

**Minutes** of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

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

In attendance: 5 members of the public and Cllr Baldock.

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

Cllr Lloyd Chapman sent his 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 enquired about the footpath that is being diverted (ZR39). Cllr Smith has recently spoken to the relevant KCC officer and the diversion has been agreed, but the hedgerows need to be dealt with.

A resident reported that at Basser Hill on one side, the hedgerow is over two feet out and is seriously restricting the road, making it dangerous not only for vehicles but cyclists too.

A resident asked after the progress of the 20 mph limit coming to the Lower Halstow. Cllr Szabo reported that an email had been received to say that the job has now been raised, these works can take up to 90 days to complete and once programmed will let the Parish Council know the start date. There will be no need to close roads.

It was also stated that drains need clearing on the north side of Basser Hill.

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

a) KCC Councillors;

Cllr Baldock reported that as reported in the press recently the council is facing severe cash shortages and they need to prove that they can carry on for the next two years. The results will be known within the next six months. They are cutting back even more on things they do not have to do. Cllr Baldock has about £2000 in grant money available. The next West Swale West meeting will be held in mid to late November. Cllr Baldock is hoping to engage Brogdale in some youth outreach sessions for next summer, which has been done before and was quite successful.

b) SBC Councillors;

There will be some Parish Liaison forums coming up shortly. The corporate plan is awaiting agreement.

c) Police Officer

The Clerk received the following report from Police Officer Jez Chittim after the meeting:

1 call to a dog incident whereby a dog attempted to attack another dog, however the owner picked their dog up prior to this happening. Dog owners did stop the incident and checked the other person was ok.

1 call to a drink drive incident. Well handled by landlord/landlady of Three Tuns.

Call to a poaching incident in the fields off of Neptune Terrace. Vehicle registration given and from some enquiries it appears a lack of evidence at the time to deal with any offences, however the registered owner of the vehicle lives out of area and has been spoken to. We now have his registration and details saved on our system and so hopefully he won't come back.

Anti-social behaviour and other incidents of note:

I received two reports over the summer period of the same male riding an off-road motorbike through the Brickfields. Not only did this concern me but it also concerned me

that it was reported he wasn't wearing a helmet or displaying a registration on his bike. Whilst I lacked any evidence to prosecute this individual, I have spoken with him at his family address also in Lower Halstow. Thankfully his parents were not impressed and subsequently I have not received any further reports of such behaviour. I still regularly patrol The Brickfields and advise anyone I see or think maybe bottle digging to kindly leave the area and advise not to come back for those purposes.

I am looking at starting regular police drop in surgeries in the village and would welcome suggestions and locations to make this most effective. I am very keen to run this alongside an existing event without being a nuisance to that event. Whilst I can host standalone surgeries, I find these are poorly attended and I want to be as easily accessible to the community as possible.

- d) Friends of the Brickfields  
Apologies received.

**5. To resolve Minutes**

It was resolved that the Minutes of the Monthly Parish meeting held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023 are a correct record and were signed accordingly.

**6. Matters arising:**

- a) To discuss possible flooding with regard to climate change. Cllr Howard-Challis has had two meetings recently, one with the Environment Agency and one with Mr Les Stevens. Cllr Howard-Challis is concerned that there is a need to look at ways for water to escape, particularly when the tide is in. Lower Halstow is at risk from flooding and the Parish Council will keep this under review.
- b) The positioning of the King Charles III bench. There was a discussion about where would be the best place for the new bench at Gibbs amenity area. It was proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis and seconded by Cllr Groves to position the bench outside of the conservation area at the end of Westmoreland Drive. Agreed unanimously.
- c) The unsafe and uneven steps from Church Path. It was agreed to get quotes to remove and stabilise the bed and re-use the steps and repair like for like.

**Action: Clerk and Cllr Smith**

**7. To Discuss planning applications received:**

An application for solar panels at 2 Stable Mews, School Lane was noted.

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

None received.

