

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 21st June 2021 at St John the Baptist Church

Present	Geoffrey Fletcher (Chair)	Peter Hawkins
	Stewart Ross	Peter Turley
	Melanie Wells	

In attendance: 1 member of the public and Tracey Block (Clerk)

To be actioned by:

To receive and approve apologies for absence. Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Murphy and Stewart and also from Borough Council Bartlett.	
To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. Cllr Wells noted a personal interest in the Inland Border facility as a family member works on the site.	
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2021 Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 26 th April 2021 were approved as a true record and were signed as such.	
To discuss matters arising from previous minutes not covered by the agenda. There were no matters raised.	
Public session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item. The member of public had nothing to raise.	
To receive report from Borough Councillor A detailed report had been circulated; a copy can be found on the website: http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/	
Suggestions for future organisation of the Parish Council The document previously circulated (attached at the end of minutes, was updated, those in blue are to be confirmed.	
Village Caretaker Review A copy of the review was circulated to all Councillors ahead of the meeting. Cllr Turley explained the review and the reasoning behind increasing the contributions by 10% for one year as there had been an unforeseen hike in pension payments last year. This will only be upstepped by this amount for one year and then will be reduced to 3%. Smeeth School and Brook Museum contributions have increased by 5% year on year. At the appraisal of the Caretaker this morning it was reiterated that everyone was very pleased with Paul's performance. Paul had an issue with the chipper being very loud and physically demanding. There are actions to review whether there is a better chipper available to purchase/hire and also to ask Aspire where they send the brush that they have left from cutting trees/hedges etc. Cllr Fletcher thanked Cllr Turley for his contribution to the committee as he has undertaken a firm review of the finances over the past few years and the Caretaker funding is now much clearer with resilience built in.	
To receive and update on the current situation of the Highways Improvement Plan The HIP was revisited and priorities amended to be submitted to Kent Highways for comment. The speed of traffic on Church road is to be prioritised along with moving the speed limit area beyond Quarry View so it is incorporated in the speed restricted zone. Cllr Hawkins was thanked for ensuring the gateway road markings had been refreshed.	
To receive an update regarding the creation of a green buffer zone in High Field There had been a site visit when the bund and planting had been seen. A walk round with Kent Wildlife Trust had then also taken place. The primary reason for the Parish Council funding the Kent Wildlife Trust Report is so that Mersham parish can support their desires for the field and that ABC can negotiate	

<p>the purchase of this asset to be kept in perpetuity. Further information is currently expected from Kent Wildlife Trust.</p> <p>A final review is due to take place in 4 weeks time. Cllr Bartlett was to ask Gerry Clarkson to front the discussion with the Department for Transport. The Clerk is to ask Cllr Bartlett for confirmation of this.</p> <p>Cllr Ross commented that the path is very soft and in poor condition, Cllr Turley felt sure that the path is part of the conditions of the SDO and the path does not look fit for purpose, early usage implies the path is not fit for purpose. Cllr Ross to send comments to the Clerk to forward to Daniel Fryd.</p>	TB																														
<p>To discuss the current situation at the inland Border facility</p> <p>HGVs continue to be an issue in Mersham. Cllr Bell wrote to the DfT and Highways England, she has received a response from Highways England.</p> <p>Cllr Fletcher is to write to Damian Green MP regarding the failure of DfT and Highways England as Highways England have failed to place appropriate signage on the M20 and their contractor failed in their repairs to Kingsford Street. Cllr Turley will write to Toby Howe in the same vein regarding Kingsford Street, now that Kingsford Street is an emergency access to the IBF, it needs to be safe.</p> <p>Cllr Ross asked whether there is any intention to press for the Biodiversity report. Cllr Turley understands that Kent Wildlife Trust should be providing a report that shows the negative impact from the building of the IBF. It will be difficult without access to the Biodiversity report to understand what has been lost and what issues might have been gained.</p> <p>Daniel Fryd is also supposed to be asking Mott MacDonald to undertake a lighting survey. Cllr Turley will also ask Daniel Fryd for a follow up meeting regarding the height of the lighting/baffles/directional lighting etc.</p>	GF PT PT																														
<p>To receive an update regarding position of the broadband project for Mersham</p> <p>OpenReach have reported that they will be upgrading the Sevington exchange as part of their operational improvements so no project will be undertaken on the Sevington exchange until this has been completed. The Clerk will press for a time frame for this upgrade.</p> <p>The core addresses for the Aldington exchange project have now been submitted to OpenReach for costing. Once this is known, the Aldington exchange project can be sent to DCMS for authorisation.</p>																															
<p>Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters.</p> <p>A list of Planning Applications was circulated as Appendix A with the agenda, those requiring a response were:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="89 1317 1398 1850"> <tr> <td>21/00742/AS</td> <td>Cranwell House, The Forstal, Church Road</td> <td>Variation of approved plans</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">The Parish Council raised no objection to this application</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21/00759/AS</td> <td>Bower House, Bower Road</td> <td>Revision to listed building consent</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">The Parish Council raised no objection to this application</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21/00829/AS</td> <td>Upper Bilham House, Cheeseman's Green Lane</td> <td>Prior notification for the erection of new agricultural storage unit</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Prior approval is not required – ABC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21/00882/AS</td> <td>Gill Farm, Gill Lane, Mersham</td> <td>Lawful Development Certificate – agricultural storage building</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">This application has been withdrawn by the applicant</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21/00890/AS</td> <td>The Stables, Bower Road, Mersham</td> <td>Repairs to the north east facing exterior wall, pointing and replacing damaged bricks, repairs to mock stable doors, associated cleaning and re-painting.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">The Parish Council raised no objection to this application</td> </tr> </table> <p>It was noted that there is a pre-application expected for 5 houses in Kingsford Street.</p> <p>The building of the Village Hall extension is expected to begin in 2022.</p>	21/00742/AS	Cranwell House, The Forstal, Church Road	Variation of approved plans	The Parish Council raised no objection to this application			21/00759/AS	Bower House, Bower Road	Revision to listed building consent	The Parish Council raised no objection to this application			21/00829/AS	Upper Bilham House, Cheeseman's Green Lane	Prior notification for the erection of new agricultural storage unit	Prior approval is not required – ABC			21/00882/AS	Gill Farm, Gill Lane, Mersham	Lawful Development Certificate – agricultural storage building	This application has been withdrawn by the applicant			21/00890/AS	The Stables, Bower Road, Mersham	Repairs to the north east facing exterior wall, pointing and replacing damaged bricks, repairs to mock stable doors, associated cleaning and re-painting.	The Parish Council raised no objection to this application			
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<p>Financial matters:</p> <p>a) To note the Parish Council's financial position for the beginning of the new Financial Year.</p>																															

