

HIGH HALDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 12 June 2023 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall

46/23 Present and Apologies

Present: Cllr. Robinson (Chairman), Cllrs: Mrs. Amsler, Ms. Dawes, Mr. Drury, Mrs. Pickering, Mr. Sargent and Mrs. Wheeler

In Attendance: Mrs L Goldsmith (Clerk),
Ward Member Alan Pickering, 14 members of the public.

Apologies: None received.

47/23 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mrs Pickering: Voluntary Declaration as the spouse of the ward member.

48/23 Minutes of the meeting of the 18 May 2023

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on the 18 May 2023 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

49/23 Report from the Clerk (information purposes only)

The Clerk advised Members that Stephen Pay, Public Transport Planning and Operations Manager at KCC, has confirmed that Stagecoach will be continuing to run the No2A (Ashford, Woodchurch, Tenterden) but will be axing the No2 which passes through Bethersden and High Halden. KCC has explained that unfortunately this is one of a number of changes that Stagecoach are making from 13 August 2023. These and other changes being made by other operators are commercial decisions being made by them and in the privatised market there is nothing that KCC can do to prevent them.

The Clerk reported that a Summer Event bringing together all the organisations in the village is being arranged by HHVEC for the afternoon of Saturday 2 September 2023 and will be held on the village green.

The Clerk has sent a detailed response to the recent Freedom of Information Request.

The Clerk has ordered a memorial bench in honour of the late Mr Robert Taylor. Mrs Taylor would prefer for a memorial bench to be positioned on the village green and has agreed to pay for the bench and plaque.

The Clerk advised that she will be on holiday from the 29 June to the 9 July 2023 with limited access to emails.

50/23 Open Session:

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow members of the public to raise items with the Council.

A member of the public expressed their concern about the ongoing water leak on Church Hill.

Facebook: Kristina Hoath, (administrator along with the Clerk of the village Facebook page), reported that there are approximately 1200 people following the village Facebook page. The recent disturbances in the village have created a massive spike in the number of people wanting to join. Kristina Hoath explained that all applicants need to demonstrate that they satisfy certain criteria before being allowed to post items on the village Facebook page.

Defibrillator for the village hall: Kristina Hoath offered to speak to the Clerk about possible suppliers and sources of funding.

A member of the public reported that the Telephone Box on the village green has been damaged again.

51/23 Highways

a) Highways Improvement Plan

The Clerk has submitted 14 site assessment reports to KCC for possible locations where the SID posts could be installed within the 30mph stretch on the A28 and Church Hill and is waiting for feedback.

b) Parking restrictions in bus layby on the A28

Cllr. Robinson advised that the Parish Council will continue to lobby KCC regarding a request for part of the layby to be removed from the parking restrictions so that it can be used for short term parking. Ward Member Alan Pickering, on behalf of the Parish Council, is also in negotiations with ABC about derestricting a section of the layby.

Initials:

52/23 Proposal to improve the drainage at Jubilee Park

Aspire has provided a quote to remove all the trees blocking the ditch on the northern side and to dredge the whole run of ditches from the south east corner to the north east corner. The Clerk advised that site visits have been carried out with two other contractors who hope to provide quotes to be considered at the next meeting

53/23 Allotments

The Clerk advised Members that the planning application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a parking area for the allotments has not yet been determined by ABC (planning reference PA/2023/0357) as they have queried something on the plans. The solicitor has advised the landowner's legal team that the Parish Council will pay the equivalent of the rental income and has offered a 49 year lease. Quotes to hardcore and surface the parking spaces are being sought. The Clerk has, with the permission of the landowner, submitted an expression of interest to KCC to plant an orchard in the vicinity of the allotments. KCC is seeking large areas of land to plant trees as part of their Kent Plan Tree initiative.

54/23 Jubilee Park

a) To ratify a decision between meetings to re-seed and level the goalmouths

Resolved: To ratify a decision between meetings to re-seed and level the goalmouths at an estimated cost of £457.50 (excluding VAT)

b) To agree a location and quote for additional goalposts for general use

Resolved: The Clerk to order two goalposts to be installed in the same location as the previous posts.

c) Repairs to the playground

It was noted that a roundabout seat has recently been vandalised. The Park Keeper has removed the damaged seat and the Caretaker has made the area safe. It was suggested and agreed to not replace the seat as the plan is to replace all of the playground equipment in the near future.

