

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BROOK PARISH COUNCIL
ON 21st MARCH 2024 HELD IN BROOK AND HINXHILL VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllr Jessop (Chair) Cllr F Penberthy
Cllr P Penberthy Cllr A Wood

The Clerk

		To be actioned by
1.	To receive and approve apologies for absence.	
	Apologies had been received from Cllr S Betty and Cllr A Betty.	
2.	To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared.	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2024	
	The minutes were signed as a true record.	
4.	To discuss matters arising from the above minutes not covered by the agenda.	
	Cllr Betty had circulated information regarding the reserved matters application. The arborial report had been received and only one tree needed remedial action, the Caretaker will undertake this. The Newsletter is nearly ready for printing and circulating. The Village Hall committee are still undertaking investigations. The Caretaker's hand-mower has been ordered. D-Day beacon lighting will take place on 6 th June at 9.15pm. The car on Spelders Hill has now been moved.	
5.	To receive reports from the Borough Councillor	
	Cllr Betty had provided a report which was circulated to all. This is available as an appendix to these minutes. The dog bins have been replaced with normal waste bins, the PC is pleased with this.	
6.	Public Session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item	
	There were no members of public in attendance.	
7.	Play area – update	
	Cllr Wood had circulated the quotations and plans for the recreation ground. Cllr Wood is meeting with Mark Hanton to discuss ideas and plans with him. Grant availability has yet to be explored. Further consideration will be undertaken at the next meeting.	
8.	Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters	
	Cllr Penberthy circulated his report. Call for sites – the raw list has been published by Ashford Borough Council. There was a discussion surrounding the 2 sites in Brook and the site at Hinxhill Park too. Planning applications 2024/0196 and 2024/0168 were deemed as a no objection response.	
9.	To consider setting up of Community Grants	

	There was no further update at this time.	
10.	Village Litter Pick	
	RESOLVED: The Parish Council will run a litter pick on 20th April at 10am.	
11.	Parish Meeting	
	The Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 7pm on 23 rd April. The Clerk will invite the Museum, Church, Village Hall, School, County Councillor and Borough Councillor to attend and share their annual report.	
12.	Financial matters:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To note/authorise the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To note the Parish Council's financial position. The Parish Council has £8,808.52 in the bank ii. To authorise any payments Payments were approved for the Clerk, HMRC and the Clerk's expenses. 	
13.	To consider any changes to the Risk Assessment	
	The Parish Council considered the Risk Assessment and there were no changes to note.	
14.	To receive the KALC Report	
	<p>The Parish Council received the KALC Report from Cllr S Betty is attached as an Appendix to the minutes.</p> <p>The Parish Councillors would like to consider the planting of a community orchard on the Recreation Ground.</p>	
15.	To receive any updates on Highways/Environment.	
	There was nothing to note this meeting.	
16.	Any Other Business (for information purposes only):	
	The Newsletter is to have a line added regarding who the other members are.	
17.	Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.	
	<p>Thursday 23rd May 2024</p> <p>The APM 23rd April 2024</p>	

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX A

WARD MEMBERS REPORT TO BROOK PARISH COUNCIL MARCH 2024

NEW WASTE CONTRACT

Ashford Borough Council will be launching its new waste and recycling service on Monday 24 March. The eight-year contract has been awarded to SUEZ Recycling and Recovery Ltd which will bring in new technology and industry improvements, whilst retaining large parts of the existing service, which helped to make Ashford the best recycling local authority in Kent. Fortnightly collections of waste and recycling will continue across the borough, with green wheeled bins for recycling on alternative weeks from grey bins for refuse collections, alongside the regular weekly food waste collections. The new contract offers the chance to increase recycling rates, more efficient routes, lower emissions vehicles and better technology to keep residents up to date on collections. It also includes improvements to the level of cleansing in rural and residential areas, as well as quicker response time to the removal of fly-tipping. All residents will be contacted to let them know what is happening and a guide will be sent out to everyone in the borough alongside a recycling bin sticker, followed up with a specific letter with the day changes. Detailed information is also available on the Borough Council website, including the collection look up facility as well as information via various social media channels and some contract progress information will appear in the next edition of the Ashford For You residents' magazine in May.

DOG WASTE BINS

Residents may be aware that specific dog waste bins have been removed. During the Borough Council's contract negotiations for the new waste contract, it was noted that the cost to empty dog waste bins was higher than the cost to empty general litter bins. As dog waste can be deposited in general litter bins a decision was taken to remove as many dog waste bins as possible and replacing them with general waste bins where there were insufficient litter bins within the vicinity. It should also be noted that dog waste can be placed in residents general waste bins for collection. The Borough Council has therefore removed over 100 dog waste bins as part of this process and the aim is to remove all dog waste bins on Borough Council owned land and the situation will be monitored to ensure that there are sufficient general waste bins available.

UPDATE ON THE CALL FOR SITES

A high-level list of all submitted sites has been produced and recently presented to the Borough Council Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group. It is anticipated that lists will be shared with parish councils imminently.

INCREASES IN LITTERING AND FLY TIPPING FINES

At the full meeting of Ashford Borough Council on 29th February, increases in the following fines effective from 1st April 2024 were approved:

1. The fine for littering or graffiti is increased from £75 to £500.
2. The fine imposed for fly tipping is increased from £400 to £1000.
3. The fine imposed for not picking up after dogs is increased from £50 to £100.
4. The fine imposed for those failing to meet the Household Duty of Care is increased from £400 to £600.

HOME UPGRADE GRANTS PHASE 2 (HUG2)

People living in homes which don't have gas heating systems still have time to take advantage of a grant scheme which provides energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades to low-income households in the Ashford borough. HUG2 is a Government grant scheme to fund energy-saving upgrades for residents who don't heat their homes by mains gas. Since the grant scheme was launched before Christmas dozens of Ashford residents have responded, checking on their eligibility to apply and starting the application process. – HUG2 funding is available until March 2025 but because there is a finite amount of funding allocated the grants are available on a first-come-first-served basis. The grant will pay for improvements which could help people to use less energy, reduce their carbon footprint and spend less on energy bills. The scheme is funded

by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and Ashford Borough Council is supporting the delivery of the scheme across the district.

The scheme is open to home-owners and private tenants in:

- Homes not heated by mains gas which includes oil, coal, LPG or only electric heating (so-called 'offgrid')

AND

- Households with a combined annual income of less than £31,000 (increasing to £36,000 from 2 April 2024) OR receiving income-related means-tested benefits such as Universal Credit OR those living in certain areas

- Hard to heat homes – this is based on the home Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). Assistance will be given with this part of the assessment and receive a free EPC assessment can be undertaken for those who do not have one already. If parish councils are aware of any households in their parishes who may be eligible for a grant under this HUG2 scheme and who would benefit from finding out more, please ask them to contact:

<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/hug2>

CLlr Simon Betty Ward Member for Bircholt

Appendix B

Report to Brook Parish Council of the KALC Ashford Area Committee Meeting on 7th March 2024

Cllrs A and S Betty attended the meeting which was held at Ashford Borough Council Civic Centre. It is considered that the following topics of discussion are relevant to Brook.

- 1. Police Report** - The meeting was attended by Inspectors Richard Batten and Hillary Bell from Kent Police. It was reported that two new PCSOs are going to join the Child Policing Team to assist with school visits and to pursue enforcement against shop owners who sell vapes to children etc. A road safety campaign is currently being undertaken focussed on mobile phone use while driving and teams are out patrolling to actively deal with these offences. The police will be taking a "Business Month of Action" including a day of action to target shops which are prone to regular shoplifting. The work against County Lines gangs continues with various initiatives being undertaken that have resulted in several successful prosecutions.
- 2. Ashford Volunteer Centre** - Beth Peal, the chief executive of the Ashford Volunteer Centre gave a follow up presentation on the work of this organisation which has been in existence since 1978. The centre helps organisations to recruit volunteers and also assist with running DBS checks if required for volunteers. The centre runs the Men in Sheds initiative, organises bite size training courses covering a range of topics for volunteers and runs the Kent Trustees Organisation which brings together trustees from various organisations and charitable trusts from around the county to provide support and advice if required.
- 3. Coronation Community Orchards** – Ashford Borough Council has received a grant from DEFRA for parish councils to plant community orchards and the application ends on 25th May. The scheme will enable parish councils to acquire a minimum of nine fruit trees (apple, pear or cherry) to plant a community orchard on public land in the parish. The scheme is not available for planting on private land as a stipulation is that the land on which the orchard is planted must be open to the public. For parish councils wishing to participate, trees will be delivered in December 2024 and in February 2025 the Borough Council will undertake inspections to prepare post planting reports to be submitted to DEFRA in March 2025.
- 4. Parish Planning Alerts** – these are now available from the Borough Council's ARCUS planning portal on a subscription basis. Anyone wishing to obtain notifications of planning applications in the parish should subscribe.
- 5. Planning Training** – the Ashford Borough Council planning department is planning to hold training for new parish councillors. This is essential for planning leads and members of parish council planning committees and highly recommended for other interested parish councillors. Details will be available shortly.
- 6. KALC Website** – the website has now been updated to provide additional management systems which are aimed to make it easier to obtain advice for parishes. The system should be available from early April.

The next meeting will be held on 29th May 2024 at 7pm.