



## St Nicholas-at-Wade with Sarre Parish Council



**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held via zoom on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.30pm.**

**Present: Councillors Gordon Bryant (Chairman), David Divers, Peter Radclyffe, Geraldine Goy, Lisa Fallon & Lee Ageros.**

**Also present: Sara Archer (Clerk), Trevor Roper - TDC District Councillor, Eileen Shrubsole – PCSO plus 10 members of the public**

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

The Parish Council Chairman Cllr Bryant was nominated to take this role, which was proposed by Cllr Fallon and Seconded by Cllr Divers.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from District Cllrs David Hart & Reece Pugh, H. Kemp – Headteacher, S. Irving – Chair of BMPC

### **3. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 1st May 2019 were re-circulated and accepted as a true record. No comments were made. Proposed: Cllr Divers, Seconded: Cllr Bryant

### **4. PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL & FINANCIAL REPORTS**

The Clerk presented a budget update for the end of 2020/21. It was reported that the Parish Council had largely met their budget on the whole. The projected receipts had seen an increase due to income from the Cemetery, and Section 106 monies. The installation of the ariel runway had seen an overspend in the budget for Bell Meadow, however, this had been aided by the receipt of Section 106 monies. An over spend on street furniture was also noted, this was due to the purchase of new planters, a memorial bench and new village gates. Nonetheless, the accounts remained in a very healthy position, with further streams of funding still to be received.

Cllr Bryant reported as follows:

Since May 2019, St Nicholas at Wade with Sarre Parish Council has gone through a most unusual time. The election two years ago saw very few residents put themselves forward and therefore all those that did were elected – unopposed. Since then, we have seen a change of personnel and we have welcomed both Geraldine Goy and Lisa Fallon. We lost Parish Councillor Ticia Cheniston just before Christmas and Parish Councillor Graham North resigned in November and we would like to thank him for all that he did for us and wish him well in, now, his complete retirement.

Covid 19 meant that last year's Parish Meeting had to be cancelled but since then we have been able to hold monthly Parish Council meetings virtually using the Zoom platform.

I am very grateful to all the Parish Councillors that have put so much effort in continuing to make improvements around our villages. Just a few to mention are the white gates in Sarre, the disabled parking area outside the pavilion, the bollard lighting in Bell Meadow, continued improvements in the cemetery including having the trees cut back to create more light. The aerial flyer is now up and running and the safety fence is in place. This was a large project and I would like to thank Lisa Fallon for all the hard work that she put in. The new planters are in place and I would like to thank The Gardening Club for agreeing to plant new flowers.

We now have three skilled handymen providing us with up to twenty-four hours per week to keep the villages looking good. If you have any suggestions to make it even better, write to Sara, our Clerk so that these can be considered. Please do not approach the handymen directly.

It was two years ago that I reported that a refurbishment of The Pavilion was well overdue and when it re-opens properly later this month following the enforced lockdown, I hope that you will all agree how good it now looks inside. We are beginning to fill it with heritage items and The Parish Council archive is now held there. We are looking for a St Nicholas Cricket Jumper to display alongside the football shirt and if anyone can loan or give us one to frame, I would like to hear from them.

With Covid and budgets being tight, we did not want to burden residents with any further increase in The Parish Precept. With the new houses now being occupied and the strategic move four years ago to bring many services 'in-house' we are beginning to see the financial benefits and we were able to reduce the precept by seven per cent this year. As more housing comes on stream it may be possible to reduce it again further in 2022.

We have formed strong partnerships with both Thanet District Council and Kent County Council. TDC provide us with cleaning equipment for keeping our village clean and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the growing number of residents that are helping us with the litter picking. We continue to build on our Highways Improvement Plan and you will have seen Kent Highways working on our roads quite recently.

There is still much to do and projects over the next twelve months include renovating footpath T5B, continue to monitor and make road safety a priority in Sarre, work with the developers in The Length to ensure that parking improves and possible purchase of land in Sarre to improve facilities along the A28. The Parish Council agreed the working agreement with Reculver Cricket Club in April and, hopefully, we may see cricket back in Bell Meadow in 2022.

Finally, I would like to thank Sara for keeping us in order and overseeing all that we do. After four years' service, Sara has become our longest standing clerk for some time.

#### **5. PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY AWARD**

Cllr Bryant confirmed that the long serving Mick the Postman had been nominated previously to receive the Community Award, however, due to Covid restrictions, the presentation was not able to go ahead. Cllr Bryant advised this would go ahead as soon as practicable.

#### **6. THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Cllr Trevor Roper advised that the covid testing site at Ramsgate Port had now closed, however, the centre at Birchington remained open. The garden waste bin subscriptions had restarted. TDC had issued a request to all Parishes for further development sites to be included in the Local Plan. KCC elections were being held on 6<sup>th</sup> May, residents were encouraged to vote.

Cllr Reece Pugh was unable to attend the meeting, however, he had advised that Planning Enforcement will be visiting the Sunningdale development on The Length to ensure that construction workers vehicles are parked on site and not on the road. Environmental Health are also involved due to the generator being left on throughout the night.

