

# **Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting for Eastling held at Eastling Village Hall on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

Present: Cllr Jimmy West (Chairman), Cllr Paul Ainsworth, Cllr Julia Bailey and Cllr Nigel Bickerdike; and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

Also present were twenty members of the public.

Apologies had been received from Cllr John Payne, County Councillor Andrew Bowles and Ward Member Colin Prescott.

Cllr West welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

## **1. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 27 April 2017**

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the minutes of the meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by Cllr West.

## **2. Matters Arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

## **3. Report of the Chairman of Eastling Parish Council**

Cllr West gave the following report:

**The Council** has adhered to its established pattern of bi-monthly meetings in the year, with a very satisfactory attendance record for all 5 Councillors. The Council is non-political.

**Elections** to the Council took place in 2015. This year, after many years of service on the Council Helen Higgs decided to step down. I would like to record our thanks for all the contribution and insights that Helen has given to the Council during her period of Office. We then went through a formal process of finding a replacement, and after appropriate advertising, I am very pleased to say that Paul Ainsworth has been co-opted onto the Council. Elections will be held again in 2019, but meanwhile anyone is welcome to attend Council meetings.

**Parish Council Clerk.** We are fortunate to have Wendy Licence as our Clerk. Wendy was appointed in December 2016, following an extensive search for an experienced Council Clerk. Wendy is Clerk to other councils and attends regular training and update seminars to keep abreast of all that is required by statute for the proper governance of Parish Councils. The Council is obliged to have its own website [www.eastlingpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/](http://www.eastlingpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/). On that is published all the agendas and minutes of Council meetings and all our regulatory and financial information and other documents. The latest formal documents that have been approved are concerning Data Protection Policy and Risk Assessment. The Council has received some £452 [last year £1,640] from the Government Transparency Fund, this money is used to finance the Council's own computer, and other expenses necessary for proper governance. This is the last year that money is available from this fund. The Council is a member of the Kent Association of Local Councils [KALC], a body that is particularly useful for training and keeping us all up to date. On the financial side the cash management and budgeting are robust. There will be no change in the Precept this year. It will raise about £5,100, being £35 a year for a band D property in Eastling.

**Planning applications** have been few, which is not surprising as Eastling is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and thus subject to severe restrictions on development. Eastling Parish Council has viewed a number of applications favourably, but it is Swale Borough Council who makes the decisions and occasionally they get rejected by Swale Borough Council. Major building continues at the Water works, and there have been some interesting proposals for the rebuilding of Pett Dane, which the Faversham Society is focusing on, along with Swale Borough Council.

**Neighbourhood Watch** Mr Alan Willson continues to do an excellent job in looking after Neighbourhood Watch, liaising with the police where necessary and helping out villagers in many ways. Thanks to Alan for the excellent work he does in the village, on many fronts.

**Highways.** The Council continues to report issues to KCC, and batter them with follow up letters and calls. We have made numerous reports and letters concerning the Z Bend flooding. We still await action. Potholes are terrible this winter, as they are all over the County. One piece of good news is the recent resurfacing of the road from the pub to up past Mill cottages. We are grateful for this and we now need to work on getting the rest of Eastling's streets resurfaced. Anyone can report any Highway problem themselves online, through [www.kent.gov.uk/](http://www.kent.gov.uk/) and I would urge you do this. KCC is pretty responsive, and you can track progress.

**The Village Website** The Council provides this website it is [www.eastlingvillage.co.uk](http://www.eastlingvillage.co.uk) and this is run by Mr David Ainsworth. We are pleased with the website for Eastling Village; it has been operating for about eighteen months. Please feed in any comments, news, or events you may have to the administrator. He can only put up information he is told about, so do be in contact with him with information and photos. In addition, the Council has its own website [www.eastlingpc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.eastlingpc.kentparishes.gov.uk) which has all the details concerning the work, constitution and regulations of Eastling Parish Council. This website is maintained by the Clerk and there are links between the two websites.

**Swale Borough Council.** We are fortunate to have Colin Prescott as our local representative and Andrew Bowles the leader of SBC and a member of KCC. The Council is grateful that both take an active interest and play a part in the issues concerning Eastling, along with their other wider responsibilities. I have also noted that our MP, Helen Whately is working hard on our behalf in this her Constituency.

**Footpaths.** The Council strives to work with local famers, to keep paths in good condition. Mr Ben Binder, manager of the Belmont Estate, works particularly hard to maintain the paths and bridleways. He provides regular reports to the Council, for which we are very grateful. If you spot any problems, such as fallen trees, then please let Ben know. The trenches around most of the fields dug by the Belmont Estate are to stop "Hare Coursing". The Estate is gradually putting up new gates, over the entrances.

**Notice Board.** All Parish Councils are required to have a Notice Board. as you will have seen, we had had to be replace ours this year at the end on the Church path, on the Street.

**Village Bus- route 660** In the last few months there was concern that local buses may have to cut by Kent County Council. The Council was reassured that our village bus, route 660, will not be withdrawn. It is a vital life line into Faversham used by many. The Council has filed a letter with Kent County Council pointing out how important Route 660 is to school children, elderly, non-drivers and residents.

#### **4. Financial report of the Parish Council**

Cllr West reported the bank balance is similar to the previous year and the precept has been kept the same. There was an additional spend to replace the notice board and the Council

will receive a grant of £405 from County Councillor Bowles's Grant Scheme. The Council received another grant of £452 from the Transparency Fund and this will be the last grant received.

## **5. To receive reports from local organisations**

*Mr Willson, the neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, said he has been Coordinator for thirteen years and has not been asked for a report.*

Cllr West said that this was the time to give a report.

*Mr Willson said the Parish Council website says the Community Warden is Maurice Stewart who is Warden for Dover.*

Cllr Bailey explained that that KCC have a system for Community Wardens for the County and Mr Stewart covers this area.

## **6. To receive questions and comments from parishioners**

*1- Concern was expressed about vehicles parking on the corner opposite the Carpenters Arms, the Highway Code states that parking is not permitted within ten metres of a junction. It is difficult to negotiate the turning if vehicles are parked there.*

Cllr West said parking is an issue from the pub.

*2- The issue is also an eyesore and should be considered a loss of amenity as the impact of parking on the corner does not look good. The person who parks there is not a customer of the pub.*

*3- A member of the public said Swale Borough Council is being asked to provide ten thousand more houses and is looking at the east, south east and south of Faversham to create more housing and expressed concern development may occur nearby. An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Conservation Area does not preclude development. There has been extensive development in Harrietsham and Lenham. The field by the pub could be developed, Belmont had offered the land as a village green however the rules have changed in 2006, meaning a village green status can only be applied for on land which has been used for leisure for at least twenty years. Local Green Space Designation enables communities to protect green spaces and gives greater protection without the need for change of use.*

*The country does need more housing and there may be development in the Parish. The Parish Council could have a Neighbourhood Plan. Development in Eastling may be less likely as it is not near a railway station and does not have shops but the parish must not be complacent. The Council could look at where development would be appropriate and how it would benefit the community. Consideration could be given to the type of housing needed. A village green will not stop housing around it and it may actually increase it around the green.*

*5- The flooding on the z-bend continues to be a problem. The drain on the corner needs to be cleaned.*

Cllr West thanked everyone for attending and for their comments

## **7. Presentation of the KALC Community Award 2018**

Cllr West said the Kent Association of Local Councils invites each parish to give a Community Award to a resident in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the village. He presented the inaugural award to Hilary Harlow. Hilary moved to Eastling thirty-five years ago and has done so much work for the community through her work for the Church, serving for a time as Church Warden and Parochial Church Council. Hilary has also been involved with the singing group, the hand bell group, the youth group, rallies. Heavenly Cleaners, Bible and study groups. Hilary took over the running of the Good News magazine and ensured it was an outstanding publication keeping residents informed. Hilary's baking is highly renowned and provides catering for many village events such as the Bluebell Walk, coffee mornings and drop-ins. Hilary is also a good neighbour visiting the sick and looking after local people.

Cllr West thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9pm.

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chairman

Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of April 2019