WICKHAMBREAUX PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2014

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

1. **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Cllr O'Sullivan welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Parish Cllr Christine Le Jeune, and County Cllr Michael Northey.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2014**
The minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting.

4. **INFORMATION FROM MATTERS ARISING**
4 (10) The Clerk reported that the list of Parish Council meeting dates for 2014 have now been laminated for posting on the Village Noticeboard.
4.11(i) Cllr Twyman reported that the three fallen trees have now been removed but poor weather is hampering clean up efforts in the wake of their removal.
7. Cllr O'Sullivan reported he had sent an email to Canterbury City Council acknowledging receiving the Parish Charter.
9(i) The Clerk and Cllr O'Sullivan reported that Sid Miller, Kent Highways Steward for the local area, has responded to the Clerk in regards to Kingsley Hill. Sid has agreed to carry out another survey of the area to assess whether any repair work needs to be carried out. However, as Kingsley Hill has no properties along the route, it is not a high priority for repair. The Parish Council will continue to press for repair work to be carried out.
9(ii) Sid Miller also replied to the Clerk regarding the kerb at the corner of Spicers Place. He reported he has already assessed the possibility of remodelling the kerb and moving it back to avoid the need for vehicles to mount the kerb, which causes damage to the kerb and the grass verge behind, but has been advised by engineers it would not be viable. The Parish Council are encouraged to get residents to record any vehicles mounting the kerbs using time, dates and the authority responsible, so Kent Highways can bill these authorities for the repair work. The Clerk also reported that Serco have agreed to speak with all their refuse lorry drivers who use the route to prevent them from mounting the kerb.
10. Cllr O'Sullivan reported that a meeting is being held at the Red Lion in Stodmarsh on Thursday 6 March 2014, regarding Community Transport.

5. **PLANNING**
Tree Works:
Sunflowers, Lampen Wall – The Parish Council has no objections to the reduction in height of a Laburnum to 5-6ft and remove ivy, located next to the driveway and neighbouring boundary

Decisions:
CA//13/02329/TPO – The Old Rectory, The List – Canterbury City Council has approved the proposal to fell a poplar tree subject of T.P.O. No 8 of 1988/G1.

CA//13/02329/TPO and CA//13/01002/LB – Pilgrims Way, Stodmarsh Road – Canterbury City Council has approved the proposal for a rear extension.

6. **SEATON MEADOW VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATION**
Nothing to report.

7. **PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSES TO EMERGENCIES**
Cllr O'Sullivan suggested that, in light of recent flooding and flood scares in the local area following weeks of heavy rain, the Parish Council should have a strategy in place to respond to all kinds of emergencies. He reported that The Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) hold two free training courses approximately every three months, one on Resilience to form a Model Emergency Plan, and the other on Reassurance which is a more practical based course involving Kent Fire and Rescue. Cllr O'Sullivan, Cllr Lodge and Cllr Wright all expressed an interest in attending on behalf of the Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to monitor the KALC website for possible dates. Cllr Twyman reported that the last Emergency Plan was formulated in 1987, so needs updating.

8. **RESIDENTS PROPOSALS**
Two residents wrote a letter to the Parish Council consisting of two proposals. Firstly, they believe the fence along the boundary with the Village Hall belongs to the Parish Council and it is currently in a poor state of repair. They requested that the Parish Council look into getting that section of fencing repaired.
Secondly, they requested the Parish Council look into selling a small piece of land next to the Village Hall to allow them to park their vehicles away from the road to help alleviate the parking problem in The Street. Cllr O'Sullivan reported that he had sought advice from KALC and had been advised to hold the discussion in a Closed Session with no members of the public present.
After discussion it was decided that the Parish Council would seek legal advice and the residents in question would do likewise in regards to the ownership of the fence, as no definitive owner could be named. Cllr Joice agreed to seek legal advice on behalf of the Parish Council.
The Parish Council declined the request to purchase the small piece of land adjacent to the Village Hall. Parish Council assets cannot be lightly disposed of, especially when only two residents would benefit directly. The proposal would not alleviate the parking problem in The Street to any significant extent. If the land were to be turned into a parking access for Tudor Cottage, it would involve the removal of a mature tree and a telegraph pole. There would also be issues with sight lines, which would be of concern to the Kent Highways Agency. The creation of access to the rear of the property could potentially lead to back development on the site in the future. Finally, the Parish Council felt that the piece of land in question was part of the Village Hall's walled garden, which is a safe space used by children from the school and also in the past for village events.

9. **THE CONSERVATION SOCIETY'S EVENT ON THE VILLAGE GREEN**
Mr Porter reported that the Conservation Society Committee does not meet until Wednesday 26 February 2014.. He reported that although the outcome is undecided, he expects the proposal to be approved following conversations with committee member individuals.

Mr Porter also reported that the event will cost £121 to run and all the equipment has been kindly donated by local resident Mr Anthony White. Kent Police are still yet to reply to the Conservation Society's queries regarding possible implications for the Parish Council and the village as a whole. The Conservation Society will be holding discussions with the residents around the Village Green who will be affected by the event to gauge their views before proceeding.

10. **BARTON COURT GRAMMAR SCHOOL CONSULTATION**

Barton Court Grammar School has recently released its proposals to relocate the school to the former Herne Bay Golf Club site. They hope in the process to be able to accommodate more pupils and increase the number of facilities available to their pupils.

In terms of the impact on Wickhambreaux, the Parish Council disagree with the proposals. For pupils who travel by bus it would involve two bus trips, one into Canterbury and then a further one to Herne Bay. In addition, the current bus service times in the village would not enable pupils to get to school on time as the first bus service is at 7:56am, not enough time for two bus journeys. For parents taking their children to school by car, it is a much longer journey to make twice a day.

Another issue raised was that by relocating the school, Wickhambreaux and other surrounding villages would then be outside Barton Court's catchment area. Barton Court is the only school in the catchment area that offer the Baccalaureate and the IB Diploma. Without this school, children in Wickhambreaux will have the number of different options open to them severely reduced. Cllr O'Sullivan agreed to respond on behalf of the Parish Council.

11. **'VILLAGE SURGERY' AT 7PM PROPOSITION**

The Parish Council discussed the idea of holding a 'Village Surgery' at 7pm before every Parish Council meeting. This would allow residents to speak freely about any concerns or queries that they may have without having to wait for a certain point in the meeting. The Parish Council decided to carry this out over an experimental period of three months – May, June and July 2014 - holding the 'surgery' from 7pm to 7:20pm with a limit of three minutes to speak for each resident to prevent any overrunning into the scheduled meeting. No formal minutes of the discussions will be taken but any issues that are noticed and placed on the following month's agenda for a proper discussion by Councillors. This new service will be advertised on the village noticeboard and at the bottom of all the letters sent out to residents informing them of the Annual Parish Meeting.

12. **THE ROAD CASUALTY REDUCTION STRATEGY**

Cllr O'Sullivan reported that all comments were gathered from all Councillors prior to the meeting. The overall consensus was that all Councillors agreed with the Strategy's proposals, but felt in some cases they did not go far enough. In particular, the dangers that are posed by pot holes on the public highway and the role of lorries in accidents needs to be better monitored. Better driver education is required in general, but also specifically for all articulated lorry drivers, especially continental ones who do not know the local area.

13. **EMAIL TRAFFIC BETWEEN MEETINGS**

The Parish Council discussed the amount of email traffic being passed from the Clerk to all Councillors between meetings. It was decided that to reduce the number of emails received by each Councillor, the Clerk should prioritise emails to certain Councillors and recognise their particular roles within the Council. For example, all emails relating to trees will only be forwarded on to Cllr Wright as Tree Warden and Cllr Twyman will sent all highways and river correspondence and so on. All consultations will still be sent to all Councillors for their views.

14. **DATA PROTECTION COURSE FOR THE CLERK**

The Clerk reported that she had received an offer to enrol on a Data Protection Course. The course would be free of charge and involve working from home. The Parish Council agreed that the Clerk should attend and present her findings on finishing the course to ensure all Councillors are informed of correct and current recommended procedures.

15. **NOMINATIONS FOR THE KALC COMMUNITY AWARD**

The Council discussed possible nominations and Cllr O'Sullivan agreed to take the matter forward.

16. **HIGHWAYS**

(i) Cllr Twyman reported that Grove Road, Preston Road, Seaton Road, Drill Lane and Wickham Road have been closed due to flooding. Residents are asked that if they see cones or signs that have been knocked over or moved, to please return them to their original positions. Signs have been put up at Sandpits to warn road users of the Grove Road and Preston Road closures, but Cllr Tywman reported he is putting pressure on Kent Highways to install some signs closer to the roads.

(ii) Cllr O'Sullivan reported that he attended the A257 group meeting deputising for Cllr Twyman who was attending a flooding meeting at the time, with the participation of Laura Sandys MP. He reported that no new traffic assessments will be carried out around the Aylesham Development until the first property is inhabited. Following a meeting between Salvatori and local Parish Councils and residents, the proposed housing development on the current Salvatori site has been reduced from 130 properties to 80. In addition more frequent lorry watches are to be taken forward, especially on the B2046 where two lorries cannot pass each other with ease. He also reported that Wingham Wildlife Park is campaigning to get better access, recording 220,000 visitors last year and aiming to increase this number to 250,000 this year. The bollards at the end of Jubilee Road in Littlebourne are also causing concern as they prevent lorries from turning easily, resulting in complex and time-consuming manoeuvring.. Report forms for reporting minor accidents on rural roads from Kent County Council are also not forthcoming.

17. **REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS**

None

18. **CLLR'S REPORTS**

Tree Warden – Cllr Wright reported that all planned tree works have been put on hold until the end of March due to the weather. This includes the replacing of the tree recently felled on the corner of Spicer's Place, the felling of the three Ash trees on the Playing Field and the planting of the Red Oak and Lime tree on the Village Green.

Village Hall – Cllr Joice reported that he had attended the Canterbury City Council's funding workshop on Saturday 8 February 2014 and found it very useful. The workshop focused on different funding streams available to apply to including National Lottery, Single Grants Gateway, Kent County Council grants, Canterbury City Council grants and Village Hall grants to help improve existing buildings, with advice on how to write successful applications. He also reported he would be signing up to Funding Central, this site will recommend the best funding streams to access depending on what the organisation is aiming to gain funding for.

Cllr Joice also reported a leak in the roof of the ladies' toilets. A short term solution will be put into place, but long term the Village Hall Committee are looking to completely refurbish the toilet block, including installation of a disabled toilet.

Playing Fields – Cllr Lodge reported she had attended the ROSPA course on 12 February 2014 and found it very informative. She reported she now feels much more confident when carrying out her personal play equipment safety checks, knowing what more specific things to look for as she received some very useful tips.

Flood Protection – The Parish Council firstly wished to record their thanks to Cllr Twyman who has been a focal point in the village during the recent difficult weather conditions, attending every flooding meeting held to make sure the impact on the village has been kept to a minimum and all residents kept informed of the current situation.

Cllr Twyman reported he has been producing reports to keep all residents up to date with current situations in Wickhambreax and the surrounding villages. He attended a meeting in

Plucks Gutter with nine out of the eleven local Parish Council representatives, the Environment Agency, Southern Water, Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council attending.

Cllr Twyman and Roy Newing, the boat and mooring owner, gave a 20 minute presentation to the group, with the expert knowledge of the city council's Chief Engineer Ted Edwards to give weight to his points regarding the state of the Great Stour. The Environment Agency denied responsibility for the state of the river, despite lots of evidence to show the river needed de-silting in a number of places. There are also a large number of trees that have been allowed to root and grow which has reduced the river flow by 50%.The recent flooding around the Great Stour would not have been prevented but if the Environment Agency had acted the impact would have been reduced. Funding has been the main issue, requiring a minimum number of properties required along the river to benefit before money is spent. The Environment Agency has since conceded action needs to be taken, with the Great Stour having been overtopping for a number of days and the whole area flooded.

Cllr Twyman reported he has been supplying all residents with sandbags to protect their homes from flooding with roughly 1,000 supplied so far. Depleted stocks have been replenished within 24 hours so far. Within 24 hours over 1,000 acres was flooded with three inches of water a day, rising in some areas. The Army has now also been called in to help with the distribution of sandbags and to offer reassurance to residents in the Canterbury area including Wickhambreaux and the surrounding villages. Cllr Twyman wished to record thanks to Jill Thomas, secretary of the River Management Group, who has been at the forefront of organising all the flooding meetings between various groups and holding the Environment Agency and Southern Water to account for their actions and getting results.

Cllr Twyman reported the current situation is that Blue Bridge has been completely flooded both sides of the river, Stourmouth is getting another pump on 19 February 2014 and the pumps installed in Ickham, which have been manned 24 hours a day, have had a great impact. The local community spirit has been tremendous at this current time. The reason there is only a ford in Drill Lane and not in Wickham Lane is due to the number of services underneath the road including gas and sewage. Wickhambreaux has been very fortunate that the bypass channel, installed since the last flooding period, has greatly reduced the impact of the heavy rains.

Cllr Joice suggested that after this is all over the Parish Counci, l should hold an Extraordinary Meeting to discuss residents' experiences and suggestions for feasible options for making improvements to help with similar future situations. The Parish Council unanimously agreed.

19. **FINANCE**

The expenditure totalling £788.54 was authorised made up of:

- Wickhambreaux Parochial Church Council – burial grounds maintenance - £500
- Stodmarsh Parochial Church Council – burial ground maintenance - £50
- Cllr Christine Le Jeune – reimbursement for various printing and postage costs relating to requests made under the Data Protection Act - £29.46
- Minster Parish Council – ROSPA training course - £36.00
- Chenice Sparkes – Clerk Salary February 2014 - £142.08
- HMRC – Employee and PAYE February 2014 - £31.00

The two cheques for Wickhambreaux Parochial Church Council and the one for Stodmarsh Parochial Church Council had already been authorised and signed in the interim period between the January and February meeting, as agreed at the January meeting.

20. **CLERK REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

(i) The Nation Grid offered to send a representative to a future Parish Council meeting if required to answer some questions on the Richborough Connection Project. The Parish Council felt it had expressed its views and that such a meeting would not be necessary.

(ii) The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) may be removing the need for the current two signature rule on each cheque in order to allow Parish Councils to modernise their banking methods to include things such as internet banking. Other safeguards would be put in place to ensure the safety of Parish Council funds but these are yet to be confirmed.

(iii) The Parish Council agreed a draft date for the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Thursday 24 April 2014, to be confirmed at the March meeting along with all the necessary arrangements.

21. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(i) Cllr Hamilton reported that the previous Clerk Kristine Bartlette has recently had a baby boy.

(ii) Cllr O'Sullivan gave the latest edition of Kent Voice magazine from Cllr Le Jeune to be circulated between Councillors after the meeting.

(iii) Cllr O'Sullivan requested that the Sustainable Communities Act should be put onto the March agenda for discussion and the Local Green Space Designation onto the April agenda for discussion.

The meeting closed at 10:00 p.m

Signed……..... (Chairman) Date…….....