

Minutes of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 4th May 2023.

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

In attendance: 3 members of the public

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

Apologies were received from the PCSO.

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 gave an update regarding the closure of Sheerness Road for a public water main to be installed by Southern Water. The problem has been tree roots and the work was suspended for a week, while the results of a survey by Southern Water were awaited, which found there was no problem with tree roots. The work will probably finish on 5th May 2023, but the work will not continue up Basser Hill, at this time. It was suggested by the developer that the work continue in the school summer holidays, which will entail the road being shut for 4-5 days.

It was reported that there are some hedgerows that need cutting back where they overhang the road. The resident will supply further information to the clerk as to where the hedges are exactly.

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

a) KCC Councillors;

None.

b) SBC Councillors;

None.

c) The PCSO sent the following report:

I have done a review of all calls for the month of April and other than some domestic related calls there was nothing else for the Lower Halstow area. Long may this continue. It is likely that after this month you won't be receiving the monthly updates from me as come June 6th a new officer who is a PC will be taking over the beat roles (or so they are promising!). They should be in touch in due course to introduce themselves.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you and all the Parish Council for all your support and kindness while I have had the privilege of being your local officer. I am extremely fond of Lower Halstow and out of all the areas I have covered will miss it, the residents and you the Parish Council very much. I wish you all the very best, and if you ever need any assistance, I will still be in Swale so please don't hesitate to drop me a message and I will do all I can to help or point you in the right direction.

d) Friends of the Brickfields.

An AGM has been held recently and some money has been raised.

5. **To resolve that the Minutes**

It was resolved that the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7th March 2023 Parish Council meeting are a correct record and were signed accordingly.

6. **Matters arising:**

a) Sign to discuss no digging into the sea wall

There have been numerous reports of bottle digging in the Brickfields including bits of the sea wall. Cllr Portman emailed the PCSO and was advised to ring 101, but was directed to the website, where this issue did not meet the criteria for anything on the website, as this is classed as environmental antisocial behaviour. Cllr Portman then rang Crimestoppers and

they said this was not a matter for them and to contact the local council. Cllr Portman contacted Swale Borough Council Community Safety Unit and they spoke to the Rural Police Force. Cllr Portman was advised that the mud flats and the beach comes under a Site of Special Scientific Interest and to contact Law Enforcement at Natural England. Cllr Portman is awaiting a reply to her email.

- b) Requesting a Police presence at Parish Council meetings and in the Village. Please see item 4(c).

- c) Coronation bench and tree planting

It was discussed where a new bench would be placed. It was suggested that it would be nice to have one at the Gibbs Amenity Area. Cllr Portman has a quote for one at £469.00 plus VAT. It was proposed to buy the bench by Cllr Howard-Challis and seconded by Cllr Groves. Agreed unanimously. It was also pointed out that the grass at the Gibbs Amenity Area is encroaching along the edge of the paths. The Clerk will contact the contractor and ask for this to be cleared. Cllr Portman has ordered a Coronation Tree, an Alder, for planting alongside the oak tree on Britannia Green.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Portman

- d) Kent Tree Plan

KCC are looking for sites the size of a tennis court up to half a football pitch up to a maximum of 0.5 hectares to plant trees. This item will be posted to the Parish Council website.

Action: Clerk

7. Policies:

- a) To review Standing Orders. No changes were required.
- b) To review Financial Regulations. No changes were required.
- c) To consider a Safeguarding Policy. It was resolved to adopt the Safeguarding Policy that had been circulated. This will be uploaded to the website.

Action: Clerk

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

There were none.

9. Finance:

- a) Donation to Citizen's Advice Bureau

It was proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis, seconded by Cllr Portman to donate £50.00. Agreed unanimously.

- b) Annual Internal Report 2022/23

Noted.

- c) Section 1 of the Annual Governance Accountability Return 2022/23

The Clerk read out each of the nine paragraphs of Section 1 of the return and completed the appropriate boxes. The AGAR was duly signed.