55/23 Proposal from ABC to remove unnecessary street lighting

ABC has advised that KCC will not cover the cost of the maintenance of unadopted pole mounted lights in the parish. In the interests of the Dark Skies Policy and a goal to reduce light pollution ABC is looking to remove any unnecessary street lighting. The Parish Council has received a list from ABC of unadopted streetlights and have been asked to select any that are deemed not necessary. The list includes 8 streetlights in The Chennells, 1 in Tilden Close, 1 in Greenside and 1 in the bus shelter near to the village green. Cllrs. Sargent, Amsler, Drury and the Clerk inspected all the streetlights on the list on the 9 June 2023 and following this walkabout recommended that the residents should be consulted to inform any decision.

Resolved: The Clerk to hand deliver letters advising the affected residents of the proposal to remove the streetlights and request their views.

56/23 To consider a request from the Church to use the village green on the 2 July 2023 for a family service.

Resolved: To give consent to the Church to use the village green on the 2 July 2023 for a family service subject to the receipt of a risk assessment and insurance.

57/23 Section 106: Renewal of playground equipment and installation of a MUGA

Cllr. Amsler, Drury, Sargent and the Clerk met with a playground contractor on the 9 June 2023 to gain some professional advice on replacing the playground equipment and regarding the installation of a MUGA on the lower recreation ground field. The contractor has been made aware that the Parish Council will need to go through a formal tender process as the project will cost over £25,000. The contractor has suggested that it would be both more cost effective and be the best use of space to install the new playground in roughly the same location. Moving the playground to an alternative location on the lower field would make it impossible to install a MUGA. A regular size MUGA is deemed the best solution as the size needed to play league matches would take up too much space. It was agreed that there should be provision for netball, five a side football and basketball but to consult residents on their thoughts. The contractor is going to prepare a ballpark quote to enable Members to consider how much funding is required. The Parish Council can already access S106

Initials:

funds from the Ransley Field development but a top up from funds yet to be received from the Hopes Grove development is likely to be needed.

58/23 Ransley Field

a) To discuss the recent issues

It was proposed and agreed to lower standing orders to allow members of the public to speak.

Several members of the public raised their concerns about recent disturbances in the village alleged to be connected to some of the new residents at Ransley Field. Members of the public mentioned being intimidated, receiving verbal abuse and other forms of threatening behaviour and witnessing damage to both private and public property and asked if the Parish Council could assist in stopping this behaviour and preferably the removal of the offenders from these homes.

The meeting resumed.

Cllr. Robinson gave a brief background on the history of the site and explained that the Parish Council were not consulted by ABC on a decision to permit the affordable housing provider Sage Homes and major housing association Optivo to team up to deliver only affordable homes at Ransley Field. ABC agreed to 21 homes being sold under the shared ownership scheme and for 22 to be allocated for affordable rent. These 22 homes were to be allocated by ABC to people in housing need on their waiting list. Cllr. Robinson explained that the Parish Council were supportive of this initiative, the first of its kind in Kent, and were advised that priority would be given to people with a local connection. However, Members are disappointed to hear and witness the recent disturbances and are in agreement that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Cllr. Robinson advised that the concerns of the Parish Council have been reported to the Community Resilience Team at ABC that deal with incidents of anti-social behaviour. Ward Member Alan Pickering has also been involved with reporting concerns to ABC and has written to the CEO and Area Manager at Southern Housing. Alan Pickering urged residents to email any concerns directly to Southern Housing, (email address: contactus@southernhousing.org.uk) Many of the incidents have also been reported to Kent Police and Police Officers and the Community Warden have visited some of the families involved. Both Cllr. Robinson and Ward Member Alan Pickering were keen to reassure members of the public present that this behaviour will not be tolerated and that action will continue to be taken to resolve this situation.

7.39pm 1 member of the public left the meeting

The Chair invited Cllr. Mrs. Pickering to lead on the planning proposals.

59/23 Planning

Planning applications:

PA/2023/0971 – Site Office, Precinct 13, Ashford Road, High Halden

Variation of condition 14 (walls and fences) of planning permission 17/00538/AS (retrospective)

Resolved: No comment.

PA/2023/0941 – Homestall Farm, Ashford Road, High Halden

Proposed new access and vehicular crossover with associated hardstanding, gate and brick walls with brick piers on either side.

Resolved: No comment.

PA/2023/0871 – Coach House, Hookstead, High Halden

Proposed side extension with addition of 1no dormers to rear elevation (amended proposals to consented scheme, application number 22/01097/AS.

