

NETTLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 5th OCTOBER 2023 IN NETTLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL at 19:45

PRESENT: **Cllr Alison Green - Chair**
Cllr Anita van Hensbergen – Vice Chair
Cllr David Meredith
Cllr Emily Corfe
Cllr Jackie Bennett
County Cllr Simon Webb
Nikki Lewis – Speedwatch Co-ordinator
Parish Clerk Suzanne Seal
One member of the public

1. APOLOGIES AND ABSENCE

Cllr Martyn Evans
Borough Cllr Claudine Russell

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

No interests declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH SEPTEMBER 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were duly signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

The meeting was adjourned to hear from a member of the public. The resident, Stephen Marchant, spoke about road safety issues at the Bow Hill Junction with the B2015/Bow Bridge & related signage issues and provided the following report:

To: Nettlestead Parish Council

Ref: Road safety issues Bow Hill Junction with the B2015/Bow Bridge & related signage issues.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to bring to your attention an issue with the current pavement layout at the above junction which I believe is a serious safety hazard for pedestrians.

At present, pedestrians coming over Bow Bridge and crossing the railway level crossing on route to the station/Bow Road and Wateringbury Village centre (and vice versa), do not have the safety of a continuous pavement. Instead, you have to cross Bow Hill after the level crossing and thirty paces or so, cross again at the mouth of the junction with the B2015 Maidstone Road.

Crossing the road twice to get to the same place is clearly, in my opinion, ridiculous and naturally nobody does it, therefore, people are walking in the road often around parked cars and are very vulnerable to traffic turning into Bow Hill, especially from the Wateringbury

village direction. Some of these drivers are not expecting pedestrians in the road and are often travelling too fast.

In addition to this, I believe the current speed limit of 30mph on Bow Bridge needs to be reviewed as the road narrows to just over one car's width. Many vehicles are attaining speeds of 40mph plus in both directions. This is a popular site especially in the summer with many visitors ambling about, not always on the pavement. It is not uncommon for drivers to put one wheel on the pavement and drive some distance just to pass another vehicle on the Bridge instead of giving way, even with people present. The problem is not helped by the national speed limit on the Yalding side which is another matter that needs to be reviewed by KCC Highways.

Finally, the residents of Bow Hill would ask that funding be allocated for a Road sign at the Junction.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Marchant (Bow Hill resident)

Cllr Webb was present and stated that he would speak with Greg McNicoll at KCC and revert back to Stephen. Parish Clerk to send Stephen's report and contact details to Cllr Webb.

4. EXTERNAL REPORTS

4.1 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Webb was in attendance and had circulated his summary note of meetings he had attended in advance of the meeting:

This is a further follow up to the two meetings I have held with residents.

a) The pedestrian crossing and issues of visibility

A group of residents and Parish Councillors met with myself and an officer from Highways to see what practically can be done to assist residents and particularly parents who have buggies and young children crossing the road when traffic speeds at varying speeds.

The officer has initiated a formal traffic analysis in order for KCC to have a more up to date set of data on which to base their next steps. To this end a Speed Limit Order on Maidstone Road, Nettlestead between Friday 15 September until 9 October 2023 is in place. I am aware that KCC have been offered the data which residents currently have.

Changes to the lighting, visibility of the crossing and cutting back of the hedges were all possible.

b) The Hampstead Lane and Station Road junction, plus walking access to the station for residents

The officer will be giving me a report on the analysis he has done to see if any traffic calming and speed reduction elements can be introduced to assist in ensuring the roads and junction are safer.

We looked at what would be necessary to provide a safe footpath from the residents' homes to the station.

Golding Homes are the landowners of the strip West of Station Road.

I am endeavouring to gain agreement that a strip of land 1.5 metres wide could be donated to the Parish Council in order for a footpath to be laid. (Not necessarily tarmac).

Further I have gained this information from MBC on CIL funding which they are entitled to:

Firstly, Maidstone Council's CIL bidding application process for strategic funding for infrastructure closed in July 2022. The next bidding cycle may be held in 2024, however there is no definite date, particularly while the CIL funding pot is needing to be replenished with collections from development within the borough.

