the tree was in the area used for bin storage and the management committee had been consulted and had agreed to the work being done. In discussion with the original contact over dormouse, he asked where the dormice were. I was able to advise him that dormice were highly protected and the even knowingly damage their habitat is a criminal offence – which carries a large fine and/or a prison sentence (hence the environmental strip between Rose Lane development and Crown Lane). He also asked where the dormice were on the Minnis.

I suggest that for the information of the community, a page should be added to the community web site indicating the known locations of dormice – both on and of the Minnis – which should include, for example, Scarpes Lane, Crown Lane and Church Wood. Together with information on the law relating to their protective status. Dormice are both arboreal and nocturnal.

Nick Smith – Tree Warden

Village Hall

Several items currently being pursued by the hall;

- A 5 year maintenance plan, being drawn up by Laszlo Dudas
- Possibilities of WIFI supply for the building
- More social activities in the hall

Cllr Max Couch

Phone Box

Re-painting of exterior of phone box has now been completed (that was what Martin said he had agreed to do).

The original proposed use, promoted by ex Councillor Pam Carr, was to use it as a book exchange. The materials are with Anthony Hadlow, who had agreed to fit the phone box out – only really room for a few shelves on the back wall. Councillors should now consider best use of the asset for the community and need to consider both cleaning and user safety. Once completed it might be prudent to acknowledge the work done by Scott Gifford (repairing the door); Martin Hart (painting the exterior) and Anthony Hadlow (if he fits it out) with a suitable plaque in the phone box, which should also show that the box is owned by SMPC.

Nick Smith