

HIGH HALDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 13 November 2023 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall

141/23] Administration: Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. The Clerk confirmed that there has been no requests to record the meeting.

142/23 Present and Apologies:

Present: Cllr. Robinson (Chairman), Cllrs: Mrs. Amsler, Ms. Dawes, Mr. Drury, Mrs. Pickering, Mr. Sargent and Mrs. Wheeler.

In Attendance: Mrs L Goldsmith (Clerk), Ward Member Alan Pickering, PC Darren Laker, 3 members of the public.

Apologies: None

143/23 Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Mrs Pickering: Voluntary Declaration as the spouse of the ward member.

Cllr Mrs Amsler: Declared a pecuniary interest in planning proposal PA/2023/0574

Cllr Mrs Pickering: Declared an interest in planning proposal PA/2023/1862

144/23 Minutes of the meeting of the 9 October 2023:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 9 October 2023 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

Standing Orders were lowered to allow PC Darren Laker to introduce himself to Councillors and the members of the public as the new Beat Officer covering High Halden. PC Darren Laker explained that he has been briefed on the recent incidents of anti-social behaviour in the village.

145/23 Report from the Clerk (information purposes only):

Redbrook Street: The Clerk advised that the residents are organising a petition to get the speed limit reduced on Redbrook Street. The Clerk has spoken to the Clerk at Woodchurch and suggested that a request for a speed reduction is also added to their Highways Improvement Plan.

Speedwatch: As a result of speedwatch PC Jason Wright attended again last week to inspect the speed of traffic. Due to the monsoon weather conditions PC Jason Wright could only observe the vehicles passing but has advised that he is aiming to attend a speedwatch session soon.

146/23 Open Session:

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow members of the public to raise items with the Council.

A resident advised that a petition to request a speed reduction for Redbrook Street is in the process of been collated.

A member of the public reported a possible breach of planning at The Stables, Redbrook Street which is being advertised as a holiday let.

147/23 Highways

a) Highways Improvement Plan:

KCC has advised that the recent speed surveys on the A28 near to Tilden Close have shown a high level of compliance. A summary of the data shows average speeds around 30mph with the 85th percentile being approximately 35mph (which is the enforcement threshold) and 83-86% of vehicles travelling below the enforcement threshold, which is the point at which any sign would activate. The Community Engagement Officer at KCC has suggested that as the current measures appear to be working sufficiently there is no justification to have a VAS installed in this location. Members expressed their disappointment with the way in which these results have been presented and asked the Clerk to obtain a copy of the raw data and to state that the Parish Council would still like to fund and install a VAS at this location.

b) Bus layby by the green:

The Clerk has written to the Managing Director at Stagecoach asking for them to lobby KCC/ABC for part of the parking restrictions on the layby opposite the shop on the A28 to be removed but has not received a response. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact KCC again and ask them to confirm that measures will be put in place to ensure that motorists can use the layby for parking when visiting the shop.

Initials:

148/23 Allotments

a) To receive an update on the lease

The Clerk advised Members that the solicitor has asked for an update on the title as the landowner was previously waiting for the Land Registry application transferring ownership to the current owners to be processed. The Clerk has responded to a couple of queries raised by the landowner's solicitor. The Clerk is hopeful that the lease will be completed and signed by the early part of December 2023 and then the Parish Council can look to let the allotments.

b) To discuss the quote for fencing and planting of the saplings

The Clerk has met with contractors and has obtained four quotes to fence the ten proposed allotment plots. The Clerk met the landowner on site last week and reported that the works to the parking area are nearing completion and that the landowner has commenced the works to the path. The landowner has also installed a tap and water meter at the entrance to the allotments.

Resolved: To accept a quote of £7,332.28 (excluding VAT) from Capel Groundcare to install 1.2m high stock fencing around and between the allotments and ten 1.2m wide gates and to plant 420 saplings. The Clerk to obtain a quote from the contractor for at least 50cms of rabbit fencing to be buried below ground under the fencing. The works to commence once the lease has been signed.

c) To receive an update on interest in the allotments

The Clerk reported that nine parishioners on the waiting list have advised that they are still interested in renting a full size plot. This leaves one plot that could be sub-divided subject to demand. The Clerk will conduct site visits with the prospective allotment holders when the lease is signed.

d) To receive an update on a grant funding application for a Coronation Community Orchard adjacent to the allotments:

ABC has advised the Clerk that they have been successful in obtaining funding from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund to plant a community orchard at the allotment site. ABC has suggested that the planting of the saplings will take place next Autumn.