The other type of CIL funding is Parish Council neighbourhood CIL. This is funding of 15% (or 25% if made through a Neighbourhood Plan) from CIL local development receipts given direct to Parish Councils for them to spend on infrastructure accordingly on their priorities.

I note that the project lies in the Parish of Nettlestead. Currently, Nettlestead Parish Council are due to receive £1,465.20 in a few weeks' time from the Hopper Hut Land Adjacent To Nettlestead Green House development and there is also a potential parish CIL receipt of £7,090.97 from The Granary, Rock Farm, Gibbs Hill, Nettlestead development when that development commences.

So the Parish Council are entitled to a total of £8,556.17 from the CIL pot.

Clearly, it is up to the Parish Council to determine their expenditure.

c) Meeting with Director of Highways

As promised, I met with KCC Director of Highways and discussed amongst other issues Yalding Enterprise Zone. This is a note of the meeting, which I am happy to circulate.

Meeting Note:

1. Yalding Enterprise Zone

SW explained that residents along Station Road and Hampstead Lane have safety concerns due to the increased number and speed of HGVs travelling to and from the site which they see as a road safety concern, especially when HGVs are passing on both sides of the road which is very narrow and when walking with children.

It is recognised that the planning application cannot be "undone", but residents would like a meeting with a Highways Officer to look at the impacts of the application. SW is willing to chair the meeting.

It was noted that the HGVs are not using the road as a cut through; the site was previously a chemical site and the ground is now neutralised which is why it can be used for warehousing. There are no nearby schools or shops. The railway station does not have much footfall.

HC and RE offered some potential options that could be explored but said that there was no guarantee of success.

- Whether Golding Homes would give up some land at Station Road to provide space for a footpath. This would not need to be "blacktop" as footfall would be light and therefore a less expensive treatment could be used.

- A similar solution could be used for the approach to the Railway Station.
- If there was agreement for the land to be donated, funding sources could include Network Rail, increase Parish precepts and MBC. Also, if there were any nearby developments, their potential CIL or S106 money could be used to support an identified scheme for the community.

SW welcomed the suggestions which he will follow up.

Cllr Webb advised that he was meeting with Greg McNicoll on 6th October to receive an update on where KCC are at with the Speed Limit Order consultation which is in place until 9th October.

Cllr Webb further advised that he has requested a meeting with Golding Homes about the 1.5 metre strip of land and is unable to find contact details for the owners of the land between Station Road and the Station. Councillors suggested a possible contact for this land.

Following Cllr Webb's report, Clerk to look into applying for the CIL funding and whether adding a footpath under the Highways Improvement Plan will increase the funding from 15% to 25%.

4.2 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Russell was not in attendance but had circulated her report in advance of the meeting:

MBC Members Report from Cllr Claudine Russell
Dated: October 2023

Local Plan

The consultation on the inspectors' main modifications is now open and closes on 13th November. Representations can be made through the portal and via email as previous rounds.

Bin Replacements

As a cabinet we voted last week to change the policy on paying for replacement bins. If the bin crew can't empty a bin or a resident complains that their bin has a broken lip so can't be emptied, then a replacement bin will now be given free of charge. Charging will still apply to general requests for a new bin where it isn't broken.

Waste Crime

At the recent cabinet meeting, we voted to increase all of the waste crime penalties that MBC can enforce, it is all part of trying to keep our borough clean and making sure that anyone that fly tips/litters or ignores the rules on waste gets penalised as much as we can.

Parish Charter

At KALC it was mentioned that a main contact list for MBC would be of use. We are now looking to build this in, either to the Parish Charter itself or on a website for parishes where the information can be updated as it changes to make sure that the document is live and relevant to parishes' needs.

Mote Park Café

The building is open and has recently been named by the Local Authority Building Control Excellence Awards 2023 as the regional winner of the "Best Public or Community Building" as well as being shortlisted as a finalist for the Grand Final on 19th January 2024 – fingers crossed!

Creative Communities Grants

The fourth and last round of the Creative Community Grants to help encourage arts engagement and community cohesion in Maidstone Town Centre are open. Applications are encouraged from groups and individuals for amounts between £500 and £2,000. Applications close on 30 November.

