

# **NETTLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 IN NETTLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL at 19:45**

**PRESENT:**        **Cllr Alison Green - Chair**  
Cllr David Meredith  
Cllr Emily Corfe  
Cllr Jackie Bennett  
Cllr Martyn Evans  
County Cllr Simon Webb  
Borough Cllr Claudine Russell  
Suzanne Seal - Parish Clerk

### **1.        APOLOGIES AND ABSENCE**

Cllr Anita van Hensbergen – Vice Chair

### **2.        COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS**

Cllr Meredith declared interest in agenda item 6 - Village Hall and it was agreed by all Councillors present that he would not participate in any decisions that Councillors might make in relation to the Hall.

### **3.        MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting were duly signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

### **4.        EXTERNAL REPORTS**

#### **4.1       COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

Cllr Webb was in attendance and gave a verbal report as follows:

There has been a number of meetings since January, as the County Council are trying to balance next year's budget.

A meeting has been arranged for the Cabinet Member of Highways, Neil Baker, to meet with residents at Nettlestead Village Hall on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February at 7:30pm. Residents will have the opportunity to ask questions about highways issues and speeding in the village. Cllr Webb to chair the meeting. Clerk to let the puppy training class know the date and to add details to the Parish Magazine, Nettlestead Facebook page and Wateringbury & Nettlestead Facebook pages. Clerk to contact Nikki Lewis of Speedwatch and residents of Hampstead Lane.

#### **4.2       BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT**

Cllr Russell was in attendance and had circulated her report in advance of the meeting:

#### **MBC Members Report from Cllr Claudine Russell**

**Dated: February 2024**

#### **Events**

The Lunar New Year was a great success at the weekend with lots of people attending, we

have a full programme of events planned for 2024 including the summer series of events over 6 weekends, and we look forward to the herd of Shaun the Sheep that will be flocking to the town this summer. More details to follow.

### **1000 Affordable Houses**

We have secured sites and acquired housing to meet 400 of our 1,000 affordable house target. As a reminder, these are houses that are targeted for local people, are provided at affordable rent and will come from the housing target that is given to us by central government, not in addition to those targets.

### **Waste Crime Penalties**

We have raised the penalties for waste crime to reflect the seriousness of this crime, the Fixed Penalty Notice has rising from £150 to £500 (a 233% rise) and the maximum penalty for fly tipping has risen from £400 to £1,000.

### **Budget**

Shortly we will be finalising our MBC budget. Through prudent financial management we are predicting a balance budget position for 2024/25 but the following years get more difficult as KCC cuts to services that have to be met by districts, distinct national grant funding cuts and the increasing pressures on our temporary accommodation budget make for difficult future financial conditions. Our leader has added his signature to a letter going from council leaders to central government to rethink the cut of the household support fund that helps some of the poorest in our community. As a council we have plans in place for continuation of the main assistance if it were cut but we are hoping this potential decision will be reversed.

### **Local Plan**

The inspector opened a new consultation on the local plan. This is his consultation and is open until the middle of February as he realised that some people had commented on the changes to the infrastructure delivery plan within the main consultation, but he wanted to make sure that everyone should have the opportunity. The consultation helps to remove one potential judicial review avenue for the future, which is positive, but extending the timeline brings adoption ever closer to the election.

### **Boundary Changes**

Just a reminder that this will be the time that the new borough ward boundaries and MP constituency boundaries alter for the first time, and Maidstone Borough Council run all out elections for a 4 year term. Our ward remains Marden and Yalding and now will include the village of Hunton, whilst our MP constituency is now called "The Weald" and no longer includes the urban areas of Maidstone, instead covering rural villages and including 3 borough councils. On the borough ballot paper this year, you will be selecting 3 rather than the usual 1 candidate as our ward continues to remain a 3 member ward.

As always, if you need my help, please do not hesitate to email me at [claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk)

## **5. COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

### **5.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT**

Cllr Corfe was not aware of any Crime Reports for January 2024.

### **5.2 PARISH MAGAZINE**

In Cllr Van Hensbergen's absence from the meeting, the Clerk reported that 15 companies had placed an advert, with just two of those companies outstanding payment. There is a

possibility of one further advert which Cllr Van Hensbergen is aware of.

### **5.3 CHATTERBOX AND WARMSPACE**

Cllr Bennett provided an update as follows:

Chatterbox is continuing to be enjoyed by all, with the next meeting to be held at The Hop Pole.

The Warmspace initiative is continuing at The Hop Pole. There were fewer users in January, possibly due to the poor weather. It was noted that the Warmspace is being enjoyed by some residents who suffer from Dementia, and their carers. Councillors thought that this was a good thing.

