

# TUNSTALL PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 21 March 2019 in the Small Hall, Tunstall Church of England Primary School, Tunstall Road, Tunstall.

Present: Cllr Brian Cook (Chairman), Cllr Lee Burgess (Vice Chairman), Cllr Wendy Harwood, Cllr Mavis Hibben, and Cllr Roger Sills; and Mrs W Licence (Clerk).

Also present were the Mayor of Swale, Councillor Samuel Koffie-Williams, and fourteen members of the public.

### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Cook welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting and ensured that those present were aware of the emergency evacuation procedure.

Apologies had been received from Cllr David Nutting (personal); apology accepted.

Apologies had also been received from KCCllr Andrew Bowles, KCCllr John Wright, SBCllr Monique Bonney, SBCllr Derek Conway, SBCllr George Samuel; apologies noted.

### 2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 9 MAY 2018

Cllr Burgess **PROPOSED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2018 as a true record of the meeting; **SECONDED** by Cllr Hibben: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**. Cllr Cook duly signed the minutes as a true record.

### 3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Cook said:

*Yet another year has passed, and we are again at the Annual Parish Meeting.*

*We decided to have a change this year, and to separate the Annual Parish Meeting from the ordinary Parish Council meeting. This allows us to invite more speakers from various organisations to speak, and for us to enjoy the KALC award ceremony without having to rush onto the next meeting.*

*We had intended to hold this meeting in the village hall, but it is such a popular venue that we were unable to secure a booking, so instead we are here at the school, which I think is a first for the Parish Council.*

*Going forward, we have decided to start the monthly Parish Council meetings at 19:30, this is to afford more opportunity for those residents with long commutes to attend meetings, which they would otherwise be unable to. Moving the start time gave us the opportunity to review our meeting venue, and starting in June, the Parish Council will move to the village hall, which has better access and parking.*

*2018/19 has been another busy year for the Parish Council. Our highways team has continued to work closely with Kent Highways on improving the village for our residents. The foliage is now being regularly managed adjacent to the school crossing and the drains throughout the village were all cleaned out and jetted just prior to Christmas. Road markings have been refreshed and the wooden bollards around Coffin Pond have been replaced with plastic covered steel bollards to offer further protection to the pond wall, as the wooden ones were knocked over so often. You will no doubt have noticed that it still hasn't prevented one of them being knocked over.*

*The new gully, due to be installed outside the village hall to help alleviate the flooding of the road, is still proving a tough nut to crack with KCC Highways. Even though the Parish Council*

*is paying for the work and have offered to arrange our own contractors to do the work if necessary, we still await the KCC Drainage Engineer's sign-off. It is very frustrating that we have done all the hard work on this and are still falling at the last hurdle, but we will not give up on this, as it is important to our residents.*

*Jane, our litter picker continues to do an excellent job to keep our roads tidy and free of litter and manages the garden at the Park Drive end of Cranbrook Close, which the Parish Council is responsible for.*

*A resident wrote to the Parish Council last year to ask us to assist in trying to reduce the dog fouling of the pavements in Stirling Road. We will have two new bins installed in Stirling Road, and have now taken delivery of a 'dog waste bag' dispenser which will be placed above one of these bins.*

*The planters around the Parish look resplendent and garner many positive comments, such that we have purchased two additional planters, one sited in Stirling Road and the other in outside the old village hall where the phone box used to be, which the Parish Council, with the help of one of our Borough Councillors had removed last year. We have also entered Tunstall in the 'South and South East In Bloom' competition this year.*

*The Tunstall Speed Watch team has sessions from April to October at various sites in the Parish. We carried out nineteen sessions last year and recorded one hundred and sixty-one vehicles exceeding the speed limit. This resulted in seventeen letters being sent or hand delivered by Kent Police to the drivers concerned. Sadly, we have lost two valuable members of our team, who have had to step down for personal reasons. If you would like to join our little group and help us to educate drivers passing through our village, you will be made very welcome. It is only one hour each month and the sessions are very enjoyable.*

*Many of you will have attended the special Armistice Day service last year, which marked the 100th anniversary of the cessation of fighting during WW1. It was very much a joint effort between the Parish Council, the church, the school and the village hall. It took a lot of organisation and culminated in a very successful event, due in no small part to the collaboration and support from residents and the various organisations including Tunstall Evening WI, who served refreshments in the village hall afterwards. The Parish Council erected a Tommy Silhouette in the grounds of the village hall, with a plaque to record the names of the men of Tunstall who were lost. It is hoped to hold a joint event at the village hall each year going forward.*

*The Parish Council ran a competition for residents, to design a new village sign for Tunstall, to mark the boundary when entering from the Bredgar end. There were a considerable number of entries, and with one exception, all were from children at Tunstall school. Councillors shortlisted and agreed an overall winner and three runners-up. All four children were presented with a book token at one of the Community lunches.*

*The sign is now in the process of being made and the Parish Council is working with KCC Highways to agree the exact location and arrangements for getting it erected.*

*As a Council, we spend a lot of time responding to various plans and surveys which SBC publish to try and ensure the parish is fairly represented. We have co-opted some residents to various working groups to assist with this process and are always happy to welcome other volunteers if you think that is something you would like to be involved with.*

*This is my last Annual Parish Meeting as a Councillor, as I have decided to step down from May, so in closing, I would like to thank both Wendys, Mavis, David, Roger and Lee, the Kent County and Swale Borough Councillors who regularly attend our meetings, for the support you have all given me during my time as a Councillor and as Chairman.*

*We have another challenging year ahead, but I know that as a team the Parish Council will meet the challenges head on.*

*Thank you.*

#### **4. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM PARISHIONERS**

*A resident said she has been looking at the precept for urban parishioners in Sterling Road, the precept has expanded significantly and the Parish Council has high reserves.*

Cllr Cook said some of the money in reserves is for the gully by the Village Hall.

Cllr Burgess said the Council took the decision to have a small yearly increase so there would not be a significant increase in the future. National Government is pushing more responsibilities onto parishes.

*A resident said she did not think litter was a problem in Sterling Road although there is a problem with dog fouling and the verges around Sterling Road are becoming overgrown and an eyesore.*

Cllr Cook said the Parish Council is planning to consider this.

Cllr Burgess said it can be discussed at the next meeting. When the wall was built the Parish Council made sure it would not have responsibility for maintenance. The Council is not afraid to spend money and expenditure is not on specific areas but is there for when it is needed.

#### **5. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS**

##### **St. John the Baptist Church, Tunstall**

Rev Alan Pinnegar, reported that it had been a good year for the church which has a burgeoning Sunday School group and young families are being encouraged to take part in the church. A few parents were involved in the Christmas Tree festival which is a very successful event. The church building continues to be used for other things such the toddler group. Fundraising is on-going to repair the roof and the church is grateful to Tunstall Parish Council and Swale Borough Council for the grants given. The church now has the faculty for extensive repairs to the roof, the last quinquennial report identified the need for the repairs to keep the building water tight for many years to come. It is hoped that the building will continue to be used for community use.

##### **Tunstall Evening WI**

Mrs Jay Collins said the WI meets monthly eleven times a year on the second Thursday and there is an Annual General Meeting. Tunstall Evening WI has various groups including a Book Club and Noisy Needles. It is a very friendly organisation and there are also meetings with neighbouring WIs and District meetings. Resolutions are voted on at the AGM and the current resolutions are to encourage women to have smear tests and rural buses, if passed a mandate will be passed to individual WIs. The WI has a mandate to socialise and educate women and they is always a business meeting and a speaker. All WIs are different and women are invited to visit the group.

##### **Village Hall**

Mrs Pauline Panton said the current Village Hall, opened in 2002, offers better facilities than the old one, especially for toddlers who have a new safe play area. The uniformed organisations are flourishing at the hall which has excellent parking facilities. Through the year, during the morning, afternoon and evening, the hall is used by groups and societies. At the weekends the hall is the venue for Christening parties, wedding receptions and family parties, there is a policy of no outside weddings as the Committee wants the hall to be available for local people. The societies also have special events at the hall. The Village Hall Committee also promotes popular events and will also be putting on events for children. For the last eight years there has been a Festive Food Fair in conjunction with Produced in Kent.

The Armistice Centenary Commemoration was an outstanding community event organised by Cllr Cook, the Village Hall was full, the children laid poppies, a wreath was laid, the Last Post was played and the Tunstall Evening WI made the refreshments. The event was the culmination of the Parish Council, the Village Hall Committee, the Church and Tunstall Primary School all working together.

### **Friends of Tunstall Church**

Mrs Panton reported that the group now meets at the village hall as the numbers have increased, and it has first class speakers. It is a flourishing group and raises funds for the church.

### **Men of Kent**

Mrs Panton informed the meeting that the Sittingbourne branch has a record number of new members. The group has food and a speaker and has hosted the County Annual General Meeting which was so successful that it will host again.

### **Kent Active Retirement Fellowship**

The following report was submitted to the meeting:

*Kent Active Retirement Fellowship is a County wide organisation which was set up as a social group for people who receive a pension from KCC and their partners. However, we do welcome guests to our meetings and events, they pay a slightly higher subscription, £1.50 instead of £1 pp, and we all pay an annual fee of £5*

*We meet once a month at Tunstall Hall and usually have a speaker. The topics vary, for instance, over the past few months we have had talks on the Tunnels found under Maidstone Grammar School and their use during the war years, The Kent countryside and Eva Braun. Next month we have a speaker from Lullingstone Castle to talk about the World Garden there, another from Lyminge on Kent Battle of Britain and, from a speaker who worked in broadcasting, a talk entitled "Don't Sneeze at the Microphone!"*

*We like to have at least 3 main outings each year. Last year we visited Flatford Mill, Allington Castle and Eltham Palace after which we enjoyed a Thames boat trip and, coming up, we will soon be going for a behind the scenes tour of Wimbledon with lunch there and also visiting Leonardslee Gardens in West Sussex in May.*

*There are a few off-shoot groups too. A flourishing walking group embarks on not too challenging walks once a month, always followed by a pub lunch...we range all over the county for these walks which are tailored to go at a pace that all can cope with. Similarly, a pub lunch group visit different local pubs monthly for food and chat and the "Friendship Group" meet up regularly and plan visits to concerts or to anywhere else that takes their fancy, even going on mini breaks together.*

*New members are always welcome.*

### **Beavers**

Mrs Sheila McGee, Group Leader of the 9<sup>th</sup> Sittingbourne, Tunstall and Wormshill Scout Group, said there are weekly meetings for boys and girls. The aim is to actively support young people encouraging integrity, respect, care and co-operation.

Beavers have themed meetings such as helping others, acting, Space badge, Mothering Sunday and there are various activities including camping, days out, emergency aid, the Christmas Tree Festival and the Christmas Party. There is also the Founders Party.

### **Water Colour Painting Group**

Mr Denis Gandon said the group started seventeen years ago and is very successful with twenty-seven members. The group meets every Friday and a twenty-week session costs £20. There are painters of all abilities.

Cllr Cook thanked everyone for attending and for their reports.

## **6. ANY OTHER MATTERS**

No other matters were raised.

## **7. PRESENTATION OF THE KALC COMMUNITY AWARD BY THE MAYOR OF SWALE**

Mayor of Swale, Cllr Samuel Koffie-Williams, said that it gave him great pleasure and that he is very excited to hear of the active things in the village, many of which involve food.

The Mayor said that having lived in Tunstall for forty-two years, Mr Denis Gandon is a well-known and well-respected member of the community and is regularly seen around the village walking his dog.

Mr Gandon has been actively involved at the village hall since it was opened and is always to be seen doing an odd job to ensure it is maintained in good order.

He has run a painting class on Friday afternoons in the village hall for seventeen years, which is very popular and well attended by members of the community. Mr Gandon also helps out at the church, cutting the grass and keeping the grounds tidy

In summary, Mr Gandon is somebody who just gets on with things quietly in the background. He is a tireless worker who is always there to offer help and support and take part in activities that benefit the village and community.

The Mayor presented Mr Gandon with the KALC Community Award.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.45pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chairman  
Date: 27 May 2021