WICKHAMBREAUX PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2015

Present: Parish Cllr Tony O'Sullivan
Parish Cllr Martin Twyman
Parish Cllr Christine Le Jeune
Parish Cllr Faith Wright
Parish Cllr Linda Lodge

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 for received and accepted from Cllr Angela Hamilton, Cllr John Joice, City Cllr Brian Staley and County Cllr Michael Northey.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Cllr Twyman and the Clerk declared an interest in the planning application for Undertrees Farm, Stodmarsh. Cllr Twyman declared an interest as the closest neighbour to the property and the Clerk declared an interest as she is the Office Manager at Anthony Swaine Architecture, the architectural firm who have submitted the application.

3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2015**
The Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting with some minor amendments, proposed by Cllr Wright and seconded by Cllr Lodge.

4. **INFORMATION FROM MATTERS ARISING**
4(6i) Cllr Wright reported that she sent County Cllr Michael Northey a report detailing the history with the outstanding issue of drainage in The List. Cllr Northey sent the email to Sid Miller, Highways Steward, and received the expected response back that no action can be taken until the Black Hole Dyke has been dredged. Cllr Wright has since sent another email back to Cllr Northey asking him to chase for the dredging to be carried out but has not received a response.
4(11 Tree Warden) The Clerk reported she had sent a letter to the residents at Wickham Court Lane regarding the overhanging tree branches as requested. The residents have since replied stating they will look into this matter as soon as they return from America.
4(11 Village Greens) Cllr Wright reported that she passed on the details of the two trees on Stodmarsh Green to Jon Lambourne, Arboricultural Officer at Canterbury City Council, who has been out to inspect them. Jon Lambourne advises that for the hawthorn tree a crown reduction would be fairly successful but the cherry tree is beyond saving. He advised either leaving the cherry tree as it is of no danger to anyone or felling but leaving the stump for wildlife.
5. Cllr Wright reported that Cllr Northey had sent on her comments regarding litter responsibility and lorries using laybys at night to Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport. Mr Balfour responded that the responsibility for litter lies with the Local District Councils, not Kent County Council, and that lorries are encouraged to use lorry parks provided which are advertised through a free app drivers can download. Although not illegal for lorries to park in laybys, any dangerous parking spotted should be reported to the Police.
12. The Clerk reported that Richard Barton has accepted the position of Internal Auditor for the Parish Council.

5. **REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS**
Both City Cllr Brian Staley and County Cllr Michael Northey will be delivering their reports at the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Thursday 30 April 2015.

6. **HIGHWAYS**

(i) Cllr O'Sullivan reported that all the pot holes reported on Stodmarsh Road have now been repaired.

7. **PLANNING**

CA//15/00638/FUL – Ivy Cottage, Grove Road – The Parish Council has no objections to the outline application for the demolition of the existing house and erection of a replacement dwelling.

CA//15/00732/FUL – Undertrees Farm, Stodmarsh – The Parish Council has no objections to the conversion of the existing disused farm outbuilding to holiday let accommodation and external alterations.

Tree Works – White Cottages, Grove Road – The Parish Council has no objections to the felling of one maple, one sycamore and two old conifer trees.

Cllr Wright reported that Adrian Verrall, Planning Policy Manager at Canterbury City Council, is leaving. His successor has not yet been named but the Parish Council hopes they are as helpful

8. **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

Cllr O'Sullivan reported that all of the invitations to residents have been distributed. Councillors offered to provide food and drink as in previous years and Cllr Lodge volunteered to set up the room before the meeting.

9. **DATA PROTECTION POLICY**

Cllr O'Sullivan reported that the Tribunal found in favour of the Information Commissioner's Office and the Parish Council. On the balance of public interest the Tribunal were satisfied with the Public Enquiry process and found no evidence of wrong-doing by the Parish Council. The Parish Council wished to record its thanks to Cllr Le Jeune and Cllr O'Sullivan for all their hard work in preparing for the Tribunal, including over the Christmas holiday period.

The Data Protection Policy, originally ratified on November 19 2013, was revised with some minor amendments. Cllr Twyman proposed and Cllr Wright seconded to ratify the new policy with a unanimous decision in favour of passing. The policy will be up for review again in May 2016.

10. **CLLRS' REPORTS**

Tree Warden – Cllr Wright reported that Jon Lambourne, Arboricultural Officer at Canterbury City Council, is being made redundant and will finish his employment this May. There will be no successor; instead Planning Officers will take over the responsibility. The Build Heritage Team will take over Tree Protection Orders (TPO) and Conservation Areas. The Clerk was asked to write a letter to Canterbury City Council expressing their regret of the redundancy and their concerns for the future with the loss of such specialist knowledge and expertise. Cllr Wright agreed to write a letter to Jon Lambourne on behalf of the Parish Council to thank him for his many years of service and express how saddened the Parish Council is at his redundancy.

Cllr Wright also reported that the yew tree has now been pruned in the churchyard grounds and had asked Jon Lambourne whether any further pruning should be carried out to the other side to balance the tree out. Jon Lambourne advised that it would be better not the prune the other side to prevent root compacting.

Police Liaison and Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Lodge reported that the AGM meeting held on Saturday 28 March 2015 was well attended. Computers are now being used much more efficiently to analyse crime rates to move the Police focus to predictive and preventative policing rather than reactive. By being able to predict where certain crimes are likely to be committed, this enables Police to better focus their resources to bring crime rates down. The stealing of metal for example has dropped by 96% due to a new policy brought in which means scrap yards cannot pay for metal with cash.

Cllr Lodge also reported that the AGM had a report delivered from Guardian Alarms with a focus on 'Fighting from your Boundary'. This includes making sure nothing is left outside, for example garden tools, which could be used to break windows, make sure alarm systems are in place and doors and windows are locked. It was also advised to put flimsy materials such as trellis on top of fences to make it more difficult for potential criminals to climb onto your property.

KALC – Cllr Lodge reported that the next meeting was tonight so has sent her apologies to attend the Parish Council meeting.

Village Hall Committee – In his absence Cllr John Joice wished to report that the annual jazz evening was very well attended and another great success.

Playing Fields – Cllr Lodge reported that the clean-up of the Playing Field on Sunday 29 March was a great success. Unfortunately it rained in the morning, but the turnout was very good and everyone was provided with refreshments. Paul Kelsey provided a tractor and trailer plus two workers to help with the efforts and only one concern was received from a neighbouring resident who was reassured before the clean-up started. Cllr Lodge wished to record thanks to Mark Perkins and his son who a few days before the clean-up cleared back the vegetation on their boundary and propped the fence back up. The Parish Council wished to thank Cllr Lodge for all her hard work in organising the clean-up and to all the volunteers who gave up their time and/or machinery.

Cllr Lodge also reported that a combination lock, donated by Harlequin Locksmith Steve Rees, has been placed on the gate for security purposes. A plaque has been situated on the gate with some telephone numbers to call for anybody who requires access.

Cllr Lodge reported that the next Bag to School day is tomorrow morning (Wednesday 22 April 2015) and she has emailed County Cllr Michael Northey with regards to gaining possibly funding for the new play equipment. Victoria Recreation Ground is received £75,000 in funding for new play equipment, funded by Canterbury City Council, which Cllr Lodge has made reference to in her email.

Village Greens – Cllr Twyman presented the two quotes he had received from contractors with regards to mowing the churchyard. 'Inside Out Services' are currently undertaking the work under a verbal agreement and have quoted £15.00 an hour including VAT. A company in Ash called 'C&W Groundcare Ltd' have quoted £20.00 plus VAT. Volunteer Liz Jones is still currently mowing the Village Green and it was agreed that if she is happy to continue there is no need to get a contractor involved. Cllr Twyman proposed and Cllr Wright seconded to continue with 'Inside Out Services', the cheaper of the two quotes and the most local with the company based in Wickhambreaux. The Parish Council unanimously agreed with this decision.

Flood Protection – Cllr Twyman reported that he has attended three meetings since the last Parish Council meeting, the first one with the MP Julian Brazier on Friday 20 March 2015 along the Great Stour. Roy Newing, Andrew Pierce (Head of Flood Protection in the South East), somebody from the local press and a representative from the Environment Agency were also in attendance. The aim of the trip down the river was to inspect the work that has been carried out

so far and the work still required. Approximately 75% of the trees selected for works have been cut, but because the water level is high, some of the trees cannot be assessed. Already you can see a large difference in the volume of water passing through.

The second meeting was held on Saturday 21 March 2015 with the Local River Group. A presentation was given to Ted Edwards to thank him for all his hard work on his retirement. A report was also presented covering the progress in all the local parishes in the area. The Littlebourne Bypass Channel has been used, but not as much as previously hoped with the Environment Agency wanting to use this channel to flush the river out. Cllr Twyman also reported that the Stonar Cut operation guide should hopefully be re-written in the near future to detail how the running of the cut should be used. The maintenance of the river should be examined in more detail sooner rather than later.

The third meeting was held on Tuesday 14 April 2015 with Canterbury City Council 'Local Flood Management Group', Kent Highways, Kent County Council, Southern Water, The Environment Agency and some Parish Councillors. The Environment Agency reported they had decided not to proceed with a new sluice at White Bridge, below Reynolds Place Mill. Cllr Twyman voiced his disappointment at the decision, challenging the decision made as The Environment Agency promised this new sluice and funding has already been obtained from Canterbury City Council for the project.

Cllr Twyman also reported that the creation of the new environmental fish pass in Seaton Weir is due to be completed in approximately three weeks' time. The deterioration of the weir had reached a point where action must be taken and the fish pass was decided to be the most environmentally friendly, depositing shingle in three bands to allow fish to swim upstream.

Cllr Wright asked Cllr Twyman whether he was aware that the sluice near Littlebourne Mill has flooded the nearby footpath. Cllr Twyman reported that the footpath has flooded because the Littlebourne bypass has been opened for a short amount of time. This bypass is opened very rarely but when it is it does cause a small amount of flooding

11. **FINANCE**

The expenditure totalling £313.80 was authorised, made up of:

- Councillor Linda Lodge – Playing Field Refreshments Reimbursement - £50.00
- Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) – Annual Subscription - £218.52
- Chenice Sparkes – Reimbursement for cost of new printer and security for laptop - £129.98
- Councillor O'Sullivan – Printing of APM invitations - £23.04
- Chenice Sparkes – Clerk salary April 2015 - £171.06
- HMRC – Employee and PAYE April 2015 - £36.20

12. **CLERK REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Nothing to report

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(i) Cllr O'Sullivan reported that he had received a complaint from a resident in Stodmarsh regarding the increase in incidents of dog fouling in the village. The Parish Council does not have any powers with regards to dog fouling, but a note was posted along with the APM invitations to politely remind residents of their responsibility to pick up after their dogs.

In addition Cllr O'Sullivan met with Richard Tolson from Environment Health to discuss other possible solutions to the problem. Mr Tolson reported that due to aesthetic reasons not many dog bins are installed in village, but he did suggest putting stickers on waste bins to make them dual-purpose, allowing residents to use normal waste bins to dispose of bagged dog waste as well. All the public bins in Stodmarsh now have these stickers.

Cllr O'Sullivan wished to thank Mr Tolson for his very fast response for meeting him the next day after reporting the problem.

(ii) Cllr Twyman enquired if there are to be any costs involved with the contested election. The Clerk reported that she has been advised by the Electoral Office the costs could be in the region of £3000.00 but there is no definite fee. Councillors all agreed that this figure seems extortionate with the Village Hall already being used as a polling station on that day for the General Election. A breakdown of the fee once received will be pursed. Cllr Le Jeune also suggested that candidates standing for the Parish Council may want to write a letter to introduce themselves to residents in the run up to the election.

(iii) Cllr Twyman, Cllr Lodge, Cllr Wright and the Clerk wished to thank the four councillors standing down at the election for all their hard work and service they have dedicated in their time as parish councillors.

The meeting closed at 9:45pm

Signed……..... (Chairman)

Date…….....