Resolved: No comment.

PA/2023/1031 – 11 The Martins, High Halden

Proposed single-storey rear and side extension with associated works following demolition of conservatory.

Resolved: No comment.

Planning applications received after the distribution of the agenda: None to consider.

Initials:

Approvals:

PA/2023/0598 – Boniface Farm, Shawlands Lane, High Halden

Change of use of land from agricultural to residential and construction of detached garage outbuilding.

PA/2023/0584 – Tiffenden House, Harbourne Lane, High Halden

Proposed part two storey front, single storey rear and first floor side extension. Amendment to approved application PA/2022/2022.

PA/2022/2966 East Warden, Harbourne Lane, High Halden

Proposed 2 bay timber frame detached garage building.

Refusal: None to consider.

Withdrawn: None to consider.

Appeal:

22/00085/AS – 1 Durrants Green, Ashford Road, High Halden

New detached dwelling and detached garage

Other Planning Matters

18/00569/AS Hookstead Farm - an alleged breach of Condition 5 has been reported to Enforcement.

60/23 Financial Report

/23-1 Cost of Living Grant:

Cllr. Robinson reported that an application to KALC for a Cost of Living Grant for £1000.00 to support the High Halden Helping Hand Group has been successful.

/23-2 Signatories on the account: To remove Karen Harris and consider adding another Member

Resolved: To remove Karen Harris as a signatory on the account and to add Cllr. Philip Drury.

/23-3 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget: Cllr. Dawes checked the invoices against the payment schedule and it was **resolved** for Cllr. Robinson and Dawes to authorise the payments online.

Payments

Cheque/Transfer	Details	£
Transfer	L Goldsmith (Expenses)	68.92
Transfer	L Goldsmith (Salary)	547.20
Transfer	HMRC (L Goldsmith)	136.80
Transfer	Mint Fresh (Bus stop cleaning)	77.22
Transfer	Npower (Electricity pavilion)	63.83
Transfer	L Goldsmith (Microsoft Office and Norton subscription)	169.98
Transfer	Life is not an Xbox (Donation)	500.00
Transfer	Satswana (DPO Services)	180.00
Transfer	Bourne Sport (Drainage works to pitches)	10,470.00
Transfer	Barrie Croucher	62.52
Transfer	Zurich (Transfer between meetings)	852.27
DD	Google Cloud	70.62

Receipts: None

Balances as at 12 June 2023

Unity Trust Account: £68,554.52

61/23 Reports

/23-1 Ward member: Ward Member Alan Pickering explained the effect of the recent elections. The political composition of ABC following the election was Conservatives: 19, Labour: 11, Ashford Independent Group: 9, Green 8, Independents; 0. Since the elections two Conservative Ward Members have formed an alliance with the Ashford Greens and Ashford Independents who are now all working together in a joint administration.

/23-2 Highways:

Replacement street names: The Clerk has ordered replacement street name plates for Millfield and Hopes Grove. Cllr. Dawes asked if an additional street name plate could be requested for Millfield.

Initials:

Water leak on Church Hill: It was noted that the Clerk has reported the water leak in Church Hill to South East Water. They have confirmed that an engineer has visited the site and that the leak is not fresh water. The leak is coming from a drain and they have reported this to the waste water company who they believe are responsible for this drain. The Clerk was asked to follow up with the waste water company.

Cessation of the No 2 Bus Service: KCC has advised that they are still digesting the impacts of these changes and in particular in relation to school trips and will look to formally announce the withdrawal of the No.2 service this week. Members expressed their disappointment with the potential loss of this service and agreed to wait for a formal announcement from KCC and to then discuss what action the Parish Council should take.

/23-3 Marketing/projects: The Clerk will begin to draft the next newsletter in conjunction with Cllr. Dawes.

/23-4 KALC: There has been no meeting.

62/23 Information items:

/23-1 HHVEC Update: Cllr. Robinson reported that the constitution, status and terms of reference for the group is being reviewed by the Clerk to ensure that the correct governance is being adhered to.

/23-2 High Halden Helping Hand Group:

A free ploughmans lunch is now being served in the village hall every other Wednesday and will continue until the end of June.

/23/3 Consultations: None to consider.

63/23 Items for the next Parish Council meeting:

Defibrillator for the village hall.

Community Ownership Fund – Round 3 Bidding Window

64/23 Date of the next meeting

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 10 July 2023 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.59pm

Signed:

Date:

Initials: