

Cliffsend Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting/AGM

Held on Thursday 21st May 2020 at 7.15pm and 8.15pm via Zoom.

A half-hour break between meetings enabled us to honour the NHS, Care and Key-Workers.

Present – Cllr Rogers (Chair), Cllr Mortimer, Cllr Ashley, Cllr Harrison, Cllr Forrest, Cllr Lyon, Alison Willoughby-Browne (Clerk) and 1 member of the public.

1/20-21 Welcome and apologies for absence (by existing Chairman) -

Cllr Galvin was absent, therefore, Vice-Chairman Cllr Rogers assumed the position of Chairman for the meeting. The Clerk advised that the proceedings were being video-recorded.

2/20-21 Declarations of interest, election of officers and confirmation of working group membership -

Cllr Lyon declared an interest in the planning application for King Arthur Road.

Cllr Rogers explained that we could continue with existing officers for the next 12 months. The Clerk asked if there were any nominations for the position of Chairman; Cllr Harrison proposed Cllr Rogers, seconded by Cllr Lyon. This left a vacancy for Vice-Chairman – Cllr Lyon proposed Cllr Ashley for this position, seconded by Cllr Mortimer, both nominations were uncontested and all were in agreement. Declarations of acceptance of office were read out by both parties, to be signed by the individuals and then signed by Proper Officer and retained.

Members of the Finance Working Group were confirmed as Cllr Rogers (lead), Cllr Mortimer, Cllr Ashley and Clerk. This party is responsible for preparing the budget and will be extended to include reviewing protocol such as standing orders, and grant applications to outside bodies.

Highways Group consists of Cllr Forrest (lead), Cllr Mortimer, Cllr Lyon, Mr Bontoft and Cllr Ashley (non-working hours).

The Meadow Group is led by Cllr Lyon; Cllrs Forrest and Harrison and Mrs Searle are also members. The name of this working group is to change, will be confirmed with Clerk when a decision is made.

The Council does not promote its own events but if an event is to be organised/participated in, the Council members will come together for that specific event.

The remaining member of the Planning Team is Cllr Galvin. A list of planning applications is issued each week by TDC, generally there is nothing of interest to Cliffsend. Cllr Rogers has made many representations through the planning portal such as the Sportsman appeal, Banger Racing at Ebbsfleet, Orbit Housing. It is disappointing that although there are a number of submissions, there are very few from residents. If a major development is suggested, individuals will come to the meetings and express views, particularly if opposed. As a Council we count for one vote, only as strong as a neighbour voting. Cllr Forrest suggested that we should have a specific group for each development, bringing in residents that are in frontline impact of these. We could face-off against the developer, issues such as S106 monies which we would be in a position to negotiate, whereas, individuals wouldn't be. We should have had S106 monies for Bakers Field, Cottington Road North and South, Canterbury Road West. We have had no input into where the S106 monies have gone, approximately £750,000, barely anything is coming to Cliffsend. Cllr Ashley supported this, suggesting that we have a hit-squad for each development, a conjoined approach involving Finance and Highways Groups, but different individuals for each project to share the load. All agreed. Cllr Mortimer said that we should also enable residents to put in objections/comments as there is power in numbers. Cllr Harrison would like to liaise with Orbit Housing, WW Martin and the archaeological team in Cottington Road. The Chairman proposed that a subsequent meeting is held to discuss, Cllr Mortimer seconded.

3/20-21 Adoption of the minutes of 12th March 2020 as being a true record -
12th March minutes proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Harrison, all in favour. Chairman to sign the minutes as a true record.

4/20-21 Approval of April and May payments and financial matters -
Cllr Rogers explained that there are two contractual payments that need to be made (Countrywide and Clerk) even if there is no meeting of the Council. Cllrs Rogers and Mortimer had previously scrutinised the payments and signed the cheques.

April Payments

Payee	Description	Invoice No	Chq No	VAT	Excl VAT	Total
Countrywide	Meadow Maintenance	112298	100918	43.32	216.60	259.92
J Hellyer	Defibrillator Keys	-	100919	-	45.00	45.00
Clerk	April Salary	-	100920	-	409.50	409.50
M Clark	Meadow Sign Repair	-	100921	-	80.00	80.00
Clerk	Expenses -Stamps	-	100922	-	4.56	4.56
Total for Month				43.32	755.66	798.98

May Payments

Payee	Description	Invoice No	Chq No	VAT	Excl VAT	Total
Countrywide	Meadow Maintenance	115445	100923	43.32	216.60	259.92
Clerk	May Salary	-	100924	-	409.50	409.50
Total for Month				43.32	626.10	669.42

Cllr Harrison proposed the acceptance of both schedules and Cllr Ashley seconded, all in favour.

5/20-21 Matters arising from the above minutes - none other than those to be discussed later.

6/20-21 Working Party & Councillor Reports -
County and District Councillors were invited to the meeting. If unable to attend, contributions are usually made through the Clerk, none were received. At present we do not have a Community Warden.

Finance Report – information was circulated prior to the meeting. £35,254.11 was carried over into this financial year. We have received a VAT refund of £3,107.60 (past 3 years) and also the first tranche of the precept £8,223 there were no cheques outstanding, leaving a balance of £45,540.73.

