



Boughton Malherbe Parish Council

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Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 4th September 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs B Adams; T Andrews; N Eastwood; R Galton (Chair)

In attendance: Cllr M Round (Maidstone Borough Council); Clerk Mrs Vickie Ford

Anybody filming or recording this meeting kindly requested to declare it: none

M01/09/23 Apologies

Apologies from Cllr R Turner were received and accepted; Apologies from Cllr S Prendergast (Kent County Council) were noted.

M02/09/23 Declarations:

Any lobbying: none declared

Any interest in items on the agenda: none declared

Any changes to the register of pecuniary interests: none declared

M03/09/23 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2023 were taken as read, confirmed and signed as being an accurate record of the proceedings.

M04/09/23 Public Session: no public session (five members of public present)

M05/09/23 Maidstone Borough Council's Emerging Local Plan:

The Chairman welcomed James Daughtry and Andrew Wilford of Esquire Developments to the meeting. There followed an informal discussion of the provision for 25 new dwellings in Grafty Green during the life of the Borough Plan. Mr Wilford explained that Esquire wanted the views of the local community on the provision of new dwellings within the Parish, especially any thoughts on suitable land. It was acknowledged that a single development of 25 dwellings may not be appropriate for the Village, although that would bring benefits through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or a s106 agreement ("Community payback"). Any need for affordable housing should be identified. The meaning of "sustainable" in relation to a community was explored. Mr Wilford stated that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) represented an opportunity to influence planning locally, even without a neighbourhood plan. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council was open-minded and suggested holding a public meeting to find out what the local community really wanted. He thanked the Esquire representatives for attending and they left the meeting.

M06/09/23 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Report

Cllr Round explained that the Borough Local Plan was still not confirmed. The NPPF requires the Authority to have a Plan in place every five years; no plan was in place for 2022-27 yet. He outlined the problems relating to housing targets. Ward boundaries would be changing next May and, if there was to be a General Election in 2024, constituency boundaries would also be different, creating the new Weald constituency. The new Headcorn ward would incorporate Sutton Valence and have an electorate of around 6,500. Cllr Round reported that he was no longer an MBC Cabinet member, turning his attention to the local community.

Cllr Prendergast (KCC) had drawn the Parish Council's attention to the various consultations on the agenda and offered her help with any matters arising from the meeting.

M07/09/23 Planning Outcomes since 3rd July 2023: None

M08/09/23 Local Policing/Community

Police/Crime Report: It was noted one crime had been reported in the Parish since 3rd July.

M09/09/23 Liverton Hill:

The Chairman reported that, as part of the process to update the Highway Improvement Plan (HIP), he and the Clerk had had a few conversations with KCC and appeared to be moving forward with the issue of the water (spring) flowing down Liverton Hill.

M10/09/23 Gullies

It was noted that no road sweeping had been carried within the Parish out for some time. Silt in the gutters had filled some gullies and blocked them. The Clerk was asked to raise with MBC.

M11/09/23 Highways

Cllr Eastwood raised the issue of Woodcock Lane name plates, reporting that the slightly damaged sign adjacent to the Village Green had been replaced whereas the seriously damaged sign further along the road had not. The Chairman had also informed the Clerk, who was asked to raise with MBC.

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had received an email from a resident regarding highways signs and speeding, in particular the 30 mph sign at the south entrance to Grafty Green. The Clerk was asked to raise with KCC, requesting investigation.

The Chairman reiterated that he and the Clerk had discussed the HIP in detail with KCC. The feasibility of the Parish Council's requests for a 40 mph speed limit along part of the Lenham Road and narrowing of the Headcorn Road within the Village centre to accommodate a Speed Indicating Device (SID) were being tested by means of speed surveys, which had already been carried out.

FINANCE

M12/09/23 Balances at the Bank: Balances as at 29th August 2023 were noted:

Lloyds current	£1,884.75
Lloyds business instant access	£10,121.91
Lloyds 32-day notice	£40,287.50
Nationwide	£14,465.77
Cambridge and Counties	£23,685.05

M13/09/23 Receipts since last meeting: £300 Ulcombe Parish Council (Community bus); £179.47 Lloyds Bank interest

M14/09/23 Bank Reconciliation

The statement prepared by the Clerk was accepted.

M15/09/23 Cheques to sign: £109.67 Amesis Ltd (Lengthsman); £35 annual direct debit to Information Commissioner's Office; £118.79 Clerk's expenses (stamps and antivirus software)

M16/09/23 Authorisation of any payments since the last meeting: £52.04 NALC (cllr training); £84 KALC (cllr training); £74.67 Amesis Ltd (Lengthsman)

M17/09/23 Request for grant from Platts Heath School:

The Parish Council had received a request for a grant towards a new outdoor play area.

The Chairman noted that the Parish Church had made a contribution. He reported that the Parish Council had investigated and does have a power to contribute to the project: the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s19. The School had also confirmed it was able to accept contributions from the Council.

Cllr Andrews suggested that the Parish Council purchase an item from the School's published wish list.

RESOLVED: to award a grant for the purchase of a storage box (£74.99) and the mud kitchen (£69.99)

M18/09/23 Hugo Fox website charges:

From 4th October, Hugo Fox were introducing new subscription charges for their websites, including the Parish Council's.

RESOLVED: to authorise payment under the bronze subscription package (£9.99 + VAT per month)

The Clerk reported that the bronze package incorporated a secure website covered by an SSL certificate, which the Parish Council's website did not hold.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to pursue the matter with Hugo Fox

M19/09/23 Grafty Green Village Green Tree pruning:

The Chairman had received a request for cutting back of the trees overhanging the roads to allow high-sided vehicles to pass by safely. He stated that it would be important to consider the health of the trees. The Clerk had checked with arboricultural consultants SJA Trees, who had recommended contacting local tree surgeons to carry out the work. Two quotations had already been obtained but the Chairman stated that he wished to be sure that they were being considered like-for-like.

Cllr Eastwood asked when the trees were next due for inspection by SJA Trees; the Clerk was asked to check.

RESOLVED: to give delegated authority to the Clerk to accept the lowest quotation, provided the health of the trees is given due consideration.

M20/09/23 Graft Green Village Green Fence:

The Chairman explained that the Landlord of the King's Head wanted the fence between the public house and the Village Green to be replaced in oak. It was noted that the gate and posts had been replaced in treated softwood but the original fence was in oak. A member of the public asked if the shrubbery and other obstacles to the replacement of the fence would be cleared and the Chairman confirmed that they would.

RESOLVED: to authorise replacement in oak of both sections of the fence between the Village Green and the King's Head public house, excluding the gate and posts, by Kingswood Fencing at a cost of £1,222.50 + VAT

M21/09/23 KCC Emerging Local Transport Plan Public Consultation:

RESOLVED: to submit a response as per the final draft presented by the Clerk

M22/09/23 KCC Community Wardens Consultation:

RESOLVED: to submit a response as per the final draft presented by the Clerk

M23/09/23 MBC Parish Charter Survey:

RESOLVED: to submit a response as per the final draft presented by the Clerk

Cllr Galton closed the meeting at 9.30 pm