149/23 Section 106: Proposal to install a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)

The tender documents have been placed on Contracts Finder and the deadline for receipt of tenders is 12pm on the 6 December 2023. Cllrs. Sargent, Drury and the Clerk met with four contractors last week on site to discuss a potential MUGA for the recreation ground. Further site and virtual meetings have been planned. One contractor has suggested that alternative equipment could be considered to a MUGA which may appeal more to the younger community. This contractor has offered to carry out further consultation, free of charge and with no obligation, which could lead to a better design brief. The contractor has advised that they accept that they may not win any subsequent tender should this approach be adopted.

Resolved: The Clerk to arrange a meeting with the contractor to explore the suggestion of further consultation to refine the design brief.

150/23 Anti-social behaviour:

Cllr. Robinson advised that the Parish Council is due to attend a follow up meeting with Sharon Williams, Assistant Director of Housing at ABC, and representatives from Southern Housing and the Community Safety Unit on the 24 November 2023 for an update on what has been done to tackle the recent incidents of anti-social behaviour in the village. This meeting should have taken place on the 10 November 2023 but had to be postponed. It was noted that there has been a number of further incidents of catapulting of wildlife and other objects such as streetlights. Cllr. Robinson advised that parishioners should continue to report any incidents to Kent Police with photographic evidence where possible.

Initials:

The Chair invited Cllr. Pickering to lead on the planning proposals.

151/23 Planning

To discuss any planning applications received:

PA/2023/1923: Homestall Farm, Ashford Road, High Halden

Lawful Development Certificate: Existing use of land for open storage of vehicles and materials for commercial use.

Resolved: Support subject to confirmation that KCC Highways are happy with the volume and size of traffic using the new vehicle access.

PA/2023/1922: Homestall Farm, Ashford Road, High Halden

Change of use of land to a commercial vehicle depot and open storage yard (retrospective). Proposed new vehicular access and 1.8m high gate.

Resolved: As above.

7.42pm Cllr. Amsler declared a pecuniary interest and left the meeting

PA/2023/0574: Hopes Grove Cottage, Ashford Road, High Halden

Listed Building Consent for a single storey rear extension to existing porch/utility. Removal of 1980's wall to create open plan kitchen with improved insulation to floors, walls and roof.

Resolved: Support.

PA/2023/0537: Hopes Grove Cottage, Ashford Road, High Halden

Single storey rear extension to existing porch.

Resolved: As above.

7.44pm Cllr. Amsler returned to the meeting. Cllr. Sargent led the discussion on the following proposal.

PA/2023/1862: Sabah House, Harbourne Lane, High Halden

Lawful Development Certificate: Existing occupation of dwelling in breach of agricultural occupancy condition.

Resolved: Support.

Planning applications received after the distribution of the agenda:

OTH/2023/2042: Land west of Harbourne Bungalow, Ashford Road, High Halden

Removal of 8 metre section of hedgerow. Will be removed under ecological watching brief and be replanted.

Resolved: Support. We question the need for a double gate.

OTH/2023/2043: Land west of 1 Summer Cottage, Ashford Road, High Halden

of 8 metre section of hedgerow, to be replanted like for like.

Resolved: Support.

OTH/2023/2041: Ashford Road, High Halden

Widening of existing access by removing 4m of hedgerow, to be replanted like for like.

Resolved: Support.

Approvals:

PA/2023/1470: Beale Lands Farm House, Shawlands Lane, High Halden

Proposed conversion of garden studio into holiday let with addition of annex use and garden shed.

PA/2023/1520: Belvedere Lodge, High Halden Lane, High Halden

Erection of one dwelling and re-align access track following demolition of existing agricultural buildings and mobile home.

PA/2023/0357: Land to south of New Barn Farm, Ashford Road, High Halden

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Creation of 6 parking spaces.

PA/2023/1669: Oakleigh Farm, High Halden Road, High Halden

Extensions to property to create a two storey dwelling.

Refusal: None to consider.

Withdrawn: None to consider.

Appeals: 22/00085/AS – 1 Durrants Green, Ashford Road, High Halden

New detached dwelling and detached garage

Initials:

Other Planning Matters

ENF/2023/0258: Gateway feature at the development at Hopes Grove has not been sited in accordance with the agreed plans under 17/00952/CONB/AS. Enforcement have undertaken a site visit and will share their findings and recommendation in due course.

ENF/2023/0359: Old Place Farm, High Halden: Alleged breach of erection of outbuilding in curtilage of listed building.

152/23 Financial Report

/23-1 Budget 2024-2025

It was noted that ABC has agreed the Council Tax Bases for 2023-2024 and have requested that all precept requests are submitted by the 5 January 2024. It was suggested and agreed that the Clerk circulates a draft budget and precept request for Councillors to consider and comment on before the next meeting.

/23-2 Printing Arrangements

It was noted that the Clerk has access to a photocopier and printer in another parish office in Capel which will offer a cheaper printing solution. The cost per mono copy will be 0.05p and 4p for colour.