Cllr Bennett provided the Clerk with 2 invoices. Clerk to arrange for these to be processed once the bank account has been transferred online.

### **6. VILLAGE HALL**

Mrs J Schofield was not present at the meeting but had provided a report in advance of the meeting:

The Handy man has repaired the Ladies' tap and toilet that were not working properly.

The Handy man has also been instructed to repair the broken cabinet in the kitchen and to order and fit new ceiling tiles. New light bulbs have been fitted on the stage and a new First Aid kit has been purchased for the kitchen, along with washing up liquid and cloths and the toilet rolls, and hand towels have also been restocked.

The Table Tennis table has been sold for £100 and this money has been paid into the Village Hall account. The Pool table is currently up for sale with several enquiries.

Air fresheners have been purchased and placed throughout the hall and entrance area to make it smell better.

A draft agenda for the 'Save Our Village Hall' meeting was discussed, along with an email from a resident with a proposal for a group to hire the hall. The Clerk to respond on behalf of the Parish Council, but decisions were not made in Mrs J Schofield's absence. Once the proposed agenda has been agreed by Mrs J Schofield, Clerk to add it to Facebook pages, Noticeboards, Parish Council website and to circulate to those that have requested a copy.

Cllr Corfe stated that the Defibrillator that is located at the Village Hall may not have been checked in terms of its battery life for a while. This was checked after the meeting and the Clerk will continue to monitor this and check the paperwork.

Cllr Meredith provided a financial update for the Village Hall and reported that it is currently liquid to operate but borderline solvent. Cllr Meredith is currently pursuing a discrepancy with the Performing Rights Licence for the hall, as he believes the hall was overcharged during COVID. Invoices are being sent out and the March 2023 Accounts need to be filed. Cllr Bennet advised that there may be a modest sum of money for the Village Hall once the Church completes the sale of the old Reading Room at Nettlestead Green.

### **7. KGV FIELD**

#### **7.1 TREE GRANT SCHEME**

Cllr Webb has been in contact with KCC to find out the contact details of the person who is

due to provide a report on the hedgerow along the North section of the King George V Playing Field and will continue to chase this up.

## **7.2 KGV FIELD – PUBLIC CONSULTATION SURVEY RESULTS**

The Cllrs discussed the pros and cons of installing football goals on the KGV field, taking into consideration the results of the survey and the views of the neighbours surrounding the field. It was noted that funding has been set aside in the budget. It was agreed to discuss the options further and consider the possibility of installing one smaller goal for shooting.

## **7.3 KGV FIELD – UPDATE ON WORKS**

The Clerk reported that the ground had been too wet for Capel Groundcare to carry out the weedkilling on the BMX track and this would now be done in Spring.

The three year quote provided by Capel Groundcare for the quarterly inspections of the play equipment was discussed and **it was RESOLVED by all members present** to approve the quote.

Cllr Corfe reported that the field looked good, there are two fallen trees which need clearing and the rubber tie around the Oak tree needs loosening as it has become tight. Cllr Corfe sent photos of these to the Clerk. The Clerk to report the fallen trees online to KCC and to ask Capel Groundcare to loosen the tie on the Oak tree when they do the first cut of the field.

Discussions were had as to the overflowing bin on the KGV field, as this is only emptied during the cutting season. The Clerk had contacted MBC and John Edwards had stated that the Nettlestead bins are generally emptied on a Wednesday, or on a Thursday during bank holiday weeks. Cllr Green to visit the bin to get it under control, bag it up and move it to the pathway so that it can be collected on the usual bin run, out of season.

## **8. CHURCHYARD**

Cllr Van Hensbergen was not present at the meeting but had provided an update as follows:

A huge branch of an ivy laden tree had crashed onto the footpath running adjacent to Cllr Van Hensbergen's garden and had hit her fence. The tree belongs to the nut copse belonging to the Church. Debris has been cleared and the branch has been put to the side of the path out of the way for the time being.

## **9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS**

### **9.1 SPEEDING**

The Clerk stated that KCC have added the cost to paint SLOWs on the road to their proposed budget and will advise whether this has approved funds to go ahead once the budget is confirmed by KCC.

### **9.2 TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY ISSUES AT HAMPSTEAD LANE AND STATION ROAD JUNCTION WITH THE B2015**

Cllr Bennet advised that a public footpath between Maidstone Road and Station Road has been blocked up by a border, Clerk to report online.

### **9.3 PROGRESS REPORT OF FAULTS & ISSUES REPORTED TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

The report was reviewed and **it was RESOLVED by all members present** to approve the repairs to the broken fuse box for the streetlight in Station Road. Clerk to inform Streetlights.