Events

The literary festival is on this week and tickets are already selling fast (it is a mixture of low price tickets and the childrens' activities which are mainly free). It is being held in a lot of the historic buildings around the town and hopefully will bring life and footfall into the town centre. We hope that this may become an annual event.

As always, if you need my help, please do not hesitate to email me at claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk

5. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr Green advised that PCSOs are no longer covering areas and Nettlestead is now covered by PC Carl Johnson and PC Will Dickinson who were unable to attend the meeting but hope to attend future meetings. Cllr Van Hensbergen enquired as to whether PC Johnson and PC Dickinson would be happy to provide their contact details for the Parish Magazine. Clerk to provide the PCs with meeting dates and enquire whether their details could be added to the Parish Magazine.

5.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

Cllr Corfe stated that there was nothing to report.

5.2 PARISH MAGAZINE

Cllr Van Hensbergen reported that the Parish Magazine went to print on time last month and included the Speed Traffic Order consultation. Cllr Van Hensbergen stated that she had responded to the consultation and encouraged other councillors to also respond.

5.3 CHATTERBOX AND WARMSPACE

Chatterbox: Cllr Bennett advised there is a fundraiser in November and welcomed any contributions of items.

Warmspace/Summerspace: Cllr Bennett reported that the Warmspace is coming to an end but has been successful with the following being provided to the community as at the 5th October:

- x60 Bacon Sandwiches
- x111 Burgers
- x42 Hotdogs
- x134 Hot Drinks
- x66 Cold Drinks
- x84 games of pool

Cllr Bennett advised that the hours had changed to 12noon – 6pm which better suited those with summer jobs who could attend after work from 4pm, it was also well attended by the older and younger generation.

Cllr Bennett reported that during the bus strikes, x3 13 year olds were unable to get home and were able to wait safely at the Hop Pole Warmspace, rather than out on their own.

Cllr Meredith stated that the £3,000 Summer Space Grant had been received. Cllr Bennett passed the invoice from Grober Limited to Cllr Meredith who will arrange the bank transfer.

6. KGV FIELD

6.1 TREE GRANT SCHEME

Cllr Webb stated that he had spoken with KCC about the KGV Field to discuss the trees along the back and was advised that there are some mature trees, with some possibly being rare and they would not want to remove them. Cllr Green and Cllr Van Hensbergen stated that the area is very overgrown with a lot of ivy and does need tidying up and enhancing to make it a more attractive area.

Cllr Webb is awaiting a report following his meeting and will follow this up and provide an update.

6.2 KGV FIELD – DRAFT PUBLIC CONSULTATION SURVEY

The Cllrs agreed with the questions and format of the survey and Cllr Van Hensbergen stated that she would add loose copies of the survey in the next Parish Magazine for residents to complete.

6.3 KGV FIELD – REVIEW AND AGREE THE DRAFT POLICY FOR TEMPORARY INSTALLATION OF A COMMERCIALY HIRED BOUNCY CASTLE

The Cllrs agreed on the policy which was circulated ahead of the meeting.

6.4 KGV FIELD – QUOTES

Cllr Van Hensbergen stated that she had swept the dead moss from the cycle track but there were still weeds growing through which were damaging the surface and causing it to crack.

Cllr Meredith reported that there is £55 remaining in the budget for the play equipment, £266 in the maintenance budget and £900 contingency.

The Cllrs reviewed the quotes for work at KGV Field and agreed the following:

- Quote from Capel Groundcare to kill the weeds on the BMX track - £88 plus VAT: It was agreed by all Councillors to proceed with these works.
- Quote from A&F Services to repair fencing - £150 plus VAT: It was agreed by all Councillors to proceed with these works.
- Quote from Capel Groundcare to lower the cable and remove the spring on the Cableway - £136 plus VAT: Having discussed the accompanying note from Capel Groundcare, it was agreed by all Councillors not to proceed with these works.

Clerk to circulate the latest Schedule of Cuts from Capel Groundcare to the Cllrs and going forward, to circulate the schedule with the meeting papers ahead of each meeting.