Resolved: The Clerk to print/photocopy, when possible, in Capel Parish Office

/23-3 Installation of a Defibrillator at the village hall

An electrician attended the village hall last week with the Clerk and installed the defibrillator at a cost of £193.12 (excluding VAT). The Clerk reported that the £1000.00 Member grant has been received and that Mrs. Hoath has kindly offered to register and check the new defibrillator.

/23-4 Request for funding for a nature trail and outdoor equipment

The Clerk advised that the school has had to take over the responsibility of the building and outside area previously occupied by Little Acorns Nursery. The school recently had an inspection to check the trim trail and outdoor gym equipment. Sadly, all of the equipment failed the inspection as did the safety surface surrounding the equipment. The school have been advised to remove all of the equipment and resurface this area. The estimates for this work are between £7000.00 and £10,000.00. The school has approximately £5000.00 available and has asked if the Parish Council could assist with the shortfall.

Resolved: The Clerk to offer to fund any shortfall up to maximum of £2,000.

/23-5 Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2023

The recently agreed NALC Pay Scales for 2023-2024 were noted and that the Clerk is entitled to a backdated pay award.

Resolved: The Clerk to receive a pay award of £166.64 subject to PAYE.

/23-6 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget:

Cllr. Dawes checked the invoices against the payment schedule and it was and it was **resolved** for Cllr. Drury and Dawes to authorise the payments online.

Payments

Cheque/Transfer	Details	£
Transfer	L Goldsmith (Expenses)	75.22
Transfer	L Goldsmith (Salary plus bac dated pay award)	993.41
Transfer	HMRC (L Goldsmith)	282.55
Transfer	M Digby (Park Keeper Services)	604.36
Transfer	CW Countrywide (drainage works)	6,960.00
Transfer	Mint Fresh (Bus stop cleaning)	77.22
Transfer	B Croucher (Caretaking Services)	72.94
Transfer	Glasdon (Memorial Benches)	2218.70
Transfer	D Ball (Poppy Wreath)	25.00
DD	Google Cloud	73.60

Receipts

Details	£
KCC (Member grant for defibrillator)	1,000.00

Initials:

Balances as at 13 November 2023

Unity Trust Account: £61,410.05

153/23 Reports

/23-1 Ward member: Ward Member Alan Pickering advised that the proposed move from the Civic Centre to International House is being reviewed. Work patterns are also being reviewed in terms of the balance between working from home and in the office. As a consequence of the EU Transition, the Sevington Inland Border Facility will become responsible for checks on imports of products of animal origin (POAO), high-risk food not of animal origin (HRFNAO) and animal by-products (animal products not for human consumption) imported from the EU.

/23-2 Highways: The Clerk has contacted KCC about improving the footpath from Ransley Oast to the school to make it complete and works are programmed to replace the sign at the junction of London Beach Cottage and the A28. KCC has advised that as there is no crash history relating to lack of visibility for motorists exiting Halden Close and that they will not install a safety mirror on KCC owned land. KCC has advised that mirrors may be sited off the highway on private land but that planning permission may be required. It was noted that the ongoing water leak at The Martins has been repaired.

/23-3 Marketing/projects: The Clerk will start drafting articles for the next edition of the newsletter.

/23-4 KALC: It was noted that the AGM will be held on Saturday 18 November 2023. The Clerk attended the Area Committee Meeting held on the 1 November 2023. Simon Cole from ABC Planning attended to discuss a number of issues raised by KALC:

Call for sites: The call for sites started in September and closes on 20 November 2023. It is the start of the next Local Plan process. ABC is looking for sites not just for housing as in the past, but also retail, employment, gypsy and traveller, nutrient neutrality, biodiversity, energy generation, and local tourism. Consultation events will take place in early 2024 to provide feedback on the local sites on offer but no decisions will have been taken at that stage. ABC will approach parish councils to host these events before the end of the year.

Parish 'subscription' for notifications: A parish level notification system will be ready for beta testing by ABC and parish clerks in mid-November. Once completed this will be rolled out to the general public.

Website improvement: ABC is looking to improve the look and feel of their website generally, but also to reduce the number of clicks needed to access the most used pages. ABC is looking for volunteers to set up a small user group of parishes to road test the new website from a resident's perspective.

Resolved: The Clerk to volunteer High Halden Parish Council to assist with road testing the new website.

154/23 Information items:

/23-1 HHVEC Update: Cllr. Sargent reported that the Christmas tree for the village green has been ordered and that the Committee is in the process of purchasing new lights and decorations. A lighting ceremony is due to be held at 6pm on Saturday 2 December 2023.

155/23 Items for the next Parish Council meeting:

Path for the whole recreation ground to include Hookstead to the bridge by the children's play area.

156/23 Date of the next meeting

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 11 December 2023 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall.

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 8.18pm

Signed:

Date:

Initials: