



Minutes of a meeting of the Dymchurch Parish Council held at 7pm on Monday 4th March 2024 at the Parish Council Offices Orgarswick Avenue Dymchurch

MINUTES

IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr. D. Young (Chair)

Cllr. M. Wright

Cllr. L. Finch

Cllr. C. McCreedy (Vice)

Cllr. C. Young

Cllr. C. Cooper

Cllr. A. Weatherhead

Cllr. V. McCreedy

Also Present: Mr J. Lawrence (Parish Clerk), Mr A. Lawson (Projects and Finance) District Cllr. T. Cooper, and 9 members of the public.

- 1. APOLOGIES.** Members are reminded of the need to tender apologies with the reason for absence direct to the Clerk if they are unable to attend. Members will confirm acceptance of the reasons for absence.

Cllr. A. Pegler (extended holiday)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
- To declare any prejudicial interests in items on the agenda – any councillors with prejudicial interests must leave the room for the relevant items.

Cllr. McCreedy-Any matters relating to Recreation Ground- Trustee of Friends of Dymchurch Recreation Ground Charity.

- 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING-** held on the 5th of February 2024 to be agreed by members present.

Proposed for acceptance by Cllr. Weatherhead and seconded by Cllr. C. Young and accepted by members present and signed by the chair.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Members will propose to adjourn the meeting to allow Public Participation- Standing Orders provide the opportunity for members of the public to speak at Council Meetings- The allotted time for Public Participation is 15 minutes and each person may speak for no longer than 3 minutes. This is however, at the discretion of the chair. At the end of the Public Participation section the Council meeting will resume.

The Council heard from several members of the public about the devastating affects of localised flooding in Beverley Gardens Dymchurch and were seeking the support of the Parish Council in finding a solution to prevent future events.

They reported that often they hear from authorities that this is all due to climate change however they highlight that it was not until the hard surfacing of the New Beach Carpark area around 2015 that incidents started to occur. It is believed that no proper drainage was installed, and the surface water relies on a soak away around the perimeter of the carpark. This had previously been open fields and no events had taken place previously on this scale. The Council heard how this is affecting the quality of life of the residents with one resident reporting that the minute he hears rain he starts to move items from low lying locations in his premises.

The Council also heard from the public that the Sewer to the rear of the car park area is full and not taking water as it should.

Members of the public are concerned that no one is taking responsibility for this problem, and this will have an effect on their home insurance costs and the potential for selling their homes in the future.

The following is linked to item 16- The meeting heard that the Internal Drainage Board for the Romney Marsh is to arrange to be installed a 900mm pipe to bring the conduit back into service at the location which should help or alleviate the issues which had occurred in Uden Road at the end of last year. The diameter of the pipe being installed is greater than is required which will hopefully keep the water flowing.

Kent County Council are currently investigating the most recent flowing event at Uden Road under a section 19 investigation, and it is hoped that this will provide some answers and recommendations.

In addition to the above location the Sands Estate is also suffering from localised flooding and concerns are raised as to whether the infrastructure can cope with the volume of water being produced. The Sands Estate is believed to rely on soakaways rather than surface water drainage.

In fully supporting the residents the following actions were agreed:

- a. For residents to copy the Parish Council into any communication regarding this matter
- b. To review the original planning application for the surfacing of the New Beach Car Park
- c. To arrange a meeting with a Southern Water representative for an update on these concerns and to include Cllr Jim Martin, Cllrs. Hills and Cooper and Cllr Jennie Hawkins.
- d. To send the Parish Council pumping station map to Southern Water contact for discussion on whether the current arrangements are fit for purpose.
- e. To obtain a map of ownership of dykes and sewers for our Parish.

5. STANDING AGENDA ITEM- DYMCHURCH PAVILION AND RECREATION GROUND- LATEST UPDATE

Cllr. McCreedy reported as follows-

- Rebuttal letter has been sent to the Planning Department to answer queries raised by interested parties after the submission of the planning application.
- A potential funder from the Football Association is being considered.
- Amendments to the roof line have been recommended by the Planning department and this is being worked on but will not delay things.

6. APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF 21/2525/FH – OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR A RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 132 DWELLINGS WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED.

Members to acknowledge above appeal and hear any additional comments.

It was noted that the original application to the District Council had not been amended and this was an appeal against the refusal-

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Planning Inspectorate to reiterate Parish Councils objections to the application and to include information about recent flooding events.

7. CHAIRMANS REPORT

The Chair will provide an update on any additional Council activities and meetings attended.

- Attended the opening of the newly refurbished area at the junction of Orgarswick Avenue with A259
- Attended the 10k racing event and awarded medals noting the excellent efforts of a Dymchurch resident coming 9th overall.
- Will be attending the Commonwealth Flag Ceremony at New Romney to represent the Parish Council and Dymchurch.

The Council wished to congratulate Cllr Tony Hills on his recent election to be our District Council representative and to thank those who were not successful for putting themselves forward to represent our area.

8. MEMBER REPORTS

Members will update the Committee regarding any meetings or events attended on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr. C. Cooper- Attended the Romney Marsh Forum- received an update from Pc Putland. Unfortunately, Stagecoach did not attend to raise issues of bus services for our area. The minutes have been circulated to members.

Cllr. V. McCreedy- Attended Friends of Dymchurch Recreation Ground meeting which was very well organised.

Cllr. A. Weatherhead-Informed members that a Kent Association of Local Council meeting had taken place.

9. CLERKS REPORT

- There are now 35 applicants for the Handy Person job which have been reviewed prior to the personnel meeting which will reduce this number through a paper sift.
- Continued correspondence with the EA regarding the water quality issues- See item 15.
- Payment for the replacement signs at the slip way have been received – The Council will now need to decide if the original signs are reproduced, or a new sign is commissioned.

It was agreed that this matter will be added to a future meeting for decision.

- Mr Lawson is working on the end of year figure for an early audit, we are awaiting the statutory papers and notices from the external auditors.
- Recruitment for the Beach Wardens will commence soon for a start date in July.
- We have commenced enquiries to look at changing the domain name for the Council to a .gov address. We will potentially lose out current domain name as this was purchased on our behalf Peter Faulkner now deceased. We are also looking at getting specific .gov email addresses.

It was agreed to proceed with obtaining information and costs for a future meeting.

10. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

a. KCC COUNCILLOR

No report this month

b. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr T. Cooper supplied written report shown at appendix 1-

The following questions were raised:

- In relation to the Sands development should the District Council be told who has bought it- Response from Cllr Cooper that he has been told that we do not know who has bought it.
- Concerns raised about decision to abstain from the budget agreement vote at the District Council meeting.
- Is there any enforcement action that should be taken if Dymchurch Beach gets a poor rating for bathing quality- It was noted that once the signs are in force if this happens that it was then down to personal choice.

Cllr.T.Hills – sent his apologies due to pre-arranged commitment.

c. KENT POLICE- PC PUTLAND- Not present-

Continued patrolling is taking place by PC Putland- He has reported recent attempted burglaries in the area and also attempted thefts of cars. The cars being targeted are mainly keyless access cars. He has published crime prevention advice and is available through My Community Voice.

d. KCC WARDEN

No report received.

11. MATTERS ARISING FROM CORRESPONDENCE WHICH HAS BEEN CIRCULATED TO MEMBERS PRIOR TO THE MEETING

- Living History Workshops have requested permission to use their days over the weekend of August bank holidays to get the village involved in Scarecrow making- **Members agreed unanimously to the above proposal.**
- Complaint from resident regarding the blind bend in the vicinity of 18-22 Eastbridge Road with speeding vehicles who seem to put their foot down when leaving the village- There are no footpaths in this location and there are concerns for pedestrians. **It was agreed that this will be included in the information provided to KCC via the Highway Improvement Plan for Eastbridge Road parking regulations.**
- Complaint and wish for support from resident at Tower Estate reporting contamination of oil into Willop Sewer- The Environment Agency are investigating, and I have written to them asking for an update. **It was proposed that the Clerk will monitor responses from the EA and update the resident.**
- A letter has been received in relation to objecting to the development at High Knocke- They have concerns over changing the village but specifically mention the impact on sewers. **Noted**
- Resident looking for assurance that the issues of speeding and the possibility of a safe crossing from the Beach Estate across the A259 are being included in the Highways

Improvement Plan. This was first identified in 2022 and in correspondence with the then KCC Councillor Andy Weatherhead.

It was agreed that the Clerk would confirm the inclusion and confirm what had been agreed so far.

12. PLANNING

REFERENCE	ADDRESS	DETAILS	Comments
24/0132/FH	72 Brockman Crescent, Dymchurch, Romney Marsh, TN29 0UA	Single storey rear extension	No objections Carried Unanimously
24/0111/FH	85 Hythe Road, Dymchurch, Romney Marsh, TN29 0TL	2No chalet bungalows with associated parking	No objections Carried Unanimously

13. FINANCE

- a. Breakdown of expenditure/income since last meeting
No matters raised.
- b. Authorisation of Payments - Members will review the list of invoices for payment and identify two Councillors to authorise the payments online.
Items shown at appendix 2 agreed by members.
- c. Additional items requiring authorisation.
No additional items presented.

14. COMMUNITY GRANT REQUEST-

- a. **To receive request from Friends of Dymchurch Recreation Ground to make a grant for 80th Anniversary of D Day.**

It was proposed by Cllr. D. Young and seconded by Cllr. C. Cooper to donate £500.00 to the proposed event.

This was carried unanimously. Cllr. C. McCreedy note declared interest at item 2.

- b. **To receive a request for a grant to support 2024's Day of Syn.**

It was agreed unanimously to donate £500.00 to the Day of Syn Event

15. TO RECEIVE RESPONSE FROM ENVIRONMENT AGENCY RELATING TO WATER QUALITY.

The response from the environment agency can be read at appendix 3- It was welcomed that the Agency had responded to our specific concerns-

The following actions were agreed-

- a. To investigate the introduction of Community Testing via Southern Water
- b. To arrange a meeting with Southern Water to receive an update about localised contamination and mis connections of sewer pipes.
- c. To include in the next newsletter and publicise the request not to feed seagulls both at the beach and inland.

16. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS OF FLOODING AT UDEN ROAD DYMCHURCH

See public participation section above.

17. REPOSITIONING OF SEAWALL BEACON DUE TO SAFETY CONCERNS.

It was accepted that the current position of the beacon now posed a risk to properties if lit.

It was proposed by Cllr Wright and seconded by Cllr V. McCreedy to reposition the beacon at the site of the concrete plinth near to the outflow basin near the Martello Carpark.

Vote for- 5

Vote against- 2

Abstain-1

Arrangements to be made to move the beacon using the original installation company.

18. TO CONSIDER PROPOSAL TO ADD ADDITIONAL SEATING AT ORGARSWICK AVENUE JUNCTION WITH A259.

The Clerk advised that it was permitted to further discuss this matter at the main council meeting given that the Assets and Amenities Committee had recorded in their minutes that the addition of more benches "*Maybe an option to add additional seating in the future, council to review use of area once completed.*"

It was agreed that the seat provided by Mr Walker for the village was being used but it was proposed that an additional bench type seat would be a practical addition to close off the gap. It was noted that this was not the agreed design, and a vote was taken for an additional seat-

5 for an additional seat

3 Against an additional seat.

Carried for an additional seat-

It was agreed that the style and location of the additional seat would be decided by the Assets and Amenities Committee. It was also requested that Mr. Colin Walker be informed of the decision.

19. KENT COAST VOLUNTEERING AWARD

Members will consider proposing Local Litter Volunteers for this award.

Without reservation members fully agreed with nominating our litter volunteers for this award. The litter volunteers do an amazing job in all weathers and are very respected within our community.

Action to arrange for nomination of Litter volunteers for the award.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING- To be held on Monday 8th April 2024 at 7pm at the Parish Council Offices Orgarswick Avenue Dymchurch.

Noted

21. CLOSED SESSION-

To consider application for a memorial bench at the seawall-

After discussion it was agreed that the memorial bench application would be granted.

Appendix 1- District Cllrs Report:

District Councillors Report to Dymchurch Parish Council
March 2024

1. You will be aware of the recent Byelection result and I am looking forward to working with Tony Hills, the new, and my fellow District Councillor for the Romney Marsh Ward.
2. You will also be aware the Developer has appealed the Planning Committees decision to refuse outline Planning Permission for up to 132 houses at High Knocke. The District Council announced in response to a question that it be providing a robust response to the developer on the reasons for refusal by the Planning Committee. I would encourage anyone who wishes to make representations to the Planning Inspector to do so before 20 March.
3. Compass Builders assets were put up for auction by the Official Receiver recently. This did not include the Former Sands Motel which I believe was sold separately and contractors have been observed on site.
4. Ther District Council put back its arrangements to implement a new Committee system by 12 months, and this should now come into force in May 2025 not this year as expected. The purpose of the new system was to abolish the cabinet, in order to involve all councillors in decisions so that none were excluded.
5. The budget was recently set and more than £18m will be spent on services across the district including household waste collection, street cleansing, maintaining parks and open spaces, providing quality social housing and other community-based supports.
6. It should be noted that the Cabinet agreed to increase fees and charges, such as for example, inflation busting increases to Green Waste Collections, CPZ and Car Parking Charges and other charges way back in December.
7. Ward Grants were maintained, Councillors Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) were frozen, and the Leader and Deputy forwent theirs. Councillor allowances were not increased by RPI but were reduced to 5% which was in line with the staff pay award.
8. Folkestone & Hythe District Council's proportion of council tax – which equates to just 12.7% of the total bill – will increase by just under 3%. This rise equates to approximately 16p a week for an average Band D property.
9. I have attended a number of meetings of the Planning Committee, met with staff of the Planning Department and residents from Willop Way, who I am hoping to meet later this week and also attended an online meeting with Southern Water.
10. Further meetings are planned, and I understand the Parish Council can expect to receive an invite.
11. Due to the Byelection I have outstanding meetings with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Tourism and a meeting scheduled later this week with the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Transport and Assets and Operations regarding potential improvements to the boundary of Oegarswick Car Park. As well as a meeting in St Mary`s Bay with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Assets and Operations.
12. I have been advised the mechanical brush has been seen on a regular basis and also for the first time in a long time in Newchurch.

13. The Romney Marsh Partnership (RMP) has undergone a review and projects are now expected to be led by District with reference to the RMP as part of the process.
14. The Rural Development Fund is swiftly moving forward and as ward member, I have been invited to attend a meeting scheduled later this month, where a number of applications submitted by local organisations will be decided under this Fund. If you have yet to apply. I would suggest you do so as soon as you can because the allocated money has to be spent by February 2025.
15. The Cabinet have decided the hoarding at Princes Parade is due to come down and be replaced by a chain link fence.
16. Flooding is an issue which is coming up in casework and I note Tony Goode from Newchurch Parish Council has been appointed to the Romney Marsh Internal Drainage Board.
17. As part of a National Cohort of Disabled Councillors, I have been attending a Disabled Councillors Leadership Course organised by the Local Government Association and hope to have completed this by next week.

Meanwhile, if I can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me or drop into one of my surgeries in St Mary`s Bay, St Mary in the Marsh or in Dymchurch – no appointment needed.

Cllr Tony Cooper
District Councillor for Romney Marsh Ward

Appendix 2- Financial Summary
Dymchurch Parish Council
March 2024 Meeting Finance Summary

Bank Reconciliation

Dymchurch Parish Council

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 27/02/2024		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2023		121,668.30
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2023 - 27/02/2024		145,063.51
			266,731.81
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2023 - 27/02/2024		147,149.67
A	Cash in Hand 27/02/2024 (per Cash Book)		119,582.14
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 27/02/2024	157.01	
	Unity Trust Bank 27/02/2024	5,668.94	
	Barclays Bank Current 27/02/2024	0.00	
	Barclays Bank Business Reserve 27/02/2024	0.00	
	NSI 27/02/2024	96,244.97	
	PayPal 27/02/2024	88.51	
	Unity Savings Account 27/02/2024	25,511.36	
			127,670.79
	Less unrepresented payments		8,148.65
			119,522.14
	Plus unrepresented receipts		60.00
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		119,582.14
	A = B Checks out OK		

Invoices for Authorisation

28 February 2024 (2023-2024)

Dymchurch Parish Council PAYMENTS (AWAITING AUTHORISATION) LIST

Voucher Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
293 Village Signs & Floral Display	15/01/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Maintenance	J H Youngs Ltd	S	21.25	4.25	25.50
297 Software	29/01/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Accounting Software	Starboard Systems Ltd	S	950.40	190.08	1,140.48
303 Insurance	30/01/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Professional Fees	Zurich Insurance	X	4,315.33		4,315.33
310 Village Signs & Floral Display	12/02/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Planting	J H Youngs Ltd	S	141.67	28.33	170.00
321 Repairs & Maintenance	26/02/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Fire Appliance Service	Morgan Fire Protection	S	168.76	33.75	202.51
320 First Aid & Fire Safety	26/02/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Fire Appliance Service	Morgan Fire Protection	S	91.02	18.21	109.23
322 Christmas Lights	26/02/2024		Unity Trust Bank		Christmas Lights Switch On 1st	Bouygues E&S Infrastructure	S	1,270.83	254.17	1,525.00
Total								6,959.26	528.79	7,488.05

Income & Expenditure

28 February 2024 (2023-2024)

Dymchurch Parish Council Summary of Receipts and Payments Summary - Cost Centres Only

Cost Centre	Receipts			Payments			Net Position
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
Bulls Field Car Park			0.00 (N/A)	12,000.00	17,573.37	-5,573.37 (-46%)	-5,573.37
Burial Ground			0.00 (N/A)	2,150.00	150.00	2,000.00 (93%)	2,000.00
General Maintenance			0.00 (N/A)	5,000.00	15,641.46	-10,641.46 (-212%)	-10,641.46
Highways and Other Village Amenit			0.00 (N/A)	11,950.00	14,369.83	-2,419.83 (-20%)	-2,419.83
Income	126,000.00	132,971.36	6,971.36 (5%)			0.00 (N/A)	6,971.36
Office Costs			0.00 (N/A)	33,752.00	25,713.67	8,038.33 (23%)	8,038.33
Projects			0.00 (N/A)	5,000.00		5,000.00 (100%)	5,000.00
Promotion of the Village			0.00 (N/A)	2,200.00	5,466.89	-3,266.89 (-148%)	-3,266.89
Recreation Ground		133.59	133.59 (13359%)	6,850.00	2,131.12	4,718.88 (68%)	4,852.47
Seawall			0.00 (N/A)	23,700.00	14,893.28	8,806.72 (37%)	8,806.72
Staffing			0.00 (N/A)	34,500.00	39,832.03	-5,332.03 (-15%)	-5,332.03
NET TOTAL	126,000.00	133,104.95	7,104.95 (5%)	137,102.00	135,771.65	1,330.35 (0%)	8,435.30

Total for ALL Cost Centres	133,104.95	135,771.65
V.A.T.	11,958.56	12,035.66
GROSS TOTAL	145,063.51	147,807.31

Appendix 3- Response from Environmental Agency

My apologies for not responding to you sooner, as you may have guessed, our team are very busy at the moment with a number of investigations and improvement work around the Kent coastline.

Since our last communications our investigations, and investigations carried out by Southern Water have progressed with speed and residents may have seen an increased presence in the Dymchurch area of Environment Agency officers and Southern Water staff.

I have attached a 'fact sheet' for Dymchurch produced by us in December. I am not sure if this has been sent out to you yet.

A number of additional monitoring points have been set up, both by us and Southern Water, and we are compiling the data from these to assist in tracking down the problem. Southern Water are carrying out a comprehensive investigation checking the integrity of all the relevant sewers and pumping stations in the area as well as investigating any misconnections that can feed into surface water sewers that drain to the sea. These monitoring points are both in the sea and in the local ditches and water courses. As you suggest, we hope to be able to narrow down potential sources in the ditch network by sampling at multiple locations.

The sampling undertaken so far has mainly been influenced by the wet weather, which is useful but to get a more rounded picture of the situation, a period of dry weather would be ideal.

Southern Water have produced a comprehensive 'Improvement Plan' for Dymchurch, which details their investigations.

Presence of avian marker DNA in samples.

As previously mentioned, we have undertaken DNA or Microbial Source Tracing (MST) analysis of certain samples which have highlighted that along with human markers, there are also bird markers.

You mention the possibility of Chicken Manure, spread on fields being a possible source. We have been working with our agricultural regulator colleagues, who have been carrying out checks and farm visits in this area. Although they have not, so far, highlighted any significant issues arising from the farms or fields they have investigated, I will follow this possibility up with them. It is possible that records of where and when chicken manure has been spread to see if this correlates with any high samples.

Usually, the presence of bird DNA is due to seabirds and or birds like pigeons. Their faeces can wash off roofs and roads during rainfall, which will then drain to the sea. Sea birds who feed on the beach will also defecate there and when the tide washes over it, it will become entrained in the water. Unfortunately, a relatively small amount of bird faeces can have a significant effect on bathing water results, as they are a very local source, and the standards are so strict. Tackling this problem is obviously not easy but regular road gully pot cleansing and ensuring beaches don't have litter on them, which attract birds can help to reduce the problem.

Citizen science testing.

As I previously mentioned, there are some trials going on in Whitstable and the Isle of White at the moment, funded by Southern Water. I understand that they will be reviewing these trials in the near future to see what the best approach is, and the conclusions will then be rolled out elsewhere. Perhaps it may be worth contacting Southern Water directly about this to ask to be involved in future?

Ongoing investigations.

As mentioned above our investigations are still ongoing and will be continuing into the year ahead. I appreciate that this subject is very important to Dymchurch, and you would like to be updated. In our last communication we stated that we will be meeting with Folkstone Council officers and Southern Water discuss the best way of communicating with you and other stakeholders so that you get the most accurate information in a structured way so that you don't have to keep asking for updates and we can use our limited resource as efficiently as possible. I understand there may be public meetings being arranged by elected officials. If this goes ahead there may be further opportunities to update you on the situation and answer questions that people may have. However, we will endeavour to update the local community when we can in one form or another.