Meadow Report – Cllr Lyon had contacted TDC to report the overgrowth of the trees and bushes at the corner of Foads Lane and Cliffsend Road, very dangerous as vision is restricted. Cllr Lyon had also reminded TDC of concerns raised because of the drop from the car park to pathway towards the nature reserve, with many more cars parked there.

Highways Group – a report was circulated before the meeting, see appended. Cllr Forrest updated the Council, advising that work has stopped at the rail crossing as the land is too soft for the installation of the 8m platform required for the pole. Cllr Rogers commented that there were a lot of markings sprayed over the level crossing and that Network Rail have been doing a lot of cutting back on embankments, trees, bushes.

Cllr Forrest said that KCC have been proactive in developing ideas for the village, pricing options etc. The Highways Improvement Plan will be forwarded to the working group and then the Council. The biggest issue facing the Council is funding, KCC will not spend a penny on improvements in the village as, thankfully, there have been no human fatalities. S106 monies have been allocated away from the village and it is unlikely we will get any community development funds. Cllr Rogers explained that the battle between Highways/KCC/TDC is a historical problem. The main area of concern for residents is the Foads Lane/Cliffsend Road corner, many residents have asked for a 20mph speed limit and traffic calming. Other than Cllr Forrest there are no other volunteers in the village registered with Speedwatch, Cllr Lyon has carried out checks previously. Cllr Ashley suggested that if there is no enforcement, it will not be adhered to; it is not about speed checks on straight roads but where there are no pavements, parked cars and bad corners we need 20mph. Cllr Rogers expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer for Speedwatch. Finally, after two years, the traffic lights at the top of Canterbury Road West have been re-programmed.

7/20-21

Planning Applications -

F/TH/20/0352 Lord of the Manor, not in our parish but a resident had shown concern. Only suggestion was that there should be no right turn across traffic, any development should be better than what is there at the moment, it has been vacant for about 12 years.
FH/TH/20/0561 17 King Arthur Road, no objections to plans for extension.

8/20-21

Current Topics -

Ongoing review of Council procedures – slow progress, usually reviewed annually when quiet, some are required for the audit. Cllr Rogers proposed the formal adoption of the Grant Application documents and Cllr Mortimer seconded, Cllr Ashley stated that they must show that we do not accept retrospective applications.

Update on defibrillator – we have the paperwork, one key and spare pads for the defibrillator. The pads have a shelf-life of four years, the spares expire in 2023 and those in the defibrillator 2022. The Clerk has commenced the maintenance, the defibrillator has internal safety checks, a green flashing light shows when all is well. However, there is a problem with the cabinet, the batteries to the keypad and external light have leaked and despite cleaning the contacts and changing batteries, it cannot be opened using the code. Clerk to contact AED to seek their advice, to check if still under warranty and to see what we can do to prevent this happening again. Also need to re-register with SE Ambulance Service.

Update on Bakers Field S106 monies – no update, the majority of the money has been allocated elsewhere. Cllr Forrest explained that negotiations for S106 monies start when planning applications are submitted.

Some allocations are questionable, such as £62k for strategic access management for green spaces. A long discussion ensued, questioning what checks are carried out as to how S106 monies are spent, how will we know if the £121K promised to primary schools is spent that way? The outcome of this discussion was for the Council to challenge TDC to demonstrate whether they had gone through due process when allocating the S106 monies.

Orbit Housing proposed development – after many emails a date of 23rd April was agreed for a public presentation. This was then cancelled due to the Government regulations on social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Head of Planning suggested sending through an information pack, followed by questions and answers remotely. This has not been forthcoming, despite further prompting. On site, the archaeological dig has commenced and will carry on for at least 10 weeks. The planning portal shows an expiry date of 30th June.

Update on R/TH/20/0171 Land East of 40 Canterbury Road West – Cllr Rogers lodged objections on behalf of Cliffsend Parish Council 26th March 2020.

Update on Sportsman Inn appeal – the appeal was turned down. What is going to happen with it, could it be resurrected as a community asset? Cllr Ashley advised that listing the building would restrict what could be done with it and increase the cost of any works considerably.

Update on minutes of Meadow Project (2007) – Cllr Forrest enquired as to how much it costs to maintain the trees and meadow per year. Cllr Rogers advised approximately £3,500. This cost would be reduced if it were planted as a proper meadow with some mowed areas for walking.

Update on Southern Water bench – a request for suggestions was made on website and noticeboards, for almost two months. Only three suggestions were received. Councillors to submit their suggestion to Clerk.

Update on banking arrangements – Cllr Rogers had investigated various options, we need to move forward as the current arrangements are inefficient. As we have received the first tranche of the precept it is a good time to switch. Cllr Ashley proposed that the Chairman and Clerk move forward as a matter of priority, Cllr Lyon seconded. The Chairman proposed that the Clerk pursue Unity Trust Bank, seconded by Cllr Mortimer.

9/20-21 Clerk's Reports -

Clerk advised the Council that the internal auditor was available to audit the accounts in June and that she had had clarification regarding the statement made by the external auditor (PKF Littlejohn) that parish meetings could not be held virtually. This only refers to parishes that have no parish council. There is an extension to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) timeframe.

10/20-21 Correspondence Received -

The Clerk listed the correspondence received, most of which was COVID-19 related and had been dealt with. The ownership of the barrier troughs was discussed.

11/20-21 Public Questions -

No questions were submitted to the Clerk.

The meeting finished at 9.48pm.

Date of next meeting - TBC.