WICKHAMBREAUX PARISH COUNCIL 17 MARCH 2020
AT WICKHAMBREAUX VILLAGE HALL, THE STREET, WICKHAMBREAUX, CT3 1RJ

Present: Parish Cllr Robin Treacher
Parish Cllr Martin Twyman
Parish Cllr Faith Wright
Parish Cllr Darren Howe
Parish Cllr Caroline Rees
Parish Cllr Peter Collinson

County Cllr Michael Northey, KCC (Kent County Council)

Mrs Chenice Howard-Sparkes, Clerk to the Council

1. **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Treacher welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished to thank Cllr Twyman for taking on the role of Chairman in his absence. Cllr Twyman also wished to thank Cllr Wright for taking on the responsibilities of Vice-Chairman to assist during Cllr Treacher's absence. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Parish Cllr Catherine Holland (Other Commitments), City Cllr Louise Jones-Roberts (Self-Isolating) and County Cllr Michael Northey (Self-Isolating).

Cllr Treacher previously circulated prior to the meeting suggested measures to implement during the Coronavirus (Covid 19) outbreak. The Clerk advised that currently the Parish Council is still required by law to hold as a minimum the AGM (Annual General Meeting) in May and the APM (Annual Parish Meeting) by 01 June. There is also no confirmation that the annual return deadline has been extended past 30 June.

The government has released advice to avoid gatherings; for anybody classified in the vulnerable category due to age, being pregnant, or having underlying health problems to self-isolate; and for everyone to practice social distancing. In practice this is very difficult to achieve in parish council meetings, especially for the APM where all parishioners are invited to attend.

For the safety of both councillors and residents, Cllr Treacher proposed that formal parish council meetings be suspended until September 2020 and the AGM and APM be postponed until such a time as government advice changes. Cllr Treacher further proposed that the Parish Council Committees and councillors with dedicated roles be delegated authority to keep Parish Council business running and that decisions be recorded via email.

Cllr Howe suggested that instead of making decisions purely via email that meetings should be held virtually. Most platforms allow a link to be circulated enabling residents to attend meetings virtually as well as councillors. The Clerk advised that there is no ability for formal meetings to be held virtually in law but informal meetings could take place virtually.

Five councillors voted for and one against Cllr Treacher's proposals. Advice from the government is changing almost daily and councillors will review these measures on a regular basis.

Cllr Treacher also wished to open discussions with councillors on what role the Parish Council can play for the local community during the crisis. The Parish Council has no specific powers to assist the community above and beyond what any member of the public can do e.g. helping with shopping and collecting prescriptions, but can act as a conduit between the community and organisations which can assist. It can also be a source of information.

Councillors were unanimously in agreement they want to do all they can to assist the community through this difficult time but could not come to a decision on how best to achieve this. Cllr Howe reported that informal community initiatives are already in place in Stodmarsh,

with parishioners volunteering to help with shopping and collecting prescriptions. Cllr Holland has also offered to help elderly residents in Stodmarsh who are currently self-isolating.

It was agreed to monitor the situation to see whether an identified need can be established on how best to assist the local community. In the meantime the Clerk will post updates on the website and encourage residents to contact her should they need any assistance. Councillors can then assist with things like shopping or running errands depending on resident needs.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
None.

3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2020**
The Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4. **INFORMATION FROM MATTERS ARISING**
10 (School Report) – The Clerk reported that she submitted the Parish Council's comment on the proposed disabled parking bay to CCC (Canterbury City Council) and this was due to be reported to the Rural Forum on 23 March 2020 and then subsequently to the Joint Transportation Board. However, these meetings have both been cancelled in line with government advice and it is unclear at this time when a decision will be made.
10 (Law and Order) – The Clerk reported that the Neighbourhood Watch conference due to take place on 14 March 2020 was cancelled and will be rearranged when government advice states it is safe to do so.
14(i) Cllr Holland reported that the drain adjacent to Lucerna in Stodmarsh is still blocked, despite contractors being out on numerous occasions and Cllr Holland's own efforts. This has been reported to KCC (Kent County Council) Highways to follow up further.

5. **REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS**
County Cllr Michael Northey
The Clerk reported on behalf of Cllr Northey that KCC is updating its website daily with regards to the Coronavirus, reiterating government and NHS advice with regards to handwashing and social distancing. On 06 March 2020, Cllr Northey attended a meeting of the Health Reform and Public Health Committee at KCC (of which he is a member), where all those in attendance were briefed and had the opportunity to ask Andrew Scott-Clark, KCC Director of Public Health, questions.

Cllr Northey asked how long it would be until a vaccine is available. Mr Scott-Clark responded that it would take at least 18 months to discover a vaccine, undertake the necessary tests to ensure it is safe and put into production. Cllr Northey also asked whether better and warmer weather will naturally have a good effect. Mr Scott-Clark responded that yes people have more resilience in warmer weather and the virus is more vulnerable to the sun so does not flourish as well.

Cllr Northey reported that he attended a meeting with Dr Martin Hurst, Chairman of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) on 26 February 2020 with Cllr Twyman and representatives from the Little Stour and Nailbourne River Management Group. Please see Item 12 'Flooding' for further information.

6. **HIGHWAYS**
(i) Highways Improvement Plan
Cllr Treacher reported that KCC has provisionally booked a road closure for 27 May 2020 for the signage relating to the change in speed limit to be installed. The road has to be closed for the safety of the crews. Michelle Matthews at KCC has asked whether the Parish Council want the 30 roundel road markings as well as the signage.
Cllr Treacher advised that the roundels are not a legal requirement but they are recommended as a reminder to road users. Cllr Wright proposed only having roundels painted if they can be of a smaller dimension than the standard roundels to be more in keeping with the

Conservation Area. Councillors were unanimously in agreement with this suggestion and Cllr Treacher agreed to relay this to Michelle Matthews.

(ii) A257 Update
Nothing to report.

General Highways Matters

- The Clerk reported that Grove Road will be closed along a section in Preston and Wickhambreaux on 18 March 2020 between 09:30 and 15:30 to allow safe access to overhead phone cables for essential works.
- Cllr Twyman reported that the road from Sandpits to Copthall has been programmed to be resurfaced within the next three months. In the interim, KCC Highways will continue to be proactive in identifying and repairing pot holes.
- Cllr Wright reported that the stretch of road near Kingsley House in Stodmarsh is in need of resurfacing. Cllr Twyman reported that KCC Highways is aware of this stretch but it is considered a low priority due to the high cost of the works.

7. **PLANNING**

CA//19/01798/FUL – The Pear Orchard, Hawthorne Bungalow and Altona, The List
No date has been given for when the application will be decided by Canterbury City Council's Planning Committee.

CA/19/10055/LB – Land West of The Old Forge House, The Street
The listed building consent application for the erection of signage on the building has been withdrawn.

CA/19/10164/FUL – The Old Rectory, The Green
Canterbury City Council has granted permission for a swimming pool, outbuilding and tennis court in the rear garden.

8. **SCHEDULE OF WORKS FOR WINDOWS AND DOORS OF THE VILLAGE HALL**
The Clerk previously circulated a Schedule of Works prepared by the Village Hall Committee for consideration. Planning permission may not be required but CCC has requested an application be submitted to examine the works to take place to establish whether this is the case. If planning permission is not required, the planning fee will be refunded.

Councillors were unanimously in agreement with the proposed works (as outlined in Appendix I) and the Clerk agreed to write a letter confirming this to CCC for submission as part of the application. Cllr Treacher wished to express thanks to the Village Hall Committee on behalf of the Parish Council for pushing forward with the refurbishment proposals.

9. **CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN CONSULTATION**
CCC is consulting on its draft Corporate Plan for the next two years, which is a key strategic document that is developed to set the agenda and priorities for the council. It is used by council officers to help focus energies and limited resources, implement agreed priorities and formulate future policy. It also helps to shape the way services are delivered.

The draft plan for 2020 to 2022 proposes the following four priorities:

- Priority One: Take a leading role in tackling climate change across the district
- Priority Two: Deliver services effectively and efficiently ensuring the council does all it can to get it right first time
- Priority Three: Help increase prosperity throughout the district in as sustainable way as possible
- Priority Four: Focus increasingly scarce resources on meeting the needs to communities

Councillors supported changing the plan from four years to two years to better hold city councillors to account during their election term. Cllr Treacher agreed to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council.

10. **CLASSIC CAR SHOW 17 MAY 2020**

Cllr Rees reported that the Playing Field Committee and St Andrew's Church are monitoring government advice closely and regularly reviewing whether the Classic Car Show should be cancelled or postponed. Cllr Wright commented that the show may not be as well supported by members of the public during the Coronavirus period even if government advice allows events. Cllr Rees responded that this is a consideration and a decision will be made closer to the time.

11. **APM (ANNUAL PARISH MEETING) PREPARATIONS**

The APM has been postponed until further notice. Please see Item 1 for further information.

12. **CLLRS' REPORTS**

School Report

As reported at the last meeting, the farewell service in the Church on 14 February 2020 for Mrs Campling was very well attended. The Church was filled with parents and school pupils, both past and present, and was also attended by the Archdeacon of Canterbury Cathedral. Mrs Campling has expressed her thanks for the card and gardening vouches given as a thank you gift from the Parish Council.

Parents and teachers carried out a clear up of the early years play area during the mid-term break and Tim Metcalfe kindly repaired the post and fence, which was damage during the recent storm, of his own volition.

A quiz night was held on 31 January 2020, attended by parents and teachers, but the Easter service in the Church on 01 April 2020 has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus.

Cllr Twyman reported that he and his wife attended the School to discuss their role as farmers within the local community to the children. The children were very well behaved and Cllr Twyman wished to thank in particular the two young boys that showed them round. Mr and Mrs Terrill, Mr Maxted and Mrs Wyatt have also either visited or will be visiting in due course.

School Liaison

Cllr Treacher reported that the Village Hall Committee has contacted him to enquire whether there is an update on the School rental review. Cllr Collinson reported that he will be continuing discussions with the School once Mrs Crosbie, standing in as Head Teacher, has had the opportunity to establish herself in the role.

Law and Order

The Clerk reported on behalf of Cllr Holland that a recent crackdown on County Lines drug dealing this month has led to the arrest of 42 people and seizure of firearms, £50,000 and 3kg of heroin.

Rogue traders are operating and profiting from storm damage. Residents are reminded to remember ABC – never Assume, never Believe and always Confirm. Other scams circulating involve emails and/or phone calls purporting to be from Amazon. Cllr Collinson reported that he received two phone calls from a company claiming to be working on behalf of the government regarding inspecting loft insulation. Cllr Treacher confirmed he had received the same calls. A number of scams are also circulating regarding the Coronavirus, including fraudsters knocking on doors claiming to be from the NHS undertaking home checks for the virus, offering a cure to the virus or a vaccine, or volunteers offering to help with shopping but taking money upfront and not returning with either the money or the shopping.

A national campaign called Take Five offers straight-forward and impartial advice to help everyone protect themselves against preventable financial fraud – www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk

KALC
The next KALC meeting is scheduled for 22 April 2020 but this is being kept under review based on government advice concerning the Coronavirus.

Rural Forum
The next meeting scheduled for 23 March 2020 has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus. Cllr Treacher expressed concern that the consultation on the future of Concurrent Function Funding and the Parish Charter will be delayed as a result.

Village Hall Committee
The most recent Committee meeting was held on 03 March 2020 where Emma Denning and Patrick Duffy were co-opted onto the Committee following the resignation of Brenda Walsh and Debbie Francis. Cathy Hayward indicated she wishes to stand down at the APM in April 2020.

Main items of discussion included confirmation that £600.00 has been received from City Cllr Jones-Roberts towards the cost of new stage curtains and the progress of the Viridor application for funding towards the cost of replacement windows. Cllr Rees has offered to help complete the application form.

The projector has now been installed and Tracy Harris gave a demonstration on how to use it to members. Hirers of the hall can either connect their electronic devices to the projector via HDMI cable or Chrome Cast. Only one remote has been provided for the projector and it was unanimously agreed by the Committee that hirers will pick up the remote with the keys to the hall, rather than the remote being left in the hall permanently, to reduce to risk of it getting lost or stolen. The current speakers are not compatible with the new projector and are outdated so the Committee is looking into different options for replacement speakers.

The first IT drop-in session held on 12 January 2020 was attended by approximately 10 people and the feedback from attendees has been really positive. Most of the issues raised could be dealt with on the day rather than requiring the assistance of an expert. The projector will be used for future sessions to demonstrate how to carry out certain actions or to play 'how to' videos online. The next IT session will be arranged when government advice says it is safe to do so. The Wine and Wisdom evening previously proposed for 18 April 2020 has also been cancelled and will be rearranged in due course.

Further events include a pottery taster day and showing of a film from 1944 called A Canterbury Tale, based on a book written by Paul Tritton, to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day. A large portion of the film was shot in Wickhambreaux, Fordwich, Chilham and other surrounding parishes in Kent. Enquiries are ongoing what licenses may be required to show the film.

The Village Hall Committee Bank balance is £4,354.89, not including the School rent which has only recently been paid in. It was also reported that the gas bill seems higher than normal, despite moving to the HIVE system and a cheaper supplier. Cathy Hayward will be investigating further to establish whether the amount of gas used has increased or whether the price per unit has increased to determine the likely cause of the high bills.

Playing Field Committee
Cllr Rees reported that the Committee meeting scheduled for tomorrow (18 March 2020) has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus to protect vulnerable Committee members. The Playing Field Committee bank balance is £2,275.85, including £245.10 in deposits for the Classic Car Show which may be returned should the event be cancelled.

Village Greens
Cllr Howe reported that the grass is due to be cut soon and a number of compliments have been received regarding the planters on the bridge and Stodmarsh green.

Flood Protection

Little Stour and Nailbourne River Group AGM (Annual General Meeting)

Cllr Twyman reported that the AGM held on 22 February 2020 in Littlebourne Village Hall was well attended, with 23 people present and 10-11 parish councils represented. Also in attendance were Ian Nunn from the EA (Environment Agency), Liam Wooltorton from CCC, Cllr Michael Northey from KCC and various flood wardens. There were no attendees from SW (Southern Water), KCC Highways or the IDB (Internal Drainage Board). The two representatives from SW gave apologies at the last minute and a letter will be written to SW expressing the Group's disappointment.

Cllr Twyman gave an update at the meeting on the current situation in all the parishes, flood and planning procedures, and flow of the Nailbourne and perceived risks. Flooding is likely to happen in this area in the future but Kent has been lucky considering the flooding emergencies in other areas of the country. Farmland and some gardens have been flooded along the Nailbourne and the aquifer will remain very high for several months.

Mr Nunn gave an update on what measures the EA are implementing with a limited budget for this region. Mr Nunn is very active and supportive in the region and helpful when issues arise. Mr Wooltorton gave a report on what work CCC is undertaking in the area with regards to preventing flooding.

Dr Martin Hurst Meeting – Chairman of the RFCC

At the meeting with Dr Martin Hurst on 26 February 2020, Jill Thomas showed a video of the 2014 floods and gave an overview of the river system to the Great Stour and beyond. Dr Hurst promised to look into all the issues raised with regards to flood defence and those present praised the work of CCC, KCC and the EA. A tour was then undertaken of key areas, including the flooding in the Causeway and South Barham Road in Barham. A follow up meeting has been arranged for 15 May 2020 (weather and Coronavirus permitting) for a trip down the River Stour in boats from Fordwich to Plucks Gutter.

Emergency Committee

The Emergency Committee met on 24 February 2020, with 11 out of 14 members in attendance. This is the first meeting for two years following concerns at the water level of the Little Stour and threats to the Mill Sluice. The Mill Sluice has been inspected twice a day by Cllr Twyman and Stuart Anderson in Cllr Treacher's absence. All members of the Committee agreed to continue but some older members may wish to step down next year.

The Emergency Plan was updated and the Committee agreed to print out an updated emergency information card for all households. Cllr Twyman circulated a draft of the resident card, which will be printed in green to distinguish from the previous version, and asked councillors to contact him in the next few days if they wish to make any changes. Cllr Collinson requested that the website address be changed to the new website currently in production.

Footpaths

Cllr Wright reported that her husband carried out a cut of the footpaths yesterday (16 March 2020) and around the pill box.

Cllr Treacher also reported that metal green and yellow footpath signposts have appeared at various locations in the parish. Cllr Wright agreed to chase up the timber posts requested for the centre of the village.

Website

Cllr Collinson reported that Eyelid Productions has scheduled in the creation of the new Parish Council website in April 2020. With regards to the new email address, Cllr Collinson has set up email accounts for all councillors and has created a number of 'how to' videos to assist councillors in getting used to the new system. Cllr Collinson also offered to assist councillors in transferring over their current emails to the new system.

Cllr Treacher thanked Cllr Collinson on behalf of all councillors for organizing the new email systems, creating the helpful tutorial videos and for his offer of assistance in transferring emails.

13. **FINANCE**

The expenditure totalling £1,411.87 was authorised, made up of:

- Little Stour & Nailbourne River Management Group – Annual Subscription (charged when required) - £25.00
- KOMPAN – Annual Play Area Inspection - £180.00
- SM Electrical – Installation of village hall projector - £470.00
- Wickhambreaux Village Hall – Use of village hall for meetings - £240.00
- Open Spaces Society – Annual Subscription - £45.00
- Chenice Howard-Sparkes – Clerk salary March 2020
- Lyssi Varghese – Village Hall Cleaner Salary March 2020
- HMRC – Employee and PAYE March 2020
- Cllr Robin Treacher – Reimbursement for ink cartridges - £67.98

14. **CLERK REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

(i) The Clerk reported that CCC is consulting on proposals to improve the appearance of St George's Street. Proposals include improvements to paving, seating and street lighting and provision of cycle racks, decluttering the street, planting 14 new trees and removing five existing trees. As part of this, CCC is also consulting on permanently removing the market from St George's Street, enabling different kinds of street traders to be accommodated and creating a fully-flexible space to host events, attractions and activities.

Councillors were disappointed that the market could be lost completely and would prefer to see the market reinstated in another location, perhaps as part of the redevelopment of the previous Nasons Department store.

(ii) The Clerk reported that a presentation on Community Policing Initiatives by Kent Police is due to take place at the Herne Centre on 02nd April 2020. Any councillors interested in attending were asked to contact the Clerk after the meeting before 20th March 2020.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cllr Treacher enquired whether councillors would be willing to meet in December, depending on government advice and how the Coronavirus situation develops. Councillors were unanimously in agreement to meet in December if required.

The meeting closed at 9.44pm

Signed……..... (Chairman)

Date…….....