

Minutes of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held virtually due to Coronavirus Covid-19 restrictions on Tuesday 1st September 2020.

Present: Cllrs: K Howard-Challis (Chair), R Smith (Vice-chair), T Portman, M Szabo, A Smith, E Stiles and two members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Whiting, Clark, A Groves, Ann Smith (Clerk)

2. Declarations of Pecuniary or Non Pecuniary Interest

Declaration of Pecuniary interest: None

Declaration of Non-pecuniary interest: None

3. To agree Minutes of the Meetings held on 2nd June 2020

It was resolved to agree the Minutes for the meeting held on 7th July 2020. They will be signed within social distancing rules. Proposed by Cllr A Smith and seconded by Cllr Portman. Agreed unanimously.

4. Matters Arising

- a) To agree anti-idling campaign and signage (emails dated 25/06/2020 and 10/07/2020) It was agreed to concentrate on the school and village hall areas. Cllr Szabo to get quotes for signage and bracketry.
- b) To discuss Parish Highways Improvement Plan Consultation – 20mph areas and double yellow lines on Breach Lane – email 28/07/2020 Mike Whiting. It was agreed that the PC will leave this in Mike Whiting's capable hands and Ann to chase for an update.
- c) Report from RoSPA regarding play area (MS) The report is the same as last year, with a couple of items to look at for improvement. The equipment is in good condition with the correct level of risk for each item. The goal nets and basketball backing board, were due to be replaced in Spring this year, but due to Covid-19, this has been delayed as the PC did not want to come across as promoting close contact sports at this time.
- d) Review of Insurance Cover – renewal 1st October 2020 – email 06/08/2020.
It was decided to continue with the cover of insurance as nothing has changed. Proposed by Cllr Szabo, seconded by Cllr Stiles. Agreed unanimously.
- e) To agree plans for opening of new carpark at Westfield. It was agreed to open the car park on 1st October 2020 – a low key affair. Proposed by Cllr R Smith and seconded by Cllr Portman. – Invoices are being delivered this week. Cllr Portman and Cllr A Smith will meet to sort and arrange the planting of the shrubs / trees for the new carpark.
- f) To discuss access to the Brickfields and the restriction of vehicles to the Dock Area – emails 06/08/2020. There is a sign at the Brickfields that states no vehicles are allowed on the Brickfields apart from authorised emergency services and the Environment Agency. Ann and Cllr R Smith to formulate the information to be put onto the website.

5. Finance

- a) To consider the internal and external audit report – email 20/07/2020. Cllr K Howard-Challis has not had any contact with the auditor for 4 days, which normally means everything is okay.

6. Correspondence:

- a) To consider request from Sea Scouts Group for access to Brickfields to kayak on Mondays – email 29/07/2020. With the restrictions to access the Brickfields, it has been agreed that Cllr Stiles will contact Bill Robson or Tim, to see if the Sea Scouts could make use of their jetty
- b) To consider letter from Swale Borough Council Proposed Local Green Spaces Local Plan Review – email 06/08/2020. Local resident (Steve Gates) proposed the Newington Banks be put forward to SBC for consideration under the Proposed Local Green Spaces. Proposed by Cllr A Smith and seconded by Cllr Stiles.

7. To discuss and agree response (if any) to the following Planning Applications:

- a) None received

8. To receive clerk's report.

The Clerk has migrated the Minutes that were left on the old website to the laptop and the Parish Council Policies have been uploaded to the new website. Mr Randall will endeavour to transfer the Village News archive before the old website is switched off. EIS have been instructed to take down the old site as of 22nd September when the new legislation comes into force.

Enquiries were received regarding: where the Minutes and Agendas can be found; information for the remote meeting; whether there are plans for meetings in the hall to re-start and to bring to the attention of the Parish Council that the hedge between Seaview and Westfield Cottages needs cutting; a date for the start of work on the new car park; replacement of the picket fence and crowning a large tree, both on the boundary of the Brickfields and Heron Close. These have all been addressed.

Two complaints were received regarding the start of work on the new car park expansion at Westfield and a complaint regarding the cutting of the hedge along the footpath adjacent to Neptune Bungalow, which was only cut along the top and the contractor had left a mess.

The Clerk has applied for a Corona Virus Small Business Grant of £10,000. The Parish Council is eligible as they are in receipt of Small Business Rate Relief on their property (Burial Ground).

The combination padlocks numbers have been changed. The Clerk has informed the relevant parties of the new numbers.

Lower Halstow Parish Council have launched their Gigabit Broadband Community Project and registrations are invited. There is no commitment at this stage. All the details are on the website.

The Clerk has submitted a request to KCC for the weeds in the gutters and alleys to be dealt with, supported with photographs.

The Clerk completed the VAT return and the payment of £1744.65 has been received from HMRC.

Councillor Portman awarded the prizes for the Best Wildlife Garden Competition. The winners were: 1st (£50), 12 Cumberland Drive; 2nd (£30), 81 School Lane and 3rd (£20), 11 Heron Close.

The bank balance as of 25th August 2020 is £87012.58.

- b) Authorisation to make the payments was proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis and seconded by Cllr Szabo. Agreed unanimously. Cllrs Howard-Challis and Szabo will authorise the internet payments and sign the cheques within social distancing rules.

9. To consider questions received from Lower Halstow Residents

- a) Are horses allowed to use footpaths? – email Mrs Drury 16/07/2020. The parish council is unaware that any paths within the village are classed as bridleways (allowing horses to traverse them). With this in mind Ann (clerk) will contact Swale Borough Council to ask that the correct signs are put up prohibiting horses from using the path as per Mrs Drury's email.

- b) Is it possible to dim the street lights in Crouch Hill Court and The Street? – email Mrs Powell 19/08/2020. Cllr Szabo will look into this challenge, as this is not the first time residents have complained about the LED lighting. Cllr Szabo will make contact with Mrs Powell to get more details and to assure her that the council is looking into what can be done.

10. Items for information only:

a) To receive items for Village News and the Website:

Cllr K Howard-Challis, wanted to thank Mr J Mcgee for his help and support in pushing forward gigabit internet for the village. At this time Mr Mcgee has gained support for the project from residents of the village, but he emphasises that we need more to join the cause.

b) To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of next meeting.

Agenda items: Update on where we are with the purchase of the Ransom strip.
 Update on Dock repair quotes.
 Update on Sea wall protection.

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on Tuesday 6th October 2020

The meeting closed at 20.03 pm.

Payments – September 2020

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
Mrs T Portman	Reimbursement for Garden Competition prizes.	100.00		566126141
Came & Co	Local Council Insurance Scheme	1136.74		852151509
ATS	Work carried out at Westfield Cottages New Car Park Invoice dated 24/8/2020	12675.00		Cheque 300009
Commercial Services	Grounds Maintenance	1606.09	267.68	132212442
RoSPA Play Safety	Annual Inspection of Recreation Ground and Play Area Invoice 50309	94.80	15.80	690136423
Mr L Robbins	Independent Internal Audit and Report for 2019/20 Annual Return Invoice 2020/60	100.00		780288071
Peelports Group Port of Sheerness	River Licence Fee	1.20	0.20	621628933
Mrs A I Smith	Reimbursement for Portable Hard Drive and Combination Padlock	93.72		451428917

Other payments:

25 September 2020 Standing Order

Clerk's Salary - £644.60

Date:

Signed:

**Cllr. K Howard-Challis
Chair**