

Minutes of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 11th January 2022

Present: Cllrs: K Howard-Challis (Chair); M Szabo (Vice-chair); A Groves; T Portman; A Smith and Mrs A I Smith (Clerk)

In attendance: Cllr M Baldock and 10 members of the public

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Woodford and the PCSO.

2. Declarations of Pecuniary or Non Pecuniary Interest

None.

3. Public Session

A resident requested an update on the 20 mph speed limit.

Cllr Smith replied that nothing further will be happening until the beginning of February due to staff issues at Kent County Council. Cllr Smith confirmed that whole of the centre of the village will be within a 20 mph zone. There will be a buffer zone of either 30 mph or 40 mph in Breach Lane of 600m before Home Farm. This will also apply in Sheerness Road but will be confirmed in February exactly where the buffer zones will start and finish. This will be the decision of Highways and not the Parish Council.

It was raised by another resident that there was a considerable amount of people, at the weekend, removing items from the beach and digging into the Seawall.

The Chair replied that this matter is being dealt with by Cllr Portman, together with Mr Telford. There is a meeting planned with the Environment Agency. This is an ongoing problem on how to police it. It was also brought up that most people do not realise that the Medway Estuary is a SSSI and has a protected status. Unless that is pointed out that there are some areas that you cannot disturb or remove items, people do not know that they are breaking the law and there is no understanding of the damage being caused. Could the Parish Council add a sign to say "No Mudlarking" which is the current on-trend word for this activity.

Permission was sought to hold an event on the Recreation Ground and a duck race at the Gibbs Amenity area on Saturday 16th April 2022, which was granted.

It was queried that the latest Minutes on the Parish Council have not been updated to show the Draft Minutes for November. This will be rectified as soon as possible.

4. Visitors:

a. KCC Councillor

Cllr Baldock has a limited amount of funding left and asked if any salt bins were required. One of the concerns regarding the budget is a potential cut to the bus services. The next Swale West parish meeting is in March and he would like to highlight the number of residents that use the buses. If the bus services keep being cut, they will get to a point where they are unusable. Loneliness will also be discussed. There is very little support for this in rural areas and it will be discussed how this issue can be raised up the agenda and what actions can be undertaken.

b. SBC Councillor

No report.

c. PCSO

The following report was received:

08/12/2021 – BREACH LANE – reports via "Farm Watch" of poaching in the area.

Officers attended but no offenders were located

d. Friends of the Brickfields

There are two work parties planned for January. The following signs will be displayed at the Brickfields in several areas:

“The Sea Wall is owned by the Lower Halstow Parish; Digging into the seawall is criminal damage. If you are caught you will be prosecuted. Digging under the seawall accelerates the collapse putting the whole conservation area at risk.” One and Hundred and Five whips supplied by the Woodland Trust will be planted to be planted as hedgerow. The area that has been left uncut, behind the Memorial as a wild meadow area is now home to yellow meadow ants, which are a keystone species. This will continue to be left uncut.

5. To resolve the Minutes

It was resolved that the Minutes of the 2nd November 2021 meeting are a correct record and were signed accordingly.

6. Correspondence

- a. Clean Growth Grant from Swale Borough Council. This has been closed for applications. Cllr Howard-Challis has been in contact with Swale Borough Council regarding this and he will be contacted when it re-opens.
- b. Email regarding Christmas Tree Recycling. As reported in the Village News shredding took place on 9th January 2022 at the Recreation Ground with thanks to Shaun Branchett (Treecraft) for volunteering to chip for the Brickfields on behalf of Greening Lower Halstow.
- c. Cars causing obstruction in Landrail Road. This is a difficult situation as people who pay their road tax are entitled to park (legally and safely) on the road. If restrictions are put in place, there is a danger of moving the parking problem elsewhere. Cllr Howard-Challis will look into the possibility of renting some land to create another car park.

Action: Cllr Howard-Challis

- d. Proposed Solar Farm at Raspberry Hill. Cllr Howard-Challis will ask Cllr Woodford if she could arrange a public meeting with a representative of the company involved to make a presentation of the proposal and allow opinions to be voiced in the Memorial Hall.

7. Matters arising

- a) The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Cllr Portman would like to plant three red oaks on Britannia Green, which was agreed.
- b) The Wooden posts on Britannia Green have now been repaired.
- c) Handy Person vacancy. An advertisement will be placed on the Parish Council website.

Action: Clerk

8. Finance

- a) To consider and approve the Precept and Budget for financial year 2022/23. It was resolved to approve the Precept value of £37,740.00 and a budget of £71,621.00 keeping the same values as the financial year 2021/22. Proposed by Cllr Szabo and seconded by Cllr Portman.
- b) The repairs to the Lookout were approved and has been carried out.
- c) To discuss the Grounds Maintenance contract. It was agreed to request two more quotes.

