WICKHAMBREAUX ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
TUESDAY 16 APRIL 2013

Present: Parish Cllr Christine Le Jeune
Parish Cllr Martin Twyman
Parish Cllr Angela Hamilton
Parish Cllr John Joice
Parish Cllr Anthony O'Sullivan
Parish Cllr Linda Lodge
Parish Cllr Faith Wright
Miss Chenice Sparkes, Clerk to the Council

15 residents

1. **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Cllr Le Jeune welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr and Mrs Hickling, Mr Proctor, Colonel and Mrs Bolton and Mr Terrill.

2. **MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**
The last Annual Parish Meeting minutes were approved and signed at the open Extraordinary Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 7 November 2012.
The Extraordinary Parish Meeting minutes of 7 November 2012 were read by Cllr Hamilton and were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**
The Chairman Cllr Le Jeune summarised the work of the Council for the preceding year.

During the year much time has been spent in preparing for the Public Inquiry into the possible registration of Seaton Meadow as a village green. The Inquiry began in November, had to be adjourned, and was completed in February. The Inspector now has to write her report for KCC. She will recommend registration of all or part of the land or take the view that there is insufficient evidence of village green use. Her report is not expected for about another two months. The Council is particularly indebted to Mrs Volkman and Mr Hayward, who represented Seaton Community Action on our Village Green Committee, for all their work in compiling the evidence for the Inquiry, the staff and students of the Kent Law Clinic at the university for all their advice and their work with the witness statements and all the villagers who gave evidence.

Much Council time has also been spent in responding to requests from Mr and Mrs Perkins under the Freedom of Information Act. They asked for all material the Council held going back to 2009 relating to the sale of the Ickham Grazing Marsh and Seaton Meadow generally. The Council complied conscientiously with the requests and with further correspondence from the Information Commissioner.

Planning is always an important part of Parish Council work. In the near future the new Government National Planning Policy is causing concern as it removes many planning constraints. The Canterbury District is due to provide another 15,000 houses over the next 20 years and the population is due to rise by 30,000. A Local Plan was due to be published last October, but won't have passed through all its consultation stages and been adopted for another year. It is now called The Local Development Framework.

The Council has had a lot of expense on tree work this year. Our insurance is subject to a tree inspection clause. We have had to fell two chestnuts on the Green because of disease and

more work is needed on the big lime in the centre. A dead tree was also taken down at the playing field.

We also monitor the river with the flood relief channel opening in early February working successfully. Rainfall in 2012 was over 40% up on the annual average. Water levels take some time to have an effect lower down the valley, once the Nailbourne starts running. High ground water levels seeped into the sewage pipes and so some pumping had to take place. Oxygen levels are at over 80% and pollution at only half a percent so despite the cautious warning notices, there has been no serious risk to health of wild life, dogs or people.

Every meeting we advise the County of pot holes. They are not responsible for the bad weather and do their best to keep up with emergency repairs but the roads are in a poor state.

In Wickhambreaux there was re-surfacing at the junction of The Street and The List where there had been big puddles for years and it looked like a good repair, evening out the whole area. Sadly, the next time it rained we realised that the levels were wrong and what had been a series of puddles had been converted into one very large one. KCC have promised to try to sort this out in the new financial year.

Parking remains an ever present problem, without solution. People without off-street parking cannot be told to limit the number of cars they own and every taxed car has a right to be on the highway. We can only ask neighbours to park considerately. Highways issues are the responsibility of the County Council, not the Parish. Fortunately, our planters on the bridge seem to have been a continuing success in preventing the most dangerous parking, on the bend by the mill. We are grateful to Cllr Hamilton who continues to look after them.

The happiest events in the year were the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June. The children's party outside the Rose Inn, the Garden Party in Mr and Mrs Hayward's garden, the film evening put on by Mr Maxted and the original Coronation decorations, preserved for so long by the Montgomery family, were the highlights in Wickhambreaux, and the barbeque and lighting of the beacon in Stodmarsh were all very well attended. The financial support received from the City and County Councils meant that we were able to offer these entertainments free of charge. Cllrs Wright and Joice drew the whole successful programme together.

Two residents, Mr Bodimede and Mr Roberts have worked on restoring the old cast iron signpost at the junction of Grove Road and Wickham Court Lane and Cllr O'Sullivan has made running repairs to the nice wooden signpost at the top of Wickham Court Lane.

The Village Hall is well maintained and remains in good order thanks to Cllr Joice who spends so much time checking and seeing that all is well.

Both our County and City Councillors have been conscientious in keeping in touch with the parishes and offering their help and support and we thank them both for their help with local issues.

The Chairman thanked all the people who volunteer in ways which help the villages, Liz Jones and the Birt family who mow the greens in Wickhambreaux and Stodmarsh, Sheila Hickling our Tree Warden, and Liz Jones and Jenny Wood for the picking up of litter around the village. She also thanked the Vice-Chairman, Martin Twyman and the councillors and clerk who all work together in the best interests of the village.

4. **RECEIVING OF THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Cllr Le Jeune summarised the expenditure and income of the preceding year.
Main expenditure included the Clerk's salary, legal fees in conjunction with the Village Green Inquiry and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations (although the majority of that expenditure was covered by grants from Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council).

5. **OBSERVATIONS ON FINANCES FOR THE CURRENT YEAR**

The Precept figure has been cut by 10% and the method of calculating band D property tax has changed. This results in residents paying the same but for less money being awarded to the Parish Council. This year Canterbury City Council are hoping to fund the short fall but the figures are yet to be confirmed. There is also a very probable possibility of Parish Councils' Precepts being capped in two years time. The Concurrent Grant funding has also been cut this year. To make up the expected shortfall to cover essential maintenance including tree works, grass cutting and insurance the Parish Council have had to make a number of saving. To allow for any future cuts in the Concurrent Grant funding and incase any projects arise in the future, the Parish Council have had to raise the Precept by a further 10% to a new figure of £9773.00 following advice from Canterbury City Council.

6. **RECEIVING REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND CITY COUNCILLOR**

County Councillor Michael Northey

Councillor Northey reported on Kent County Council's decisions with the budget for the current year. £97 million has to be saved in this year's budget – Council Tax has not increased for the last three years and there is no loss of front-line services although main services such as roads, education, services for children, young people, adults and the elderly have to be prioritised.

Congratulations was given to Wickhambreaux School for coming second in Kent County Council's model railway competition. Superfast Broadband is to be rolled out all over Kent. Kent County Council have funded £10m, the Government £10m and BT £20m to make sure that by 2015 91% of Kent will get superfast speeds of at least 24mb.

Councillor Northey reported that he would not normally take sides on planning matters but gives his full support on the quest for village green status for Seaton Meadows. On roads there is always the problem of parking, but here again it is more a matter of neighbourly relations.

City Councillor Brian Staley

Councillor Staley congratulated the chair and the whole of the parish council for the splendid work that they undertake on behalf of the village, wishing them well with striving to campaign for village green status on Seaton Meadows.

As an opposition Lib Dem Councillor he explained an alternative budget which included not raising the Council Tax, insisting on maintaining the grants to the voluntary sector organisations which do so much for the most vulnerable at this difficult time, reducing councillor allowances by 10% setting some sort of example in these difficult times and one more market day which would have brought in an extra £150,000.

In the last year there has been a reduction of the speed limit on the A257 and the opening of Ellen Court and he is pleased that Ickham and Wickhambreaux now has an improved bua service although would like to see more appropriate smaller vehicles used and an extension to Stodmarsh.

7. **VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS REPORTS**

Wickhambreaux Church – read by Cllr O'Sullivan on behalf of Peter Terrill
Stodmarsh Church – read by Cllr O'Sullivan on behalf of John Hickling
Wickhambreaux School – read by Cllr Lodge
Neighbourhood Watch – read by Cllr Lodge

Sloyden Charity Christine Le Jeune
Conservation Society – read by Cllr Hamilton on behalf of Megan Taylor
Conservation Walks – read by Cllr Hamilton on behalf of Jane Rice
Villages Post Office and Shop – read by the Clerk on behalf of Peter Terrill
Garden Society – read by the Clerk on behalf of Isabelle Stevens
Cricket Club - by Geordie Hayward

8. **ELECTION OF THE VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Cllr Joice gave a brief report of the actions and finances of the Village Hall. Thanks were expressed to Diane Moore who acted as the cleaner and caretaker for the past 25 years who has now retired.
Committee members John Joice, Tracey Harris, Linda Lodge, Bob McMurran, Sharon Egin and Malcolm Withers all stood for election. It was proposed by Mrs Tywman and seconded by Mrs Joans to re-elect all members and the decision was passed unanimously.

9. **ELECTION OF THE FRANK MONTGOMERY PLAYING FIELD COMMITTEE**

Cllr Lodge gave a brief report on litter, dog fouling, new stretch of fencing and the possibility of funding options in the future to complete the fencing. Thanks were expressed to Lisa Crosbie and Mrs Tina Burton for all their help and support.
Committee members Linda Lodge, Sarah Barnes, Jamie Mears and Ann Campling stood for election. It was proposed by Mrs Vine and seconded by Mr Hayward to elect all members and the decision was passed unanimously.

10. **RESOLUTIONS OF WHICH ONE WEEK'S NOTICE WAS GIVEN TO THE CLERK**

No resolutions had been received.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr Hayward wished to put on the record his thanks to Cllr Le Jeune, Cllr Wright and Mrs Volkman for their tireless work on the Village Green application. A vote of thanks was unanimously passed.

Mr Hayward also questioned County Cllr Michael Northey on the best way to report pot holes having used the Kent Highways Portal website as instructed with very few results. Cllr Northey suggested Mr Hayward and other residents continue to used the Kent Highway Portal website and if no action has been taken in two weeks to inform him so he can chase Kent Highways to undertake the necessary work.

Mrs Volkman enquired with Cllr Northey whether the previously planned renting out of the Church tower to a private broadband company to improve speeds in the village as still going ahead or now necessary with the new rolling out of superfast broadband. Cllr Northey said he would investigate

Cllr O'Sullivan thanked Cllr Le Jeune on behalf of residents and the rest of the Parish Council for her Chairmanship and all her hard work the past year.

The meeting closed at 9:00pm and a social evening with refreshments followed.