- d) Section 2 of the Annual Governance Accountability Return 20-22/23 was approved and duly signed.

- e) Purchase of a new strimmer. Cllr Portman reported that the current strimmer has been checked over and is now working.

- f) Continuation of subscription to KALC. It was proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis to continue with the subscription, seconded by Cllr Groves and unanimously agreed.

10. To receive reports on the following:

- a) Parks & Leisure & Planning (MS)

Cllr Szabo has received a quote to provide power at The Green to light the Village Sign and the Christmas tree of £7500.00. It was agreed not to proceed. Cllr Szabo suggested that the post for the sign needs treating. The Clerk will ask the village handyman.

Action: Clerk

- b) Footpaths and Hedgerow maintenance, Burial Ground and Allotments

Cllr Portman and Szabo have put up some "No Horses" signs at Church Path at the Brickfields gate and Heron Close. The Environment Agency have come back with their findings regarding the cracked wall over the sluice. The bridge pre-dates the sluice, it goes back to about 1700. They advised the Parish Council to refer it to KCC for their attention. There is still a property in the village that has a very overgrown hedge. The Clerk will follow it up. There is currently one allotment vacant at the Tutt's site. Cllrs Portman and Groves will liaise regarding a handover for the responsibility of the allotments.

Action: Clerk

c) Parish Highways Plan

No further information at this time. The Clerk will contact KCC Highways again.

Action: Clerk

d) Brickfields and Seawall

The Clerk has once again emailed Elizabeth Kingsley-Smith regarding the purchase of the strip of land at the Brickfields with no response. The Clerk will keep trying to get a response.

Action: Clerk

11. Clerk's Report

Payments received during March total £19,669.03, which includes payments from both barges docked at the wharf, the Precept for 6 months and a partial year allotment rent. There is currently only one plot not taken, which is at Tutt's Site in School Lane. Lower Halstow Parish Council subscriptions for the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and Swale Borough Council Brown bin service have renewed. Dog waste bags and safety signs regarding horses have been ordered and received. The defibrillator service will take place on Friday 5th May 2023. The barriers that have appeared on the grass verge in The Street were reported to Southern Water. They called to say that an Engineer was sent Thursday 25th April 2023. A resident called to ask about the where the boundary lies between Lower Halstow and Upchurch at Chapel Hill. I have found the answer, which is the brook that flows at the bottom of the hill, just by Chapel House and will let the resident know. Lower Halstow Parish Council is uncontested in the local elections which are taking place on Thursday 4th May. The Internal Audit for the financial year 2022/23 took place on Wednesday 26th April 2023. The crack in the bridge at Church Path was reported to KCC PROW reference number 230447250, which is awaiting allocation. The bank balance as of 28th April 2023 is £75,961.86. It was agreed that Cllrs Howard-Challis and Szabo will authorise the payments, as per the payment list below, via internet banking.

12. Items for information only:

- a) Items for Website and Village News.
The Parish Council achievements for the year 2022/23 and the Kent Tree Plan.
- b) To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of next meeting.

The meeting closed at 19.51pm

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 6th June 2023

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and Salary	1123.09		859950740
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning	166.72		747331444
JRB Enterprise Ltd	Invoice 25336 Dog Glove bags	133.62	22.27	486293119
Imperative Training Defib Shop	Invoice 1000127916 Defibrillator Service	198.60	33.10	154583693
Intelligent Facility Services	CCTV SIM Service Invoice: 07936	30.00	5.00	486555043
Robin Goreham	Invoice: IAS/LHPC 00408 Internal audit	65.00		744466286
Business Stream	Water Services Invoice: 2165961	245.16		581947595
Kent Association Of Local Councils	Continuation of subscription to be agreed at this meeting: Invoice: 8794	469.24	78.21	846292008
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust Fund	Hall Hire Invoices: 90 and 94	42.50		648122541

Other Payments:

Multipay Direct Debit - 09/02/23

£3.00

Date:

Signed:

**Cllr. K Howard-Challis
Chair**