

# EASTLING PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting for Eastling held at remotely on Wednesday 22 April 2021

Present: Cllr Jimmy West (Chairman), Cllr Paul Ainsworth, Cllr Julia Bailey and Cllr John Payne; and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

Also present were Ward Member David Simmons and three members of the public.

Cllr West welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Cllr Paul Adams, Cllr John Payne and County Councillor Andrew Bowles

### 1. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 April 2019

Cllr West said that it had not been possible to hold the Annual Parish Meeting in 2020 due to the pandemic.

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 April 2019 as a true record.

### 2. Matters Arising from the minutes

No matters were raised.

### 3. Report of the Chairman of Eastling Parish Council

Cllr West reported:

**The Council** has adhered to its established pattern of bi-monthly meetings in the year, with a very satisfactory attendance record for all five Councillors. The Council is non-political. All meetings have been held remotely by Zoom during the year, and this process worked well with no change to the smooth running of the Council. Members of the public were also able to join the meetings, and several took advantage of this facility.

**Elections to the Council** took place in 2019. Full Elections will be held again in 2023, although there may be vacancies on the Council before then, due to retirements. As a reminder, anyone is welcome to attend Council meetings, who would like to get more involved. There has been no change in the Easting Councillors this year.

**Covid-19.** Life has been restricted by the lockdowns. As freedom now begins to open up, we hope we can back to normality in the next few months. In Eastling, we are greatly helped by several voluntary groups looking after those who are most vulnerable and those in need. The Council is extremely grateful to all those villagers who are helping all their neighbours, during this very difficult and unnatural time.

**Parish Council Clerk.** We are fortunate to have Wendy Licence as our Clerk. Wendy is Clerk to a number of other councils and attends regular training and update seminars to keep abreast of all that is required by statute for the proper governance of Parish Councils. The Council is obliged to have its own Website <https://www.hugofox.com/community/eastling-parish-council-15993/home> On that is published all the agendas and minutes of Council meetings and all our regulatory and financial information etc. This Website is maintained by Wendy. The Council is a member of the Kent Association of Local Councils [KALC], a body

that is particularly useful for training and keeping us all up to date. On the financial side all I need to say is that the cash management and budgeting are robust. There will be no change in the Precept this year. It will remain about £5,100, being £35 a year for a band D property in Eastling.

**Planning applications.** Eastling is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and thus subject to severe restrictions on development. Eastling Parish Council have viewed and commented on a number of applications favourably and a few unfavourably, but it is Swale Borough Council who makes the decisions and sadly occasionally the Councils opinions get rejected or upheld by Swale Borough Council.

Alan Willson continues to do an excellent job in looking after **Neighbourhood Watch**, liaising with the police where necessary and helping out villagers in many ways. Thanks to Alan for the excellent work he does in the village on many fronts and helping to keep us all safe.

**Speed Limits.** Residents have been concerned for a number of years about the highways speed limits in Newnham Lane, the 40mph sign is in the wrong place, and in any event, it should be a maximum of 30mph. To help resolve this, a petition was organised and received a massive 144 supporting signatures. This was submitted to the Chairman of the Joint Transport Board at KCC last year. This year we were asked to prepare a Parish Highways Improvement Plan [PHIP], which has been done and submitted. KCC officers are now looking in more detail at our request for the Newnham Lane speed limit.

**KALC awards.** The Council decided to make this occasional award to Colin Bell for all the outstanding work and help he has given to Eastling village over many years. To pick out just one example, Colin's woodwork skills can be seen on the paths around the village. After many years of service Colin has handed over the position of "Tree warden" to Cllr John Payne.

**PHIP.** Apart from Newham Lane issue, several other matters were raised on the PHIP, including the railing on Kettle Hill, which were broken. These have now been repaired and are safe once again.

**Highways.** "The Street" was resurfaced this year and is now in good shape. A small portion of this road [where cars are normally parked] was not able to be resurfaced due to flooding concerns. Council continues to report potholes and other issues to KCC and batter them with follow up Anyone can report any Highway problem themselves online, through [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) I would urge you do this. KCC are pretty responsive, and you can track progress.

**The Village Website** The village website is [www.eastlingvillage.co.uk](http://www.eastlingvillage.co.uk). This is run by Paul Ainsworth. We are pleased with the website for Eastling Village; feed in any comments, news, or events you may have to the administrator. He can only post information he is told about, so do be in contact with him with information and photos. In addition, the Council has its own website, [see above] which has all the details concerning the work, constitution, and regulations etc of Eastling Parish Council. This is run by our Clerk, Wendy Licence. There are links between the two websites.

**Footpaths.** The Council strives to work with local farmers, to keep paths in good condition. Ben Binder manager of the Belmont Estate works particularly hard to maintain the paths and bridleways. He provides regular reports to the council, for which we are very grateful. If you spot any problems, such as fallen trees then please let Ben know. The trenches around most of the fields dug by the Belmont Estate are to stop "Hare Coursing". Unfortunately, some is still occasionally taking place. If you see this happening, please report it to the police, rather than approach the offenders yourself.

**Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council.** I must pay tribute to KCCllr. Andrew Bowles who is now retiring from KCC. Andrew has attended, and significantly contributed to, all our Council meeting over many years. Andrew has been able to help the Council in giving sound advice on local and Kent matters. We will miss him, and sincerely thank him for all his hard work. Who will represent us at KCC will be decided on the election on 6 May. Cllr David Simmons is our Ward Member on Swale Borough Council. David attends our meetings, and his input is always appreciated.

#### **4. Financial report of the Parish Council**

Cllr West reported that the Council's finances are in good shape. The precept has been kept the same at £35 per band D property. The Council has received a grant of £135.10.

#### **5. To receive reports from local organisations**

There were no reports.

#### **6. To consider litter bin for the parish**

Cllr West said Swale Borough Council has agreed to provide Eastling with a litter bin and to empty it at no charge to the Parish, consideration needs to be given as to where it may be sited.

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the offer from Swale Borough Council.

#### **7. To receive questions and comments from parishioners.**

A resident outlined a proposal for a development on their land with an offer of amenity land for the parish.

Cllr West said the Council does not comment on planning matters until an application is lodged with Swale Borough Council.

#### **8. Any other business**

Cllr West said that the legislation permitting remote meetings runs out on 6 May and the Village Hall will not be open, therefore the next meeting of the Parish Council will be on 4 May at 8pm.

Cllr Ainsworth said a committee has been set up in the village to organise a party for Eastling, post-lockdown, in September. There has been one meeting so far.

Cllr West thanked everyone for attending.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.06pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chairman  
Date: 4 April 2022