7. CHURCHYARD

Cllr Green reported that everything was looking good at the Churchyard.

8. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

8.1 SPEEDWATCH

Nikki Lewis, the Speedwatch Co-ordinator was in attendance and had circulated a report in advance of the meeting. Nikki advised that since the Nettlestead Village Speedwatch Group was set up in January 2022, it had carried out 36 Speedwatch Sessions with 7 volunteers from both ends of the village. Nikki reported that 496 speeders had been caught with 61mph being the top speed in the 30 limit zone and 59 mph being the top speed in the 40

limit zone. Of those 496 speeders, for 97 of them it was their first record observed, for 1 person there was active enforcement and others received letters from the Police.

Nikki stated that there are more women than men in Speedwatch and the women often receive verbal abuse from drivers and the public who live near to where they set up.

Nikki further advised that the Speedwatch group arrange their sessions around work, family life, daylight hours and weather conditions, and the period during the middle of the day is least covered due to this. Nikki stated that it would be useful to have more volunteers so that more hours could be covered.

Nikki stated that there needs to be a downwards trend in speed and the speed strips being placed on the road on 30th October should help with this too. Most speeding is recorded from the corner of Bishops Close.

Nikki to send a short report to Cllr Van Hensbergen to add to the Parish Magazine and to use this forum to ask for volunteers. Parish Clerk to send Anita's details to Nikki.

8.2 SPEEDING – TOOL KIT & BEACON SHIELDS

The Clerk advised that she had received the tool kit from KCC which consisted of a series of posters, banners and stickers for cars and residents' bins with 30 logos on them. Nikki Lewis took the tool kit for the Speedwatch group to make use of. Clerk to send email correspondence to Nikki Lewis about the tool kit for reference.

The Councillors discussed the suggested removal of the beacon shields and all Councillors agreed to keep them in place as they were originally put on to shield the lights from flashing in the nearby residents' windows. It was suggested the beacon lights could be cleaned by KCC once a year. Clerk to follow up on this.

8.3 TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY ISSUES AT HAMPSTEAD LANE AND STATION ROAD

This agenda point was covered by Cllr Webb in his report under agenda point 4.1.

8.4 STREETLIGHTS - MAINTENANCE

The Councillors discussed the quote of £679.97 plus VAT provided by Streetlights for the works presented in the Inspection Report. It was agreed by all Councillors not to proceed with these works at the current time, but to consider them for next year's budget in April, as there are currently not enough funds for the work. Clerk to make a note of this item for the budget in April.

Cllr Corfe reported that she had completed a survey of the streetlights and found that there were 10 LEDs per lamp and several of these had degraded and now have a blueish colour. Cllr Evans had also provided a note to say that light number 15 does not work correctly on the sensor. It was agreed by all Councillors that the streetlights, when blue, are still functioning and the cost to replace these LEDs would be considered in the April budget.

8.5 STREETLIGHTS – ENERGY SUPPLY

The Clerk referred to an email circulated with the agenda and reported that it had come to light that the streetlights' meter for the Parish is an O8 Profile Class Meter and when the P272 legislation was passed in 2017, these meters should have been replaced.

The Cllrs were under the impression the streetlights were unmetered. The Parish Clerk to contact Npower and research the matter further.

9. **OLD SCHOOL HOUSE CLOCK**

Cllr Corfe and Cllr Van Hensbergen reported that the clock has been working well.

10. **PLANNING MATTERS**

10.1 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

23/504153/SUB	Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ Submission of details to discharge condition 10 (phasing plan) of planning application 19/504910/OUT. Application Validated: Thu 14 Sep 2023 Determination Deadline: Thu 09 Nov 2023 IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS PRESENT TO MAKE NO COMMENT
23/503927/FULL	Plot 10 The Three Sons Hampstead Lane Nettlestead, Kent ME18 5HN Retrospective change of use of land for use as 1(no) Gypsy and Traveller pitch for personal occupation only, including siting of 1(no) mobile home, 1(no) touring caravan and utility shed with associated hard and soft landscaping. Comments due by: 26 October 2023 Decision due date: 27 November 2023 IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS PRESENT TO OBJECT DUE TO THE AREA BEING A HIGH FLOOD RISK AND BEARING IN MIND THE LOCATION IN METROPOLITAN GREENBELT.
23/503928/FULL	Plot 9A The Three Sons Hampstead Lane, Nettlestead Kent ME18 5HN Retrospective change of use of land for use as 1(no) Gypsy and Traveller pitch for personal occupation only, including siting of 2(no) mobile homes, 1(no) touring caravan and day room with associated hard and soft landscaping. Comments due by: 26 October 2023 Decision due date: 27 November 2023 IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS PRESENT TO OBJECT DUE TO THE AREA BEING A HIGH FLOOD RISK AND BEARING IN MIND THE LOCATION IN METROPOLITAN GREENBELT.

10.2 DECISIONS MADE BY MBC

<p>23/503503/FULL</p>	<p>3 Rose Cottages Maidstone Road Nettlestead Kent ME18 5HB Erection of a part single storey side/rear extension, part two-storey side extension including accommodation in the roof and changes to fenestration. Removal of outbuilding.</p> <p>APPLICATION PERMITTED</p>
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The decisions were noted.

10.3 PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE

None

11. FINANCE

11.1 RESOLUTION TO RECEIVE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2023

Cllr Meredith signed the invoices, advised that the direct debits had been paid and stated that he also required the Clerk's payslip and expenses form to sign each month. **RESOLVED by all members** to approve the Budget Monitoring report for OCTOBER 2023.

11.2 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PAYMENTS FOR OCTOBER 2023

Cllr Meredith and Cllr Corfe signed the cheques. **RESOLVED by all members** to approve payments for OCTOBER 2023.

It was **RESOLVED by all members** to approve the Bank Reconciliation and this was signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

NPC CHEQUE LIST - OCTOBER 2023					
Cheque No	Gross	VAT	Nett		Details
622344	£515.82	£85.97	£429.85	CAPEL GROUND CARE	GM CONTRACT AUG & Operational Inspection & 6 month Service
622345	£198.00	£0.00	£198.00	HADLUM DESIGN	Parish Magazine Printing - AUG
622346	£441.42	£73.57	£367.85	CAPEL GROUND CARE	GM CONTRACT SEPT
622347	£198.00	£0.00	£198.00	HADLUM DESIGN	Parish Magazine Printing - SEPT
622348	£567.97	£0.00	£567.97	SUZANNE SEAL	Clerk's Salary - SEPT
622348	£61.25	£0.00	£61.25	SUZANNE SEAL	Clerk's Expenses
DD 150923	£9.60	£1.60	£8.00	SAGE PAYROLL	Payroll fee - SEPT
DD 260923	£108.17	£5.15	£103.02	NPOWER BUSINESS	STREET LIGHTING ENERGY - SEPT
	£2,100.23	£166.29	£1,933.94		

11.3 RESOLUTION TO AUTHORISE SETTING UP A NEW STANDING ORDER TO PAY THE NEW CLERK

Cllr Meredith to arrange this once the online banking with Unity Bank has been completed.

11.4 INTERNET BANKING

The Clerk reported that the Unity Bank application had been completed and that she would contact them to find out if they require any ID for the Councillors. The next stage is to then agree a switch date avoiding direct debit payment dates.

12. SOCIAL MEDIA

No update.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

Cllr Green advised that the Clerk had received an email about parking at Bishops Close. It was agreed that unfortunately this is an ongoing issue that the Parish Council cannot resolve as Golding Homes are the landowners. The Parish Council can only remind all residents to park considerately.

Cllr Van Hensbergen enquired as to whether the weeds on the footpath from Gibbs Hill to Nettlestead Green and the broken bus stop sign by the Church had been reported. The Clerk stated that both issues had been reported online and would be followed up this month.

14. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Speeding

Traffic and Highways Issues – Hampstead Lane and Station Road and Bow Hill Junction with the B2015

Streetlights – Energy supply tariff

Scribe Software Package

Budget for 2024/Initial Draft

Internet Banking

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday 2nd November 2023 at 7:45pm at Nettlestead Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.25pm