The ongoing bus stop flag and leaning bus shelter were discussed and the Clerk stated that it was proving difficult to speak to someone at MBC to progress these matters. Cllr Russell to email the Clerk contact details for who best to speak to.

**10. OLD SCHOOL HOUSE CLOCK**

Nothing to report this month, the clock is working well.

**11. PLANNING MATTERS**

**11.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

24/500426/FULL	<p><b>Three Pines, Gibbs Hill, Nettlestead, Kent ME18 5HS</b>  Proposed garage/undercroft conversion and fenestration alterations.  Expiry Date: 28 February 2024  Determination Deadline: 1 April 2024</p> <p><b>IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION</b></p>
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**11.2 DECISIONS MADE BY MBC**

21/500110/ENF	<p><b>The Three Sons Hampstead Lane Nettlestead Kent ME18 5HN</b>  Appeal against enforcement notice: Without planning permission, the laying of hardstanding and the construction of fences and gates in the area hatched on the attached plan.</p> <p><b>APPEAL DISMISSED AND/OR NOTICE UPHELD</b></p>
21/500111/ENF	<p><b>The Three Sons Hampstead Lane Nettlestead Kent ME18 5HN</b>  Appeal against enforcement notice: Without planning permission, the construction of two outbuildings in the position hatched on the attached plan (the ‘Unauthorised Development’).</p> <p><b>APPEAL DISMISSED AND/OR NOTICE UPHELD</b></p>
23/504153/SUB	<p><b>Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ</b>  Submission of details to discharge condition 11 (phasing plan) of planning application 23/502119/OUT.</p> <p><b>APPLICATION PERMITTED</b></p>

<p><b>23/503694/SUB</b></p>	<p><b>Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ</b>  Submission of details to discharge condition 13 - Proposed Slab Levels for Phases C, D, and E, subject to 23/502119/OUT.</p> <p><b>APPLICATION PERMITTED</b></p>
<p><b>23/505192/FULL</b></p>	<p><b>The Three Sons Hampstead Lane Nettlestead Kent ME18 5HN</b>  Retrospective change of use of the land for the accommodation of one Gypsy and Traveller pitch for personal, temporary occupation for a period of 5 years only. Siting of two Mobile homes, two touring caravans and two day rooms with 2no. ancillary outbuildings. Associated hard and soft landscaping.</p> <p><b>APPLICATION REFUSED</b></p>

**11.3 PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**12. FINANCE**

**12.1 RESOLUTION TO RECEIVE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2024**

Cllr Meredith signed the invoices and advised that the direct debits had been paid.

**RESOLVED by all members** to approve the Budget Monitoring report for FEBRUARY 2024.

Cllr Meredith stated that there should be an upcoming insurance invoice, Clerk to look into this. Clerk to also check if there is a deadline to spend the CIL funds and what it can be put towards. It was noted that Hadlum Design & Print, who print the monthly Parish Magazine, have increased their prices, but Cllr Meredith confirmed that an increase has been included in the 2024/25 budget.

The Clerk confirmed that the Precept had been submitted for the sum of £22,867.75.

**12.2 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PAYMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2024**

**RESOLVED by all members** to approve payments for FEBRUARY 2024. Cllr Meredith and Cllr Corfe signed the cheques. The HMRC cheque in the sum of £38 which was sent by post in December 2023 has still not been cashed, Clerk to check with HMRC.

It was **RESOLVED by all members** to approve the Bank Reconciliation and this was signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

