

DARENTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Remote Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17 February 2021

COVID-19 2020 Regulations Statement

The COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic and the unprecedented Government measures in response to the crisis (e.g., prohibitions on gatherings, social distancing, self-isolation and shielding of those deemed to be the most vulnerable) have meant that the requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person with all members present in one place cannot currently be met. The statutory requirements for meetings are mainly contained in the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act") and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 ("the 1960 Act").

In recognition of the difficulties of holding and attending meetings, the Government included s.78 in the Coronavirus Act 2020 and provided the Secretary of State the power to make Regulations for the provision of holding alternative format meetings.

As such, this Meeting was held under agreed terms, being to conduct the Council business remotely by Zoom with decisions recorded in the minutes by the Clerk.

Councillors' participating at remote meeting: D Carey, W Cook, I Gutteridge (Chairman), T Hicks, D Risely, Y Seymour and N Weavis (Vice Chairman).

Public present: There was one member of the public present who had registered to observe the meeting.

Questions from the public: The Chairman had received two questions from one member of the public. Public questions do not form part of the business of the Parish Council.

Before the Questions from the public could be heard, a Councillor interrupted the Chairman to report that his neighbour 'up the road' had not been sent joining details for the meeting. The Chairman explained that his neighbour's request to observe the meeting had been received after the pre-meeting deadline, and for this reason he had not been provided with joining instructions. This matter bore no relevance to the Parish Council Agenda or minutes.

- 1) The greens either side of Sandbanks Hill have recently been flooded. I cannot recall the flooding being so bad and prolonged. Have the recent works exacerbated the situation? Also has the Parish council any liability should any accident occur with this flooding? Are there any plans to prevent it in the future?

Response: The Chairman asked the Vice Chairman to respond:

The greens contractor, whose knowledge of the specific area is excellent, and who has been instrumental in helping the Parish Council deal with the unfortunate problem resulting from UK Power Network's attempt at bunding installation, confirmed that he cannot recall the area ever being so badly affected by incessant rain. The mini-aquifer on the green opposite The Ship has filled, overflowed and caused the flooding which has been successfully addressed by the contractor who redistributed the surplus soil which was left. It was, therefore, nothing to do with the recent bunding work. Councillor Carey confirmed this area had flooded historically and this was not just a recent or unique event.

- 2) Will the Parish Council please explain the circumstances which occurred which led to 2 Councillors having to resign midway through their term of office?

Response: The Chairman explained that Member resignations are not a matter for discussion at a Parish Council meeting as they do not form part of the business of the agenda. It was suggested that if this information is required by the member of the public, he contact the former Members directly.

The business of the Parish Meeting commenced at 19:37

98/02/21: TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR NON-PARTICIPATION

No apologies for absence were received.

99/02/21: TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

100/02/21: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE REMOTE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 2021

Councillor D Carey wished it to be noted, that he was unable to join the meeting, despite a 45-minute endeavour, due to technical difficulties.

Following the above amendment, Members resolved to approve the minutes of the remote meeting held on Wednesday 20 January 2021 and adopt as a true record.

101/02/21: MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A Councillor wished to speak about a question from a member of the public which was asked, and dealt with, at the January 2021 meeting. He asked:

- 1) *Has DPC taken any action to remove dumped tyres and other rubbish on the green, located both sides of Shellbank Lane? (Reported to DPC on 28/12/20.)*

Response: *The Chairman reported that no action had been taken in respect of this particular incident and, that members of the public and Council Members are reminded and encouraged to report cases of fly tipping directly to the Borough Council. Full details for reporting fly tipping issues are contained on the Borough Council's website (Questions from the public do not form part of the business of the Council meeting).*

The Councillor refused to accept the Chairman's response and aggressively insisted that it was the Clerk's job to report fly-tipping. The Clerk reiterated the response from the Chairman and previous meeting in that, any Council Member or member of the public may report fly-tipping using the appropriate submission form on the DBC website.

Matters then became confused with the Councillor referring to a second fly-tipping case, which the Clerk confirmed she had reported to the Borough Council due to the contaminated nature of waste dumped. With no clarification from the Councillor as to which fly tipping incident he was referring to, the Chairman moved to proceed the meeting.

One Councillor asked the Chairman's permission to speak to report that she was, "Not happy with the previous Councillor's aggressive and rude attitude".

A further Councillor confirmed that he too thought this Councillor was behaving in an aggressive and intimidating manner towards the Clerk, who he believed had done nothing wrong. He also considered that this Councillor was being rude and disrespectful to the Chairman and fellow Members.

