

**Minutes** of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Present: Cllrs: K Howard-Challis (Chair); M Szabo (Vice-chair); T Portman; A Smith; A Groves and Mrs A I Smith (Clerk)

In attendance: 13 members of the public and Dr Andrew Richardson (Finds Liaison Officer)

1. To receive **Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Cllr Woodford.

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.)  
None.

3. **Public session.**

A resident from Heron Close reported an update regarding his freedom of information requests to Swale and Medway Councils regarding statistics for planning over the last three years, which were not easily translatable into useful information. He is going to continue trawling for the information looked for and when that is complete, it is intended to send it to the housing minister with input from the Parish Council.

A resident asked what the reasons were to support the planning application in respect of Callum Park to change the status of the Agricultural Occupancy. The Parish Council responded that with the evidence produced there was no reason not to approve it. It was also requested that the Parish Council use the Village Facebook page to communicate with the residents. The Parish Council have discussed this previously and decided not to use it as their main platform as they have a website where information can be found. The resident also enquired about email alerts for residents. This is provided by the Parish Council website for anyone to sign up to, should they wish.

Dr Andrew Richardson was introduced to the meeting. He is currently acting as Finds Liaison Officer for Kent. The Roman Semuncia coin, minted in the Roman Republic in the years 217 – 215 BC, which was found on Parish Council land was passed around for the Councillors and members of the public to see. It is one of the few that has ever been found in this country. The Parish Council have agreed to donate it to the British Museum for inclusion in the British Numismatic Journal "Coin Register". It is not known why it was there. This coin was found in a coastal area of reclaimed land known to be formed from material cleared from London in the Post-Medieval period after the Great Fire of 1666. The area 200m to the south-east of the find spot however is the location of a suspected Roman villa. It is therefore unclear whether this coin is a genuine ancient loss relating to the nearby Roman site, redeposited alongside other material from London or a more recent antiquarian loss. It was requested that once the British Museum have cleaned it up, for them to liaise with the School and send photographs.

A resident asked if the Wardwell Lane sign can be replaced as it is badly damaged, where a truck has reversed into it and bent it double.

It was asked if the grass would be cut at the Gibbs Amenity area before the weekend. This is unknown, but unlikely as the contract is being discussed at this meeting.

4. **Visitors.** Reports or comments from:

a) KCC Councillors;

No report.

b) SBC Councillors;

No report

c) The PCSO sent the following report

No crimes of note

Anti-social behaviour and other incidents of note:

12/03/23 – Sheerness Road – Reports of poaching, officers attended the location and spoke with males. The incident has been passed over to the rural team.

15/03/23 – Sheerness Road – Reports of nuisance vehicle driving on the farmer's field.  
No patrols attended.

- d) Friends of the Brickfields.  
No reports.

5. **To resolve that the Minutes** of the Parish Council meetings held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 are a correct record

- a) It was resolved that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 are a correct record and were signed accordingly.  
b) It was resolved that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 are a correct record and were signed accordingly.

6. **Correspondence:**

- a) Email suggesting non slip strips for steps from the sea wall near the reed bed. Cllr Smith will have a look at this.

**Action: Cllr Smith**

- b) Email requesting update on the Village Sign. The Clerk will contact the artist to arrange a date for it to be transported. Cllr Smith will arrange the transport.

**Action: Clerk and Cllr Smith**

7. **To discuss and agree response (if any) for the following Planning Application:**

- a) 23/501254/FULL PROPOSAL: Garage conversion into a habitable space with the erection of a single storey front extension, raising of roof height, insertion of roof light and changes to fenestration. ADDRESS: 32 School Lane, Lower Halstow.  
It was agreed to support this planning application.

**Action: Clerk**

8. **To Discuss any planning applications received between producing the agenda and this meeting.**

None received.

9. **Finance:**

- a) Proposal to purchase an access tower. It was agreed not to purchase the item at this time.  
b) Proposal to purchase a new defibrillator. It was agreed to go ahead with service for the current defibrillator. The Clerk will contact the Defib Shop to re-arrange a date.

**Action: Clerk**

- c) Proposal to purchase a new strimmer. Cllr Portman made the case for the requirement to replace the strimmer and will look into costs. This will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

**Action: Cllr Portman**

- d) To discuss the updated quote for the new noticeboard. There was some discussion regarding the size of the new one as currently it is shared with St Margaret's Church. It was agreed, that providing the Church Warden is happy to do so, to allow the Church to use the noticeboard at Britannia Green and that the Parish Council would purchase the new noticeboard at The Green for their sole use. Proposed by Cllr Howard-Challis and seconded by Cllr Szabo.

**Action: Cllrs Howard-Challis and Smith**

- e) Quote for Grounds Maintenance for Gibbs Amenity Area and the Recreation Ground. It was proposed to agree the quote from Mr Pascoe by Cllr Howard-Challis and seconded by Cllr Portman. Agreed unanimously.

10. **To receive reports on the following:**

- a) Parks & Leisure & Planning (MS)  
Cllr Szabo has looked at a package for new playground equipment and will keep the details on file. Cllr Groves reported that the bench in the Memorial Wood needs some

attention. The person who donated the bench will be contacted to see what repairs are needed.

**Action: Cllr Szabo and Clerk**

- b) Footpaths and Hedgerow maintenance, Burial Ground and Allotments.

The wall over the sluice is badly cracked and the Environment Agency have been contacted, as they are responsible for the sluice, however, they are not the owners of the bridge. They did say, however, that they would look into it. It has been suggested that the area may need closing off. It was agreed to wait for the result of the Environment Agency's enquiries. It was also suggested to contact the Public Rights of Way team at KCC regarding this.

The Burial Ground fence is in need of attention and an unknown person has put a paving slab against it to hold part of it up. Cllr Smith will have a look at it.

**Action: Cllr Smith**

- c) Parish Highways Plan

Notices have been put up informing the public of the change of speed limit to 20 mph in the locations that will be affected.

- d) Brickfields and Seawall

The sea wall repairs have now been completed and the Environment Agency have done a good job. The damaged gate at the entrance has also been replaced. Cllr Portman has sent thank you letters. Cllr Portman will look into whether the Brickfields will merit being classified as a Site of Scientific Special Interest (SSSI) or as a Nature Reserve. It was reported by Cllr Groves that there is polystyrene foam in the reed beds, that has probably blown there. Cllr Portman will let the Friends of the Brickfields know, as they have a work party taking place at the weekend.

#### 11. Clerk's Report

Payments received during March total £592.78, which includes payments from both barges docked at the wharf and for an amendment to a memorial in the Burial Ground.

The Environment Agency are making further enquiries regarding who is responsible for the bridge over the sluice, it appears that it is not Peel Ports and that the Environment Agency are responsible for the maintenance of the sluice, but not the bridge.

There was a report of an unauthorised vehicle parking at Westfield Car Park, which was untaxed. It has since moved on.

The Parish Council litter picker, Mr Tidy kindly litter picked further along Wardwell Lane, as requested, a job that unfortunately took him 4 hours and 11 bin bags.

The deadline for the delivery of nomination papers regarding the upcoming election on Thursday 4th May was at 4.00 pm on 4th April 2023 and the published statement as to persons nominated will be available from Swale Borough Council no later than 4.00pm on 5th April 2023.

The Clerk has contacted the internal auditor who conducted the internal audit last year and he is very happy to do so again this year. A date will be set shortly.

The bank balance as of 31st March 2023 is £58,967.49

It was agreed that Cllrs Howard-Challis and Szabo will authorise the payments, as per the payment list below, via internet banking.

#### 12. Items for information only:

- a) Items for Website and Village News

Conclusion of Sea Wall work

- b) To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of next meeting. The May monthly meeting and the Annual Parish meeting date will be arranged at a later date.

The meeting closed at 7.54pm

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
DCK Payroll	Payroll Services Invoices: P3899, P3831 and P3376	108.00	18.00	223004997
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning	190.00		744391642
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and. Salary	1145.09		94791540
HMRC	PAYE Tax January – March 2023	210.77		850322980
Intelligent Facility Services	CCTV SIM Service February and March Invoice: 07866	30.00	5.00	958880084
ATS	Work carried out at Recreation Ground Invoice: 21/3/23	850.00		Cheque 300027
Keith Howard-Challis	Donation for Dog Show 8/5/23	50.00		936073596

Other Payments:

Information Commissioner's Office – Direct Debit 9/4/23	£40.00
Multipay - Direct Debit 11/4/23	£3.00
Swale Borough Council Garden Waste Bin - Credit Card	£55.00

**Date:**

**Signed:**

**Cllr. K Howard-Challis  
Chair**