The financial position was noted as at 31st May 2021

b) To authorise any payments

Cheque No:	Payee	Amount
502094	I King (May salary)	£ 124.14
502095	T Block (May salary)	£ 383.86
502096	HMRC	£ 58.20
502097	JRB Enterprise (dog poo bags)	£ 103.14
502098	Mersham Sports Club	£2,500.00
502099	Cllr Turley expenses	£ 21.99
502101	I King (June salary)	£ 124.14
502102	Village Caretaker Account	£5,000.00
502103	HMRC	£ 29.00
502104	T Block (June salary)	£ 384.06

A copy of the budget v expenditure was distributed to all Councillors.

Any Other Business (for information purposes only):

It had been reported at the last meeting that the streetlight on Bower Road has been removed, Cllr Bartlett will get on the case if photographs can be sent. An update from Cllr Bartlett is requested.

The Village Hall is to be added as an agenda item at the next meeting.

Cllr Wells gave a small update on some issues that had been raised. Initially, as the Council is the sole trustee, it was noted that the front doors do not lock on the Village Hall and that there are 2 discarded fridges on site.

It was agreed that a locksmith would be called in to undertake the repairs to the door as this is a security and safety concern and the removal of the fridges would be booked as this is also hazardous. Cllr Ross will organise both and the Parish Council approved expenditure up to £400.

Cllr Wells will report back at the next meeting. It was agreed that Cllrs Hawkins and Wells would contact the Village Hall Chairman to discuss some of the issues as a matter of courtesy.

The storm drains along Kingsford Street have been reported and they will be cleared.

The phone box has been repainted and a new door is awaited.

The Council will object to the Planning Inspectorate appeal regarding Chequer Tree and will state that they are disappointed in the length of time that it has taken to achieve any resolution.

PB

Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

- Monday 19th July 2021**
- Monday 20th September 2021**
- Monday 18th October 2021**
- Monday 15th November 2021**
- Monday 17th January 2022**
- Monday 21st February 2022**
- Monday 21st March 2022**
- Monday 18th April 2022**

Cllr Murphy thanked Cllr Turley for all of his work over the past year.

All

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Focus Area	Lead Councillor	Comments
KALC	Cllr Murphy	Lead Mersham PC engagement with KALC

Planning	Cllr Fletcher	Lead Planning agenda item each month, Develop Subject Matter Expertise ,	
Finance (precept etc)	The Clerk	Lead Finance agenda item each month,	
Village Caretaker	Cllr Wells/Cllr Turley	Represent Mersham on Sub Committee, Primary contact for all Caretaker items	
Village Hall	Cllr Wells	Act as interface between Parish Council and Village Hall Committee	
Mersham Sports Club	Cllr Turley	Trustee	
Highfield ownership development and ongoing maintenance ideas	Cllr Turley/Cllr Stewart	Act as "project manager"	
Highway Improvement plan and Traffic	Cllr Murphy	Act as "project manager"	
Mersham Manor and Barn	Cllr Turley	Act as "project manager"	
Inland Border facility, lighting, errant vehicles and signage, Kingsford Street	Cllr Ross	Act as "project manager"	
State of A20 Mersham to J10A	Cllr Murphy	Act as "project manager"	
Broadband	Cllr Turley/Cllr Wells	Act as "project manager"	
The Bridge	Cllr Fletcher	Act as "project manager"	