

Minutes of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 5th December 2023.

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

In attendance: 3 members of the public

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

P C Chittim 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 thanked the Parish Council for the event regarding the lighting of the Christmas Tree particularly as it was so bitterly cold on that day. In addition, it is wonderful that the 20 mph zone has been implemented, although the signs are not right as you leave the village. This is going to be discussed later in the meeting.

A resident asked if it was true that speed bumps are going to be put in The Street. The Parish Council replied that there is no truth in that rumour.

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

a) KCC Councillors;

None.

b) SBC Councillors;

None

c) Police Officer Jez Chittim supplied the following report:

There were 7 calls to Lower Halstow in the last month. The only ones of note and impact the community are the 3 x poaching calls. Unfortunately, no one was caught, however the rural team were provided an index to one of the vehicles. I am soon to be added to the farm watch scheme and so will have more access to this type of crime and the rural policing teams results.

d) Friends of the Brickfields.

Cllr Portman reported that there has been a broken sewer pipe on the Brickfields.

Fortunately, Southern Water have now completed the work. They installed 2 metres of new pipe, the tankers have gone, and the road should be open as usual tomorrow.

There are currently no plans for further work,

5. **To resolve Minutes**

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

6. **To discuss any planning applications received between producing the agenda and this meeting.**

None received.

7. **Matters arising:**

- a) Westfield Car Park. A stolen vehicle was recovered from the car park, but there is still an unauthorised trailer belonging to a resident there. It is a breach of the tenancy agreement. The Clerk will contact the resident to ask them to remove it. Cllr Portman has noticed that there are car tyres and bollards by the fence indicating that the residents are having difficulty in seeing where the fence is in the dark. It was agreed to put reflectors on the fence. There

is also a lot of brambles and weeds that have taken hold in the tarmac. The clerk will ask the contractor to quote for this area to have weedkiller applied.

Action: Clerk and Cllr Szabo

- b) Benches for the Recreation Ground. It was proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis, seconded by Cllr Smith to purchase three park benches for the Recreation Ground under the trees, which were on offer by the company Futurform.

Action: Clerk

- c) Cllr Groves visited Lower Halstow Primary School for a discussion with Head of School Miss Crowe, following the discussion at last month's meeting regarding litter. At the School this month has been "Carbon Footprint" month, the children have done challenges whereby if the children use something "old" instead of buying something new they can tick it off, and for each one they get a certificate at the end of the month. The school has received an Eco bronze award. Every year they have a litter drive where they clear the school driveway, but they only own four sets of equipment. They would really like to get more involved and do more around the village; however, they would need more equipment. Would the Parish Council be able to provide them with it? They are also involved in Litter Rangers organised by Cllr Gordon Henderson. Cllr Szabo will investigate sources and get quotes for some equipment.

Action: Cllr Szabo

8. Finance:

- a) Cllr Szabo proposed to approve Local Government Services Pay agreement 2023, seconded by Cllr Smith. Agreed Unanimously.
- b) Cllr Howard-Challis proposed to approve the budget, previously circulated to the councillors. Cllr Smith seconded it. Agreed unanimously.

9. Correspondence:

- a) The Parish Council has received a request for another barge to berth at the wharf. Cllr Howard-Challis proposed that this barge is accepted, seconded by Cllr Portman and agreed unanimously. The Clerk will send out an agreement for signature.

Action: Clerk

- b) Damaged tap at Westfield Allotments. The tap has been repaired and to try to avoid it being knocked over again it was agreed to place some reflectors on the post.

Action: Cllrs Szabo and Groves

10. To receive reports on the following:

- a) Parks & Leisure & Planning. . Cllr Szabo has been in conversation with his contact at Southern Water regarding the situation with the pipes that have once again been leaking at the Brickfields. They discussed that the situation should be treated as a priority and that if they completed the job properly they would not have to keep coming back causing all the disruption. The tankers have erroneously used School Lane and there is concern regarding the bridge and the weight of traffic it can safely take. The Clerk will contact KCC whether there should be a weight limit and signage.

Action: Clerk

- b) Footpaths and Hedgerow maintenance, Burial Ground. A request has been received regarding clearing the leaves on the slope by the church. Cllr Portman has cleared this using her own brown bin. However, it is the responsibility of KCC to do this, not the Parish Council. Most people have cut their hedges when they have been asked, but there are still one or two that will need contacting again. Brown bins have yet again not been emptied throughout the village.

Action: Clerk

- c) Allotments
Nothing further to report.
- d) Parish Highways Plan

Some 20 mph signs have been put in place. However, buffer zones of 600 metres between each different speed limit have not been put in place, which is illegal. In Breach Lane the sign is in the wrong place as it should be before the bend, not after as you enter the village. The road markings appear to be only one coat of paint and are wearing thin already. Cllr Smith has had complaints regarding the hedge, which is growing over the road outside Green Farmhouse. The Clerk will contact the owner.

Action: Clerk

- e) Brickfields and Seawall
No further report.

11. Clerk's Report

Payments received during November totalled £897.78. This included £250.00 for Westfield Residents car park; £105.00 for allotment rents and £542.78 wharf payments from the barges.

This last week has had its challenges with the below freezing temperatures, regarding burst pipes, sewage leaks and damaged allotment taps. Southern Water are currently dealing with the leak at the Brickfields and R H Parker Ltd has dealt with the tap at Westfield allotments. Cllr Szabo turned off at the stopcock for the Memorial Hall site and a new tap is on order.

The owners of the Three Tuns reported to me that the defibrillator was showing a red light and after some correspondence with the Defib Shop, who did the service this year, they confirmed the pads and batteries are all well in date, but Cllr Groves discovered that it had been disconnected. The defibrillator has now been reset.

I am very pleased to report that the draft contract was received today via our solicitor regarding the purchase of the previously leased land at the Brickfields.

The bank balance as of 30th November 2023 is £70,563.43

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

12. Items for information only:

- a) Items for Website and Village News
None.

The meeting closed at 19.55

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 2nd January 2024

Payments December 2023

| Payee | Description | Gross Amount £ | VAT £ | Cheque No/Bank Payment |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------|-------|------------------------|
| Mrs A I Smith | Clerk's Expenses and Salary 22/12/2023 | 1074.69 | | 894058585 |
| Mr M Tidy | Village Cleaning November | 208.40 | | 992532068 |
| Intelligent Facility Services | CCTV SIM Service Invoice: 08788 | 30.00 | 5.00 | 705880327 |
| DCK Payroll Solutions | Payroll Process Invoice: P4715 | 36.00 | 6.00 | 180277974 |
| Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust | Hire of Hall 19/9/23 Invoice:55 | 21.25 | | 616901439 |
| KALC | Burial Law and Management Workshop Invoice: 8365976599 | 84.00 | 14.00 | 412104907 |
| Peter Froggatt | Reimbursement for Poppy Wreaths and wooden crosses | 45.00 | | 434295009 |

Other Payments: Multipay - Direct Debit 09/12/23

£3.00

Date:

Signed:

**Cllr. K Howard-Challis
Chair**