The Councillor in question gave the response: (verbatim) "and so were you when you slagged-off the Mahoneys". This comment was unrelated to any business of the meeting.

At this point The Chairman insisted that the meeting be moved on.

102/02/21: TO NOTE CASUAL VACANCIES FOR LANE END WARD AT DARENTH PARISH COUNCIL

Members were asked to note two Parish Vacancies that had arisen following the recent resignation of Councillors' S-J & M Mahoney.

A Councillor asked where the vacancies had been advertised? The Clerk confirmed that the details had been uploaded to the Parish website. The Councillor said that the Clerk should be

putting the vacancies on Parish noticeboards as 50% of parishioners used them. The Clerk pointed out that this was not considered to be a safe action during a national lockdown and that she had advised the DBC Electoral Services Manager that the vacancies had been advertised via the website. The Chairman confirmed that the public were aware of the vacancies as they had been uploaded and commented on through local social media platforms.

RESOLVED: To note two casual vacancies for Lane End Ward.

103/02/21: FINANCE

(a) To receive Financial Statement as at 31 January 2021

RESOLVED: To approve the Financial Statement as presented.

(b) To note expenditure for replacement garage doors to Council owned property at Waller Park Pavilion

Following a break-in at garages located in Waller Park Pavilion, two new metal up and over doors were ordered at a cost of £1,083.33 excluding VAT. Due the urgency of securing Council property, the Chairman granted approval.

A Councillor reported that his recent visit to the site had shown the garage doors to be secure. The Chairman explained that due to the urgent need to protect the properties, she had authorised payment. She confirmed that, in this instance, due to the crucial time element involved, it would not have been practical to obtain three quotes for full Council approval. She suggested that what the Councillor was not aware of, was that the garage doors had been nailed shut to make them temporarily secure and items inside the garages could not be removed without removing the whole door. This was obviously something that would not be practical going forward. The Councillor once again showed extreme displeasure at having his statement identified as being incorrect. The Chairman reminded Members that they were required to note this item only.

RESOLVED: The majority of Members noted expenditure of £1,083.33 to replace garage doors to Council owned property at Waller Park Pavilion. Due to the requirement to necessitate urgent repair work, the Chairman had authorised the spend under the provision of the Council's 2021-22 approved repairs and maintenance budget, in line with Item 4 of the Parish Council's Financial Regulations.

104/02/21: TO NOTE DETAILS OF ANNUAL PLAYGROUND INSPECTION REPORT FOR WALLER PARK PAVILION

Members were asked to note details of the Annual Playground Inspection Report carried out by Ralt Leisure Ltd on 29 January 2021.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Annual Playground Inspection Report as presented.

105/02/21: PLANNING

(a) To consider new applications

Members deliberated new applications from the Local Planning Authority:

DA/21/00114/FUL - 16B The Green Darenth Kent DA2 6JR

Conversion of integrated garage to habitable room with associated alterations to front elevation. Members noted the details of the application.

DA/21/00082/TPO - 23 The Green Darenth Kent DA2 6JR

Application to remove lower growths below the main trunk division, crown reduce to 6 metres diameter and a 2-metre reduction in height of 1 No Sycamore tree subject to Tree preservation order No.1 1995. Members noted the details of the application.

(b) **To note recent decisions and appeals made by the Planning Authority**

Members noted recent decisions from the Local Planning Authority:

DA/20/00891/FUL - Pheasants Field St Margaret's Road Darenth Kent

Demolition of existing stable block and erection of a stable block and barn store, with an associated hardstanding area. Decision: **CONSENT GRANTED**

(c) **To consider new applications/recent decisions received after agenda production**

No new applications or recent decisions had been received.

106/02/21: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date for the next meeting of the Council was noted as Wednesday 17 March 2021.

107/02/21: EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the **exclusion** of the **press and public** for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

108/02/21: TO CONSIDER FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR WALLER PARK PAVILION, INCLUDING RECRUITMENT, PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT AND ANY ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Members deliberated the various options for recruitment and property refurbishment.

RESOLVED: That the majority of members wished to confirm recruitment Option (a), following the loss of the Waller Park Pavilion facility caretaker, with financial implications being presented to Members at a future meeting ahead of advertising of the vacancy.

Members also resolved that initial property and utility checks take place prior to commencement of the apartment refurbishment programme. Quotes for urgent works will be provided for consideration. Security of the property is a priority and measures will be taken to protect buildings.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:37.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairman)