WICKHAMBREAUX PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2015

Present: Parish Cllr Tony O'Sullivan
Parish Cllr Martin Twyman
Parish Cllr Christine Le Jeune
Parish Cllr John Joice
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 were received and accepted from Parish Councillor Angela Hamilton.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
None.

3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2015**
The Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting with some minor amendments.

4. **INFORMATION FROM MATTERS ARISING**
4(3) Cllr Wright reported that Jon Lambourne at Canterbury City Council has now inspected the ash and willow trees along Wickham Road. Jon Lambourne said the felling of the willow trees was acceptable because they are used for commercial purposes and new trees will be planted. With regards to the ash trees he feels that many of the trees were diseased so no further action will be taken regarding the felling of the trees without permission.
4(6i). The Clerk reported she had received plans from Southern Water following the request for more recent drainage and sewage maps. Cllr Le Jeune pointed out that the plans were of nearby Ickham, not Wickhambreaux. The Clerk was asked to request for the plans again.
4(7). Cllr Wright reported that the tree which partially snapped off on Wickham Court Lane has been inspected by Jon Lambourne. He advised against felling for wildlife and environmental reasons but suggested a small reduction in height and spread would be beneficial. Jon Lambourne noted that the ash trees further up the road looked more dangerous and recommended they be inspected by a tree surgeon.
6(iv). Cllr O'Sullivan reported that the large pot hole on Hollybush Lane is still there and now approximately four inches deep. The Clerk was asked to report the pot holes to Kent Highways again.
6(ii). Cllr Lodge reported that the damaged curved metal protective barrier between Grove and Grove Ferry has been replaced. She also reported that the hedges along the same stretch of road have been drastically cut back.
6(iv). Cllr Lodge reported that the majority of the damage to the verge outside The Old Rectory occurred when the new owners of the property moved in. The furniture removal vans had to mount the verge a number of times and unfortunately the verge was muddy following poor weather.
6(v). Cllr O'Sullivan reported that local residents in Spicers Place appear to have been true to their word and have spoken with the white van owner who parks on the corner. The van so far appears to have been moved on rubbish collection day which enables the dustcart to enter and exit the road without having to mount the kerb.
6(vi). Cllr O'Sullivan reported that he had spoken to Steve Lewis at Kent Fire and Rescue to enquire when the fire hydrants surveyed will receive remedial action. Steve Lewis was very apologetic and assured Cllr O'Sullivan a gang would be out later this week.

8. Cllr O'Sullivan reported that the first draft of the election information he sent to the editor of Church and Village was rejected, for being too long. He has since re-drafted and sent a shorter version to the editor and has been informed the article will be published if there is enough space in the next edition. The text will also be posted on the website and George Hayward's website. The nomination papers are due to be received at the end of this month for the elections.
9. In her absence Cllr Hamilton reported to the Clerk she had responded to the consultation on the delivery of Library, Registration and Archive Services. She responded that maintaining these services is very important and if the only way to do this without any major cuts is to form a trust then that is acceptable. She stressed that the existing service is excellent.
11(Tree Warden). Cllr Wright reported that she had spoken to Sid Miller, Highways Steward at Kent County Council to find out who owns the informal layby. Sid Miller was meant to visit the village today to inspect the potentially dangerous trees on the verge of this layby to assess whether they are dangerous. He will then report back to Cllr Wright with his findings.
11(Neighbourhood Watch). Cllr O'Sullivan reported that the sofa dumped in the woods along Stodmarsh Road was removed 24 hours after reporting. The area is currently free from fly tipping.

5. **REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS**
None present.

6. **HIGHWAYS**
(i) The Clerk reported she had received an email from a resident in The List asking for an update on sorting the retaining water issue in the road. The Clerk passed this onto the resident and Cllr Wright formulated a response while still chasing Kent Highways for action. Cllr Wright reported she met with Drainage Engineer Alastair Coleman this morning on site to discuss the situation further. Paul Merden, a Highways Officer, advised after a site inspection back in October 2014 a new drain was needed near The Conifers property. Alastair Coleman disagreed with this assessment and felt the best solution would be to improve the drainage in The Black Hole Dyke through dredging.
Normally this would be the responsibility of the property riparian owners but the owner in question for this stretch has damaged his back and is not in a position to carry out the work. Kent Highways do not normally dredge rivers when the the water course is not dry but in this case they will make an exception. Alastair Coleman will get his men to carry out the work as a first course of action and if this does not help alleviate the situation, a new drain will be installed involving the road being closed for three to four days.

7. **PLANNING**
CA//15/00293/FUL – Wickham Lodge, Wickham Court Lane – The Parish Council has no objections to the proposed removal of existing front door, glazed fanlight and replacement with new glazed door and porch extension.

Tree Works
3 Grove Road – Cllr Wright reported that the proposed eucalyptus tree to be felled, is directly on the boundary with 2 Grove Road. The Parish Council has no objections to the felling.

8. **BEST VALUE REVIEW OF THE CONCURRENT FUNCTION FUNDING GRANT**
The Clerk reported that Canterbury City Council is undertaking a review of how the Concurrent Function Grant is awarded. A meeting is being held in The Guildhall in Canterbury on Friday 27 February 2015 where all Parish Clerks and Councillors are invited to discuss the current situation and possible ways forward. A number of questions have been sent round to the parish Clerks to ask for views of all Parish Councils before the Review Committee meet in March. The Clerk was asked to respond on the Parish Council's behalf.

9. **CONSULTATION ON PARISH POLLS**

A review was undertaken last month with regards to current issues surrounding the calling of parish polls. The main trigger proposed is if the majority of electors present at a meeting call for a parish poll the Parish Council are bound by this result. The Parish Council await the outcome of the consultation.

10. **PREPARATIONS FOR THE FORTHCOMING INFORMATION TRIBUNAL**

The Parish Council has completed all the necessary responses and statements required, and has indicated to the Tribunal, that after acting on legal advice, it will not be appearing at the Tribunal.

11. **CLLRS' REPORTS**

Tree Warden – Cllr O'Sullivan reported that two trees, a cherry and hawthorne, on the small Stodmarsh Green have been noted as badly diseased. A local gardener has inspected them and come to the conclusion that action needs to be taken. Cllr Wright agreed to speak to Jon Lambourne at Canterbury City Council to request an inspection. Cllr O'Sullivan reported that the Stodmarsh Community want to go through all the proper channels and have the funds to replace the trees once felled.

Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Lodge reported leaflets providing information on police liaison are no longer being posted through letterboxes, they are only available online.

Playing Fields – Cllr Lodge reported that she had attended various meetings with school mothers and various companies, including Timberplay, Playdale and Wicksteed, with regards to obtaining more play equipment. The manufacturers have provided the group with some comprehensive drawings. She also reported that the textile collection in January was a great success raising £200.80 towards the fund. Another one is planned for Wednesday 22 April 2015.

Cllr Lodge reported that the group are in the process of applying for £50,000 from Viridor, but as a condition will have to raise 11% of their application in return. There is a possible volunteer in the village who will donate this sum of money should the application be successful but this is not confirmed.

The decision has been made to move all the play equipment to the further end of the playing field instead. The remaining hard standing from the redundant play equipment will be converted into a picnic area.

Village Greens – Cllr Twyman reported that the mower has been inspected and the outcome is not good. The mower will need £500.00 of electrical work carried out and a further £800.00 spent to correct the steering, not including work that will need to be carried out on the under carriage. Cllr Twyman reported he has spoken with all the stakeholders and everyone is in agreement the repairs are too much money to spend on an old mower.

The mower is currently split 60/40 between Wickhambreaux Church and the Parish Council. The Church pays for its grass maintenance in two parts on top of the mower maintenance; £1200.00 is spent a year on gardeners and the second part is the generous time given by volunteers. However unfortunately the volunteer force has seen a reduction of three members recently leaving only two remaining.

Cllr Twyman reported that a second hand mower is for sale for £750.00, including VAT, at a gardening place in Chilham. The mower is six years old and appears to be in good condition. There is however a slight problem, this potential mower is somewhat larger than the current one

which means it will not be able to be safely stored in the current barn. In addition it will also be more difficult to manoeuvre round in the Churchyard when cutting the grass.

Another option which could be explored is contract work. Enquiries have been made with a local contractor who already carries out work on Village Greens and Churchyards and would be able to start soon. With the grass requiring cutting next month this option would be a useful, even if only in the short term until a replacement mower can be found. Cllr Twyman reported that to hire a contractor it will amount to approximately £700.00 more expense a year.

Cllr Joice expressed his concern at the dwindling numbers of volunteers. Even if this second hand mower on offer is purchased, the volunteer force required to run it may not be sustainable. Volunteers sign up to a long term commitment with the grass requiring a new cut every two weeks for nine months. With five volunteers this meant roughly one cut a month which is not too demanding, however with the current number only at two, this amounts to a huge amount of work.

A final decision on how to progress will be made at the next meeting on Tuesday 17 March 2015. In that time Cllr Twyman agreed to go out to tender and obtain three quotations for various contractors for the Parish Council to consider. Cllr Twyman also agreed to speak to Peter Terrill, the main representative from the Church, to find out his views before making any decisions as their financial input will be the larger share than the Parish Councils. Cllr Joice agreed to put a notice on the village noticeboard and in Church and Village to try and recruit some more volunteers for the grass cutting in village.

On another matter, Cllr Joice reported there are a number of tire tracks on the entrance to the Village Green. Cllr Twyman agreed to take a look and try to smooth them over.

Flood Protection – Cllr Twyman reported that there are currently two Environment Agency teams working on the stretch of river from Grove Ferry to Fordwich. Roy Newing is working alongside one team but silt has proved to be a major problem. Tree limbs that are being removed should be ground up, but due to the high water course, large butts have had to be left. The pontoon has only recently been able to travel under the bridge which shows the river is flowing well. The teams should both be finished by the end of March.

Cllr Twyman also reported he had attended a number of meetings to discuss the silting problem in The Great Stour. The first meeting was run by Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and Kent County Council, which was informative, but initially did not allow Cllr Twyman to ask any questions to the representatives present. After speaking with the Chairman, Cllr Tywman was allowed to speak on four occasions during the rest of the meeting to ensure all the facts were made clear. The Ashford MP did not realise The Great Stour was in a terrible state.

The second meeting involved travelling by river with the local MP Julian Brazier, an Environment Agency representative and another representative from Southern Water, to assess the remedial work that has been carried out already and re-evaluate what work still needs to be undertaken. There was also the opportunity to have a 10 minute talk with Roy Newing to get his views across regarding the works.

Roy Newing also discussed the Stonar Cut near Richborough where the river horseshoes round to Sandwich and cuts back through a relief channel back on its original course. This route roughly takes an hour for the water to travel from one end to the other. The relief channel is governed by a law dating back to 1774 and is not currently being run correctly by all parties involved. There are six gates which have a major silting problem along this stretch. A very productive meeting with a committee of eight farmers was held last week where the law and how to run the relief channel effectively was presented and demonstrated. Not even the Environment Agency fully understood how the relief channel should be run to maximise on

results. Now all the parties are fully aware of their responsibility, the water should be running through this channel a lot better and the silting problem should be reduced. Plans are in place to carry out de-silting within the next 12 months.

Cllr Twyman also reported that the relief channel around Littlebourne has not been used yet so the water is running very fast in The Little Stour. The Nailbourne does however appear to be under control for the time being. He also reported that tankers have been stationed in Patrixbourne following a problem with sewage infiltration. This is a new problem that has arisen and appears to be contained to that area only.

12. **FINANCE**

The expenditure totalling £250.08 was authorised, made up of:

- Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) – Annual Subscription - £77.00
- Chenice Sparkes – Clerk salary February 2015 - £142.08
- HMRC – Employee and PAYE February 2015 - £31.00

13. **CLERK REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

(i) A number of documents regarding the Richborough Connection Project were received including the overview report, navigation document, projections for February 2015 and the consultation form for February/March 2015.
(ii) Rural Housing Alliance – Affordable Rural Housing Guide for Parish Councils was received
(iii) Parkers Design and Print advertisement leaflet with a £20.00 free voucher was received.
(iv) Zurich Insurance information was received.
(v) Clerks and Council Direct Issue 97 was received.

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

The meeting closed at 9:52pm

Signed……..... (Chairman)

Date…….....