**9. Finance:**

- a) To discuss whether to continue with web provider Hugo Fox on introduction of a subscription service only. Councillors considered asking if any local talented web designers might be able to help with a new website. The Clerk will advertise via the Village Facebook site. Cllr Howard-Challis proposed to continue with Hugo Fox Bronze package in the interim, seconded by Cllr Szabo. Agreed unanimously.

**Action: Clerk**

- b) Councillors resolved to continue the membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

**10. Correspondence:**

- a) Allotment Sharing. Councillors decided to add a note to the invoices going out in the coming week regarding sharing.

**Action: Clerk**

- b) Provision of a dog waste bin outside the shop. Cllr Groves will ask the shopkeeper if he knows what has happened to the bin that was there.

**Action: Cllr Groves**

- c) Brickfields Campers, Conservation and updated signage for Brickfields. The Police attended when campers were reported at the Brickfields. At one of the places where tents were pitched, the equipment and an awful mess were left behind. There is signage but Councillors will look at updating it, particularly that it should say any kind of digging is not allowed anywhere on the Brickfields, not just bottle digging.

**Action: All Councillors**

- d) 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D Day. Plans are currently under way and there will be updates at future meetings.
- e) Drain at rear of a property in Burntwick Drive. This is located at the en-bloc garages. It is thought that the residents are responsible for this area. The Clerk will make some enquiries.

**Action: Clerk**

- f) Upcoming proposed events on Tollesbury and use of car park. There is a covenant covering this area. Cllr Szabo will check the terms and conditions.

**Action Cllr Szabo**

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

- a) Parks & Leisure & Planning (MS).  
The playground report has been received. There is wear and tear, but there is nothing dangerous and it will be monitored.
- b) Footpaths and Hedgerow maintenance, Burial Ground.  
Cllr Portman has trimmed the footpath between The Green and Curlew Avenue and cut back some of the brambles on the signage and along the bridge between the Gibbs amenity area and Burntwick Drive. The old graves have been trimmed three times this summer. Cllr Portman has had difficulty in contacting and getting permission from the Swale Borough Council officer for the conservation area in respect of the burial ground fence repair.
- c) Allotments.  
As discussed in Correspondence, above.
- d) Parish Highways Plan  
The Councillors are not happy that the 20 mph zone is taking so long to implement.
- e) Brickfields and Seawall  
A member of the Friends of the Brickfields will contact Kent Wildlife Trust to ask if they can make an updated assessment of the Brickfields, which was deemed a local wildlife site in circa 2008, if the Parish Council are in agreement. Police Officer Chittim has challenged several people seen to be digging on the Brickfields and they were warned that they could be charged with theft if they are seen again. There have been no further reports. A quad bike was seen at the Brickfields and this was picked up on the CCTV.

#### 12. Clerk's Report

Payments received during July totalled £1540.03. This included a grant of £1000 passed to the Neighbourhood Watch group to help towards the warm home scheme. Payments received during August totalled £1900.22 included a claim of £1357.44 for VAT.

The external audit has concluded and the documents posted to the Parish Council website.

The invoices for Westfield Car Park and the allotments have been prepared and are going to be sent out this week. They all become due for payment on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

The bank balance as of 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 is £55,940.95

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

**13. Items for information only:**

- a) Items for Website and Village News. None at this time.

The meeting closed at 20.10pm

**Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust	Hall Hire – 4 July 2023 Invoice: 43	21.25		178990922
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and Salary 25/9/2023	1074.69		199677875
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning	125.04		46165239
Intelligent Facility Services	CCTV SIM Service Invoice: 08384	30.00	5.00	764823337
DCK Payroll Solutions	Payroll Process Invoice: P4429	36.00	6.00	15557874
KALC Training	Webinar sessions (Cllr Portman): Introduction to Changing Behaviours; Respectful and Positive Social Media; Standards in Public Life 3 x £19.20 Invs: 7397141479, 7397101779 and 7397168409	57.60	9.60	115309171
Gallagher Insurance	AJG Community Scheme 01/10/23 – 30/9/24 Invoice: 526825721 (Long term agreement until 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2025)	1505.86		212624321

Other Payments:

Multipay - Direct Debit 12/9/23

£3.00

**Date:**

**Signed:**

**Cllr. K Howard-Challis  
Chair**