

Minutes of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 7th November 2023.

Present: Cllrs: K Howard-Challis (Chair); A Groves; T Portman; A Smith and Mrs A I Smith (Clerk)
In attendance: 6 members of the public and Police Officer Chittim

1. To receive **Apologies for absence**.
Cllr Martin Szabo sent his apologies.
2. To receive any **Declarations of Pecuniary or Non Pecuniary Interest**, and any Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items. (Requirement of the Localism Act 2011.)
Cllr A Smith, item 10a.
3. **Public session**
The Parish Council were asked if they would be laying a poppy wreath at the Church Service on Remembrance Sunday. Cllr Portman will attend to do this.
The lighting of the Christmas tree and carol singing will take place on Saturday 2nd December at 6.00pm.
4. **Visitors.** Reports or comments from:
 - a) KCC Councillors;
None.
 - b) SBC Councillors;
None
 - c) Police Officer Jez Chittim supplied the following report:
Crimes of note:
Poaching – There were 4 x reports of poaching in Lower Halstow over the last month period. The rural policing team did stop 3 x juveniles with dogs in the fields behind Neptune Terrace on one occasion. All details obtained and were taken home.
Unfortunately, no one was identified on the other occasions.
Anti-social behaviour and other incidents of note:
None reported.
Items of good work:
None of note.
Any other business
Saturday 18th November
Lower Halstow Village Hall – 15:00 to 16:00
I will be parked outside the village hall for residents to come and find me to discuss any local issues or to merely introduce themselves to me. Please can you advertise this in any Parish newsletter you publish.
 - d) Friends of the Brickfields
Litter has been found in the same area where camping took place in the summer, but there were no signs of fires or overnight camping. The Chair of the Friends of the Brickfields requested that sycamore saplings are not planted on the Brickfields as these spread rapidly and are very difficult to manage. Information is being collated for Kent Wildlife Trust to update their assessment of the Brickfields. There are proposed winter walks between 27th and 30th December on the Brickfields. Work parties are still continuing and the friends welcome volunteers.
5. **To resolve Minutes**
It was resolved that the Minutes of the Monthly Parish meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October 2023 are a correct record and signed accordingly.

6. To discuss planning applications received:

- a) 23/504427/TPOA TPO Application to reduce crown T1 Holm Oak tree, currently 16m tall with 9m crown spread. Reduce in height by 2.5m and 2m radially. Reduce stem adjacent to bungalow to just above the woodpecker hole, leaving this in situ. The Steam Shed Vicarage Lane, Lower Halstow.

The Parish Council are happy for this to be approved by Swale Borough Council

- b) 23/504672/LDCEX Lawful Development Certificate Existing use for the continued use of Callum Park House as a single dwelling house occupied by persons not solely or mainly employed or last employed locally in agriculture or forestry or any dependent or widow/widower of such (non-compliance with condition (ii) approved application with reference SW/91/456) and uninterrupted breach of agricultural occupancy condition for a period in excess of the last ten years. Callum Park House Callum Park Basser Hill Lower Halstow Kent ME9 7TY.

It was agreed not comment.

7. To discuss any planning applications received between producing the agenda and this meeting.

None received.

8. Matters arising:

- a) Provision of litterbin outside the shop. The owner of the shop removed the original bin because it was being misused. It was agreed that when Cllrs Groves and Portman go into the local school they will raise the subject of education regarding dropping litter.
- b) Benches for Recreation Ground. In the absence of Cllr Szabo it was agreed to defer any decision until the next meeting.

9. Policies:

- a) To review the Emergency Plan. The Council agreed to defer the review, as they require further information.
- b) Review Village Planning Policy. The Council agreed to defer until there is a change in the law, which is due in January 2024.

10. Finance:

- a) Quotes for repair Church Path steps. Cllr Howard-Challis proposed to go ahead with the quote from ATS, seconded by Cllr Portman. Agreed unanimously.
- b) Quote to cut Burial Ground bank. Proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis, seconded by Cllr Smith to accept the quote from Mr Pascoe.
- c) Budget for Financial Year 2024/25. There had been a concern at the last meeting, as the precept had not been received. However, since then it has been paid to the Parish Council's account. The Clerk asked the Council to study all the figures supplied for agreement at the next meeting.

