

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BROOK PARISH COUNCIL
ON 21st SEPTEMBER 2023 HELD IN BROOK AND HINXHILL VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr S Betty (Chair) Cllr A Betty
Cllr Jessop Cllr F Penberthy
Cllr P Penberthy Cllr Wood

The Clerk

		To be actioned by
1.	To receive and approve apologies for absence.	
	There were no apologies for absence.	
2.	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.	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2023	
	The minutes were signed as a true record.	
4.	To discuss matters arising from the above minutes not covered by the agenda.	
	<p>Cllr P Penberthy queried why the Parish Council decided not to take the Speed Watch scheme forward. Cllr Betty explained the history behind it and explained that speed is often a perception, we can ask Kent Highways Serviced for the Adams data to see the actual speed of vehicles in the village. Cllr P Penberthy expressed concern about vehicles driving too fast at the pinch point near his address.</p> <p>The potholes on Spelders Hill had been filled but have since re-opened.</p> <p>The resident who had reported that a piece of land at the culvert/bridge is not being cut has now cut the piece of land himself.</p>	
5.	To receive reports from the Borough Councillor	
	<p>Cllr Betty had provided a report which was circulated to all. This is available as an appendix to these minutes.</p> <p>Cllr Betty provided an explanation of Nutrient Neutrality, the levelling up bill and ABC and their 5 year housing supply. ABC has been looking at creating artificial wetlands in order to mitigate the nutrient issue.</p> <p>ABC has launched the Citizen's panel for residents to take part in Council consultations.</p> <p>Car park charges have increased across the Borough.</p>	
6.	Public Session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item	
	There were no members of public in attendance, but Cllr P Penberthy questioned the grey piles in the field. This is human waste made in to fertilizer.	
7.	Play area – update and agree next steps	
	<p>The Play Area responses provided a majority response for swings, climbing tower, zip wire and digger.</p> <p>Mark Hanton has offered to meet with Cllr Betty to discuss the drawing up a plan.</p> <p>Cllr Wood agreed to look at brochures etc with a small working group and bring forward a plan looking</p>	

	at a 2025 delivery.	
8.	Recreation ground and woodland walkway initiative	
	<p>Cllr Betty and the Clerk met with Annie from KSCP.</p> <p>It was considered a good idea to leave a swathe of 1m down one edge to encourage yellow rattle plants. The Caretaker had commented that plug plants would be better than seeds as yellow rattle is very difficult to establish.</p> <p>The nettles are to be cut back to create an arc along one edge of the field. A pathway could be created through the woodland and plant up with wild roses and wild honeysuckle. It was suggested that some sculptures could be installed. Also maybe stepping stones and a wooden bridge. This is to be considered further.</p>	
9.	Financial matters:	
	<p>a) To note/authorise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To note the Parish Council's financial position. The Parish Council has £6,833.34 in the bank ii. To authorise any payments Payments were approved for the Clerk, HMRC, Caretakers half yearly payment and the community space grant funding received for the Village Hall (£420). <p>Cllr Jessop questioned the restrictions of the Community spaces grant. The Clerk will send the details over to Cllr Jessop.</p>	
10.	To consider any changes to the Risk Assessment	
	The Parish Council considered the Risk Assessment and the net at the climbing frame/slide had been removed.	
11.	Salt bag for winter and disposal of same	
	The salt bag for winter is required, Clerk to tell KHS. Cllrs Betty and Jessop will remove the previous bags and dispose of them.	
12.	Communications	
	<p>There was a discussion regarding the website and a relaunch of this. It was considered important to bring the communications up to date.</p> <p>Resolution: Update the website</p> <p>Resolution: Have brookpc emails, the Clerk to set up.</p> <p>Resolution: Stay with HugoFox as the website provider.</p> <p>Resolution: Cllr Betty will review the Emergency Plan information and update prior to circulating.</p>	
13.	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>A planning report had been circulated.</p> <p>The new call for sites is in process.</p> <p>A discussion ensued regarding the Planning lead. Cllr Penberthy agreed to become the planning lead.</p>	
14.	To receive the KALC Report	
	The Parish Council received the KALC Report from Cllr A Betty.	
15.	To receive any updates on Highways/Environment.	

	The Clerk is to report the worn out roundels.	
16.	To receive a Caretaker Report	
	The Caretaker review was positive.	
17.	Any Other Business (for information purposes only):	
	<p>There was a discussion regarding WiFi installation at the Hall.</p> <p>There is some flytipping at the top of the village that needs reporting. There was a discussion regarding people putting rubbish outside of their property.</p> <p>There was a discussion regarding the public house and the Sui Generis use.</p> <p>Cllr A Betty is checking the defibrillator regularly.</p> <p>Cllr S Betty is to chase the defibrillator training.</p>	
18.	Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.	
	<p>Thursday 16th November 2023</p> <p>Thursday 18th January 2024</p> <p>Thursday 21st March 2024</p> <p>Thursday 23rd May 2024</p>	

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX A

WARD MEMBERS REPORT TO BROOK PARISH COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 2023

STODMARSH UPDATE

In July, the Leader of the Council, Cllr Noel Ovenden, joined a number of other local authority leaders across the country in signing a letter asking the Prime Minister to act immediately on nutrient neutrality and demanding Government intervention. Possible strategic solutions, such as the creation of wetlands, have also stalled because key Government organisations are not working constructively with councils and constantly change their advice or stance on the matter.

Upon receipt of the letter the Leader, together with other local authority leaders, was invited to 10 Downing Street to meet with the Prime Minister's special advisors to discuss government support in finding a national solution to nutrient neutrality. The Leader specifically raised the issue of the need to unblock the delivery of affordable homes in Ashford and argued that not building new homes does very little to slow the increase in water pollution and that Government organisations need to own this national problem.

The Government has now responded by announcing a range of new measures to help address the impact of nutrient neutrality. The Government intends to legislate in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to make Natural England's rules on nutrient pollution advisory rather than mandatory and that funding will be available to help tackle the underlying problem of pollution in England's waterways.

Although the detail is awaited, it is hoped that this quick reaction by the Government will help the Council get the Local Plan back on track to deliver much needed homes in the right places.

MYASHFORD PORTAL

MyAshford is an online customer portal that gives residents access to the various accounts held with Ashford Borough Council in one place. Once residents set up an account they can view council tax bills, find out their rent balance, see who their local councillor is, apply for parking permits and more. Once signed up, residents can link all their accounts under one single sign-on, making it easier to access all their information in one place.

The old MyAshford system will be shut down on Friday 29 September 2023. Existing users will still be able to access the system until that date, but it is recommended that residents sign up for a new MyAshford account. Existing users are being contacted giving them guidance on how to register to the new portal.

For more information, visit www.ashford.gov.uk/your-council/my-ashford.

INCREASE IN TARRIFFS IN COUNCIL OPERATED CAR PARKS

Over the last few years, the Council has experienced a significant increase in its costs relating to car parking, mainly driven by increased utility costs. The Council policy is to review parking charges every three years; however, the last review had been postponed and so it had been four years since the charges were reviewed.

Tariffs have therefore been increased by approximately 10% (rounded to the nearest 10p) whereas the Consumer Price Index has increased by 20.18% since the last increase. The charges are still lower than those in nearby centres.

LAUNCH OF CITIZENS' PANEL

Ashford Borough Council is launching a Citizens' Panel to encourage residents to engage with the Council give their views and opinions on services and issues that affect the borough. Citizens who sign up will be able to share opinions and take part in consultations through online surveys and polls to provide their views on various topics of interest to residents. The aim is to consult the panel up to six times a year and provide regular updates on what changes to services have been made because of the feedback received. (For example, having a 'You said, we did' style campaign).

More information on the Citizen's Panel can be found at: www.ashford.gov.uk/citizens-panel

UPDATE ON KCC HIGHWAYS POTHoles AND SAFETY CRITICAL DEFECTS

KCC Highways report that it has received additional government funding to ensure that potholes and safety critical defects can be repaired as soon as possible before the onset of winter. Six additional contractors have been appointed by KCC to ensure the required resources are on hand to deliver the level of repair needed. Highways stewards will prioritise reports of damage received from residents as well as those picked up from routine inspections.

Cllr Simon Betty
Ward Member for Bircholt