#### **7. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE REPORT**

John Brockman reported the following on behalf of the Village Hall Committee:

Like every other hospitality venue, the hall has been affected by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The hall was first closed all users on the 24th March 2020 and did not open again as a Covid secure venue until the 3rd August 2020.

Most of our usual hirers returned once the hall reopened but there were some notable exceptions but loss of income from these was made up by additional usage by others.

Unfortunately, the hall was again closed on 5th November 2020 to all users except childcare.

We again reopened on 12th April 2021 for children's activities, individuals and household groups.

Hopefully we will fully reopen on 17th May 2021 for group activities and pre bookings for then are looking good.

Income during from April 2020 to March 2021 was down approximately 70% compared to the previous period, this includes the loss of income from the cancellation of the Christmas fair.

These losses have been mitigated by a government grant of £10,000 obtained last April and full relief on the 2020/21 business rates. We have also applied for this year's government restart grant.

All planned improvements and non-essential repairs have been put on hold until the end of the pandemic.

These include replacement of the hall acoustic ceiling panels, replacement of the kitchen floor and repairs to the hall rear wall.

As long as the majority of hirers return once the hall is allowed to fully reopen this appears to leave us in a reasonable financial position. This is at a time when many other halls appear to be struggling financially. We have again managed to maintain hire fees unchanged during and it should be noted that these have not been raised since June 2017.

I would like to thank all our hirers for their continued support and use of the hall during these difficult times.

#### **10. PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT - BELL MEADOW PAVILION**

The following report was read on behalf of Sue Irving – Chair

This last year has been hard for everybody. Covid has held us up in many ways. We as a committee have a lot of ideas with regards to future events but would like as much input as possible from all residents as to what they'd like to see.

We are open to all ideas (wet t-shirt competitions exempt, sorry boys). Family friendly only.

We will be having a celebratory event to mark the queens official birthday. This will be held at the pavilion on the 21st June, between 2 and 5pm. It will be a cream tea event and all are welcome. Please come along and support us at our first event and any input you can give is welcome.

#### **11. ST NICHOLAS-AT-WADE PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT**

The following report was read on behalf of Heather Kemp – Headteacher

##### Pupil Progress and Achievement

What an extraordinary year the last one has been. This time last year we only had 14 pupils coming to school each day from a variety of year groups, staff were on a rota and we all imagined that children would only be working from home for a month at most. As we all know things were very different with a mixture of in school and online learning throughout the year. In the most recent lockdown over half the school pupils were at school, reflecting the high numbers of parents employed as key workers, and staff spent all day in school whilst also providing online work for the children learning at home. It is lovely, as I write, to have a full school once again with the prospect of no future closures. We have been fortunate in school with few "bubble" closures and only a small number of the community falling ill with Covid. The disrupted year has, inevitably, had an impact on pupil progress, achievement and wellbeing and now we are setting out to restore and recover.

##### School in the community

We have missed our community links over the past year with our usual events not able to take place. Harvest afternoon tea and our visits to the church and Manor hall have been missed. Our Nativity this year was filmed and shared online with parents.

##### Church links

We have missed Mother Karen but Reverend Darkin has become a wonderful support to the school. He was able to introduce himself to "bubbles" of children at the start of this academic year and has provided us with regular recorded worship. He has joined our governing body and really shown an interest in the wellbeing of staff and children alike. The chocolates he has provided have also been very much appreciated.

##### Premises

The premises continue to benefit from recent updating and are well maintained. Since my last report our PTFA have been very active and many of our plans have come to fruition. We now have an all weather play surface next to the studio, where previously the grass refused to grow. We have two lovely shelters to help weather proof our outdoor classroom and the site has been further developed to provide the opportunity for Forest School activities. Two play sheds, a stage and a large chalk board have also been erected on the main playground to provide more play opportunities for the children.

##### And Finally

We hope that the school continues to be an establishment of which the community can justifiably be proud. Despite a drop in birth rates locally and an ageing village population, the school remains very popular attracting pupils from all over the area. The school is fortunate to receive excellent support from the local community and the Parish Council and is always keen to strengthen community links. Please visit our school website for further information about the school. <http://www.st-nicholas-birchington.kent.sch.uk/>

The Parish Council expressed their grateful thanks to all of the teachers at the Primary School. Their hard work and dedication is appreciated.

#### **12. ST NICHOLAS-AT-WADE CHURCH REPORT**

No representation or report submitted.

**13. ST NICHOLAS-AT-WADE & SARRE GARDENING CLUB REPORT**

There are currently 15 members in the Club. Thanks were offered for the grant received from the Parish Council. It is hoped the meetings will re-start in June. The planting of the new planters in the Village was near completion. Concern regarding watering of the planters was raised, however, the handymen would be approached to help. The Parish Council thanked the Club for their support.

**14. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No representations were made.

**The meeting concluded at 8.05pm.**