11. Correspondence:

- a) Anti-slip for steps near reed bed. This had been deferred so that the sea wall repairs could be completed first. Cllr Smith will research suppliers and request quotes.

Action Cllr Smith

- b) Poster on Noticeboard. The councillors discussed that the noticeboard is for Parish Council use and that space is limited. The Council resolved not to allow posters for business purposes.
- c) Request to advertise the properties for sale at the new development at Callum Park. It was resolved not to advertise the sale of these properties on the Parish Council website.

12. To receive reports on the following:

- a) Parks & Leisure & Planning (MS).
No report.
- b) Footpaths and Hedgerow maintenance, Burial Ground

The vegetation has been cut back around the sluice. Cllr Szabo kindly secured the Burial Ground fence and it is now upright and much safer. Letters have been sent to several residents requesting that some of the overgrown trees and shrubs and many of them were affecting roads and footpaths. It is pleasing to report that most of the residents have complied.

c) Allotments

No matters of concern. Cllr Groves and the Clerk will liaise regarding which allotments have become vacant.

d) Parish Highways Plan

The Parish Council are still awaiting the work to commence for the 20 mph zone by KCC. The Clerk will contact them again to ask when work will begin.

Action: Clerk

e) Brickfields and Seawall

Cllr Portman will liaise with the Friends of the Brickfields regarding wording for new signs at the Brickfields.

13. Clerk's Report

Payments received during October totalled £20,302.78. This included £19,120.00 from Swale Borough Council for the precept and lighting grant; £450.00 for Westfield Residents car park; £190.00 for allotment rents and £542.78 wharf payments from the barges.

I am still chasing regarding the purchase of the land at the Brickfields, which is owned by Deadwood Properties although our solicitor thinks it is a lost cause and the Parish Council should conclude that the sale will not take place. The lease has excluded the effect of Sections 24-28 of the Landlord and tenant Act, which means that the Council no longer has a right to occupy this property.

The bank balance as of 31st October 2023 is £71,643.03

Following the Clerk's report there was some discussion regarding the purchase of the small strip of land at the Brickfields. The Parish Council offer was accepted by the current owners and it was discussed that the Clerk will not give up chasing for the draft contracts to be sent to the Parish Council solicitors.

14. Items for information only:

- a) Items for Website and Village News – Update regarding lack of progress for the 20 mph zone.

The lighting of the Christmas tree will take place on Saturday 2nd December together with carol singing and mince pies.

The meeting closed at 19.39

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 5th December 2023

Payments November 2023

Other Payments:

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and Salary 25/11/2023	1074.69		961458846
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning October	166.72		184601253
Intelligent Facility Services	CCTV SIM Service Invoice: 08637	30.00	5.00	281331331
DCK Payroll Solutions	Payroll Process Invoice:	36.00	6.00	239765660
SLCC	Membership Fee Invoice: 245621-1	177.00		973564660
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust	Hire of Hall 19/9/23 Invoice:49	21.25		973564947
Swale Borough Council	Recovery Costs of LHPC election 4 May 2023 Invoice: 7220270950	124.60		885683293
Business Stream	Water Services Invoice: 3490743	100.50		389269908
JRB Enterprise Ltd	Economy Dispenser Dog Glove refill wastes bags Invoice: 26149	133.62	22.27	359681555
Scarecrow Trail	Sponsorship Invoice:124 Agreed 3/10/23	50.00		Paid 11/10/23
Metals4U	Mild Steel Galvanised Angle Order: 1001750058 (Burial Ground repair Agreed 3/10/23	209.52	34.92	Paid 17/10/23

Other Payments:

Multipay - Direct Debit 09/11/23 (SBC Brown Bin subscriptions) £113.00

Date:

Signed:

Cllr. K Howard-Challis
Chair