Action: Clerk

9. Policies

- a) It was resolved to adopt the Privacy Policy, which had been circulated. Proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis and seconded by Cllr Portman.
- b) It was resolved to adopt the Privacy Notice, which had been circulated. Proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis and seconded by Cllr Portman.
- c) It was resolved to adopt the Terms and Conditions of Lower Halstow Parish Council Wharf Licences, which had been circulated. Proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis and seconded by Cllr Portman.
- d) It was agreed to adopt the Lower Halstow Wharf Rates with the rates reduced to £35 per foot.
- e) The S101 1972 LGA (Delegated Authority) document that had been circulated was discussed and it was agreed to file it.

10. To discuss and agree response (if any) including the following Planning Applications:

None were received.

11. Any applications received between producing the agenda and this meeting.

- a) 21/506826/FULL PROPOSAL: Alterations to first floor with new roof structure to provide enlarged bedrooms and a en-suite. ADDRESS: Elm Lodge Wardwell Lane Lower Halstow Sittingbourne Kent ME9 7ER.

Lower Halstow Parish Council agreed to support this application in line with the Village Planning Strategy.

12. To receive reports on the following:

- a) Parks, Leisure and Planning:
Repairs for the roundabout are still awaited.
- b) Footpaths, hedges, Burial Ground and allotments:
The Beech hedge in the Burial Ground will be cut next month. Cllr Portman has trimmed some of the lower parts of the hedge at the front. The Clerk will chase SBC regarding the Brown bin for the Burial Ground. Some tree cuttings waste has appeared in the corner, but this has not come from the Burial ground and Cllr Portman will liaise with the PCSO regarding this. A blue bin is also required. Cllr Portman asked if the Allotments could have the plots marked, as the boundaries are not clear.
- c) Parish Highways Plan:
Discussed above. Cllr Smith will keep the council informed as soon as there are any developments.
- d) The Dock
There are three very large concrete gravel boards that are spare and could be used for the seawall. However, the Environment Agency may not agree.
- e) Brickworks and Seawall.
Cllr Portman is awaiting a meeting with Ian Nunn from the Environment Agency. An email has been received to say that some funding has been granted to carry out an assessment of the seawall. This will become available in April 2022. It was proposed that the sections at the top of the seawall is marked by stakes and tape to alert people of the danger posed by the seawall collapsing.

13. To acknowledge Reports on meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council

- a) KALC Rep
No report
- b) Memorial Hall Rep
No report.

14. To receive the Clerk's report:

I am pleased to report that I have received an email from Unity Trust Bank who have now updated their records regarding my change of address. This was vital to the reclaim of VAT as the Government form could not be completed where the addresses did not agree. The Kent Film Office were in touch with me in November in relation to a possible use of location in Lower Halstow, but I have heard nothing further. An enquiry was made to Open Reach regarding the infrastructure to which they replied that they were investigating further with a specialist team. To date nothing else has been received from them. A letter from the ICO was received offering advice to the Parish Council and to say that the case reference IC84351-B6X1 has been closed down.

£25.00 was been paid in December for allotment rents. There are currently some plots still available.

The bank balance as at 31st December 2021 was £100,584.14

15. Items for information only:

- a) Items for website and Village News

Cllr Smith requested that an item is placed on the website regarding feedback for the 20 mph campaign. Statistics will be asked for from the Village Facebook administrators.

16. To receive agenda items for next meeting:

None at this time.

The meeting ended at: 20.02pm.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 1st February 2022

Payments January 2021

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
ATS	Work Carried out at The Lookout, Brickfields Site £480.00 and Hire of Harris Fencing 4 weeks £256.00 Invoices – 030122	736.00		Cheque 300018
S and R Parker	Stage payment of remedial work to dock	£10,000.00		806410552
DCK Payroll Solutions	Quarterly Payroll Fee Invoice P2816	£42.00	7.00	49124423
Treecraft	Grounds Maintenance for Year March 2021 – December 2021 Invoice 2112072	£4945.00		883448976
Mrs A I Smith	Salary and Expenses Oct – Dec 2021	£612.19		840645801
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust Fund	Hire of Lower Halstow Memorial Hall for Parish Council Meetings Sept – Nov 2021	£76.50		110714983
Mr J Knott	Village Cleaning Invoice for Oct- Dec 2021	£225.00		399679233
HMRC	PAYE Tax	81.80		637970552
D Pascoe	Grounds maintenance (Tutt's allotments and at Noticeboard sites) Invoice 30	70.00		550240488
Commercial Services Ltd	Quarterly Grounds Maintenance Oct- Dec 2021 Invoice LS202204	741.60	123.60	179346836

Other payments:

25th January 2022 Standing Order

Clerk's Salary - £644.60

Date:

Signed:

Cllr. K Howard-Challis
Chair