NPC CHEQUE LIST - FEBRUARY 2024					
Cheque No	Gross	VAT	Nett		Details
<b>TO BE APPROVED</b>					
622369	£441.42	£73.57	£367.85	CAPEL GROUNDCARE	GM CONTRACT - JAN
622370	£708.33	£0.00	£708.33	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S SALARY - JAN
622371	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	VOID CHEQUE	INCORRECT AMOUNT ON CHEQUE - JAN
622372	£108.77	£10.00	£98.77	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S EXPENSES - JAN
622373	£212.54	£35.42	£177.12	STREETLIGHTS	STREETLIGHTS MAINTENANCE - PYMT 4 OF 4
622374	£215.00	£0.00	£215.00	HADLUM DESIGN & PRINT	PARISH MAGAZINE PRINTING - JAN
	£1,686.06	£118.99	£1,567.07		
DD170124	£9.60	£1.60	£8.00	SAGE PAYROLL	PAYROLL FEE - JAN
DD 250124	£216.96	£10.33	£206.63	NPOWER BUSINESS	STREET LIGHTING ENERGY - JAN
	<b>£1,912.62</b>	<b>£130.92</b>	<b>£1,781.70</b>		
<b>UNCLEARED B/F</b>					
622364	£38.00	£0.00	£38.00	HMRC	HMRC TAX PAYMENT FOR MICHELLE RUMBLE
	£38.00	£0.00	£38.00		
<b>INCOME UNITY BANK</b>					
TFR 190124	£40.00	£0.00	£40.00	DAVID TERRY	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - JAN
TFR 230124	£75.00	£0.00	£75.00	GILL TURNER TUCKER	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - JAN
TFR 250124	£75.00	£0.00	£75.00	N/STEAD & W/BURY PRESCHOOL	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - JAN
TFR 310124	£70.00	£0.00	£70.00	WHITES LANDSCAPING	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - JAN
<b>TOTAL UNITY BANK INCOME</b>	<b>£260.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£260.00</b>		
<b>DEDUCTIONS UNITY BANK</b>					
311223	£9.00	£0.00	£9.00	SERVICE CHARGE	UNITY BANK - DEC

### 12.3 RESOLUTION TO AUTHORISE SETTING UP A NEW STANDING ORDER TO PAY THE NEW CLERK

Cllr Meredith advised that Santander had now changed the address on the account to his address and the account can now be moved across to the new online Unity bank account. Clerk to arrange for the transfer to take place and to find out how the authorisation of payments will take place online. Clerk to also check which account the PSS fund will be paid into to ensure it is not missed during the switch. Cllr Meredith advised that the Clerk's salary and expenses will be paid as a standing order once the new account is up and running.

### 12.4 INTERNET BANKING

As noted above under agenda item 12.3.

### 13. SOCIAL MEDIA

Parish Clerk to contact Becky Pullen to arrange for the Highways Meeting information to be added to the website and for a reminder to be sent for the 'Save Our Village Hall' meeting. The Cllrs agreed all was running well with the Facebook page.

### 14. CORRESPONDENCE

#### 14.1 D-DAY 80 – 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2024

It was agreed by the Cllrs present that the D-Day 80 anniversary remembrance would be held at The Hop Pole and would also be a joint commemoration for the Spitfire Pilot, Tony Blumer, as the anniversary of his death falls on 25<sup>th</sup> June. Cllr Bennett to run this event. It was agreed it would be an opportunity to be involved in the 'Ringing Out For Peace', whereby every Cathedral and Church throughout the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man will be ringing their Bells at 6:30pm on 6<sup>th</sup> June. Cllr Bennett to speak with the Church in this regard. Cllr Meredith advised that £150 was provided for the King's Coronation, which was not utilised and this could be put towards the D-Day 80 Anniversary.

- 14.2 MAIDSTONE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – INSPECTOR ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION ON TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS 2024**  
The documents were noted.
- 14.3 PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT OF THE KENT MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN 2024-2039 – REGULATION 19 PUBLIC CONSULTATION JANUARY 2024**  
Cllr Green advised she had read through the report and noted that there is nothing that directly affects Nettlestead.
- 14.4 KCC KENT PARISH COUNCIL WINTER SUPPORT SCHEME**  
The correspondence was noted.
- 14.5 PARISH COUNCIL CARBON LITERACY TRAINING FOR COUNCILLORS**  
The correspondence was noted.
- 14.6 CLUSTER 6B – MARDEN AND YALDING, STAPLEHURST – ACTION PLAN**  
The correspondence was noted.
- 14.7 EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE – BISHOPS CLOSE PARKING**  
Both the Borough Councillor, Claudine Russell and the Parish Clerk are currently in correspondence with Golding Homes as to who owns the land and whether there is anything that can be done to mitigate the parking issues.
- 14.8 MAY 2024 – ELECTIONS – CANDIDATES AND AGENTS BRIEFING 1 – ELECTIONS ACT AND BOUNDARY CHANGES**  
Cllr Russell and the Parish Clerk attended the Teams training meeting to get up to speed on the changes ahead of this year's elections.
- 15. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**  
Village Hall – Follow up from meeting  
KGV Field – Tree Grant Scheme  
KGV Field – Goal Posts  
KGV Field – Update on works  
Traffic and Highways Issues – Speeding/Follow up from KCC Highways meeting  
Traffic and Highways Issues - Progress Report  
Old School House Clock  
Internet Banking  
Update on D-Day 80 – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
Update on correspondence with Golding Homes – Parking at Bishops Close
- 15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**  
The next meeting will be on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7:45pm at Nettlestead Village Hall.

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.18pm**