

**WICKHAMBREAUX PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2023 AT  
WICKHAMBREAUX VILLAGE HALL, THE STREET, WICKHAMBREAUX, CT3 1RJ**

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

County Cllr Mike Sole

Mrs Chenice Howard-Sparkes, Clerk to the Council

2 Members of the Public

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

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for apologies for absence. There were no apologies for absence.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2023**

All councillors voted in favour that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2023 be accepted as a true record of the meeting and the Chairman duly signed them.

**4. INFORMATION FROM MATTERS ARISING**

4(9) – The Clerk advised that the Village Sign Working Group have submitted a planning application for the village sign, which is to be located on the small green. The amended design was on display at the coffee morning held in the Village Hall on 04 February 2023, where residents were invited to view and comment on the design. The Group received many positive comments and some constructive feedback, which they are in the process of incorporating. The Group is due to meet with the designer and ironmonger on 24 February 2023 to obtain an accurate quotation.

14(v) – Cllr Treacher and the Clerk attended CCC's (Canterbury City Council) virtual elections briefing for parish councils on 25 January 2023. The Clerk circulated notes from the briefing to all councillors prior to the meeting.

15(i) – Cllr McRobbie reported that she contacted Cllr Sole regarding the possibility of amending the current booking system for the Household Waste Recycling Centres, but was advised there is little scope currently. Cllr Sole advised KCC will be consulting in due course regarding a proposal to charge a fee for out-of-county users and the closure of some sites.

15(ii) – Cllr Treacher advised he will be meeting with representatives from Ickham Parish Council shortly to discuss the feasibility of establishing a joint Speedwatch scheme. Cllr Treacher also advised that a resident in Stodmarsh has approached the Parish Council to request some sessions in Stodmarsh.

**5. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS AND PCSO**

County Cllr Mike Sole

Cllr Mike Sole reported that the CCC Annual Parking Review was out to consultation until 10 February 2023. Views are sought on proposals such as new double yellow lines, loading bays and pavement/verge parking bans. Changes are proposed locally in Barham, Petham and Littlebourne. CCC is also running an electric vehicle infrastructure survey until 13 March 2023. Any feedback given will help plan for new charging locations and by demonstrating a need, it will help with obtaining grant funding – [www.canterbury.gov.uk/consultations-and-petitions](http://www.canterbury.gov.uk/consultations-and-petitions).

KCC is also running a number consultations, including the proposal to close 35 children's centres across Kent, six in the Canterbury district. All consultations can be found at [letstalk.kent.gov.uk](http://letstalk.kent.gov.uk).

At CCC, Cllr Sole questioned the leader about the Wincheap Gyratory Scheme and asked that the council meet with KCC and the developers to review it. Although this was not agreed to, later in the month he raised it again at the Joint Transportation Board meeting. There was significant opposition voiced about the zoning plan for Canterbury and the Wincheap Gyratory Scheme. The committee agreed to ask for a review of the Wincheap scheme, although what form the review might take has not been decided.

The Canterbury Draft Local Plan consultation has now closed. Cllr Sole met with Bridge Parish councillors and CCC officers to raise questions on aspects of the plan in January. There has been huge opposition across the district to many aspects of the draft plan. The community response from Adisham has been tremendous in putting the case against the 3,200 housing development at Cooting Farm and the expansion of Aylesham into Womenswold parish.

With highways issues, Cllr Sole has been out and about looking for potholes and other issues and then pressing KCC to act. These include improvements to the road surface in Valley Road, Barham, replacement of reflective bollards near the Coldharbour Lane junction, new 30mph road markings, and bus stop accessibility improvements.

Cllr Sole is very concerned with a number of budget cuts proposed by KCC. Locally, this includes a huge two-thirds reduction in the grants that he is able to access for community and highway improvement projects. Cllr Sole will be challenging this at the KCC budget meeting.

Cllr Sole reported that the Ropersole lay-by on the A2 has been cleared of rubbish. CCC has informed Cllr Sole that regular litter picks will now take place, new bins will be installed and other measures put in place to deter and catch those who leave rubbish there. Clearance along the A2 will take place twice a year. Cllr Wright commented that litter on highway verges seems to be increasing. Cllr Sole confirmed that CCC is responsible for clearance and this can be reported online, although it is unlikely there will be any proactive action.

## **6. HIGHWAYS**

### **(i) A257 Update**

Cllr Twyman reported that he was unable to attend the last A257 meeting. There was nothing of note to report.

### **General Highways Matters**

Cllr Twyman reported that the KCC Highways Steward remains on leave so he had a site meeting with another representative, David Burton, last week. The site meeting lasted for 1.5 hours and managed to visit approximately half the planned route Cllr Twyman had identified. Any potholes able to be filled were reported by Mr Burton to KCC while on site and some patching undertaken by Mr Burton where appropriate to do so. The potholes on The List were not deemed deep enough for action. 2no potholes were identified on Drill Lane and were marked as urgent for filling within 48 hours of inspection. This has not been completed to date.

## **7. PLANNING**

### **CA/22/02472 – 6 The Mill, The Green**

CCC has granted the application for Listed Building Consent for external and internal alterations including replacing four fixed timber rooflights on the east side of the roof for four opening timber rooflights and reducing the size of the of the upper two rooflights together with installation of two new timber rooflights on the west side of the roof.

Cllr Wright advised that following concerns expressed by CCC's Heritage Officer, the Parish Council and the Conservation Society, the proposed number of rooflights on the west side of the roof was reduced from 4no to 2no.

## **8. KING CHARLES III CORONATION CELEBRATIONS**

Cllr Treacher advised that the Village Hall Committee discussed the Coronation at its recent meeting on 06 February 2023. Members of the Committee indicated they would be happy to hold an event, but were not in a position to orchestrate a parish wide event of a similar size to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. The Committee agreed to provide refreshments and broadcast the Coronation live in the village hall. The Parish Council may be able to provide some funding towards costs of the event.

## **9. FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Finance Committee met on 16 February 2023 and made the following recommendations to the Parish Council:

- (i) The Parish Clerk and RFO (Responsible Financial Officer) be instructed to investigate investment options to take advantage of higher interest rates available.
- (ii) The Parish Council financially underwrite a substantial portion of the cost associated with the village hall toilet roof repairs, up to a maximum of £15,000. An estimate for the works is in the region of £25,000 to £30,000. The Finance Committee suggest the Village Hall Committee should fund £10,000 from its existing reserves and look to fundraise the remaining amount, including exploring grant funding options.
- (iii) The Village Sign Working Group be approached to establish costs for the village sign and a likely timescale. Please see item 4(9) above for an update (not available at the time of the Finance Committee meeting).

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to proceed with the Finance Committee's recommendations, as outlined above.

Cllr Wright enquired whether the Finance Committee has a recommendation for a tender process for tree surgeons. Cllr Treacher advised that this is in hand and he has contacted all parish councils' part of the KALC (Kent Association of Local Councils) Canterbury Area Committee to ask whether other parish councils have undertaken a similar process.

## **10. CLLRS' REPORTS**

### **Trees**

Cllr McRobbie confirmed that the Four Villages' Conservation Society has funded the planting of a new Crab Apple tree on Stodmarsh green. Cllr Wright suggested that a tree guard be purchased for the tree, and an additional tree guard for a tree on Wickhambreaux green. The Clerk was asked to write a thank you letter to the Conservation Society for funding the cost of the new tree.

### **Village Hall Committee**

The most recent Village Hall Committee meeting was held on 06 February 2023. Main items of discussion included the small capital works required to replace the toilet roof, wildflower meadow, utility bills and the King's Coronation. Cllr Treacher advised that the new Keep Fit classes and Art Group are going well, and some residents are wishing to start up a gardening club again. Bookings in general have increased and £201.25 was raised at the recent coffee morning on 04 February 2023. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for 22 March 2023.

### **Playing Field Committee**

Cllr Rees reported that a number of residents have expressed concerns that a suspicious vehicle has been parking in the entrance to the playing field. Cllr Rees confirmed that this has been reported to the Police and the situation is being monitored.

On a recent visit, Cllr Rees encountered three teenagers smoking in the evening. All three teenagers were spoken to and advised not to return, with no incidents since. Regular visits are being undertaken to the playing field to monitor the situation and future incidents will be reported to the Police.

Cllr Rees confirmed that the replacement bench plaque has been installed and she is in the process of obtaining quotations to pressure-wash and treat all the benches in the playing field. Cllr Rees reported that the Playing Field Committee will be exploring costings for installing a basketball hoop and relevant surfacing.

Cllr Rees also reported that the Clerk submitted a CCC Capital Grant application for £1,635 towards the cost of replacement safety surfacing around the climbing frame. The existing surfacing is shrinking and, whilst it is only highlighted as a 'low' risk in the regular inspection reports, it does need to be repaired/replaced.

The Playing Field Committee shed, which was proposed to be situated in the village hall garden, will not be installed until after the repair works to the roof have been completed. It is possible that the previously identified location within the garden will be unsuitable depending on the nature of the works undertaken.

### **Village Greens**

Cllr Rees suggested that the Parish Council obtain quotes for re-turfing and re-seeding both Stodmarsh village greens. Cllr McRobbie agreed to liaise with the current contractor to discuss options.

Cllr Wright advised that the Four Villages' Conservation Society is exploring siting the replacement footpath map and noticeboard in a different location. The map was previously located on the side boundary wall of Old Ballroom House, but access to that side of the wall is not as good due to the positioning of neighbour bins. The Society has considered exploring siting the new noticeboard on the small green opposite. It was agreed to add this as an agenda item for the next Parish Council meeting.

### **Flooding**

Cllr Twyman reported that he checked on the progress of the Nailbourne on 10 February 2023 and noted it has started to run up to Barham then disappears again. The Nailbourne at Bourne Park is running up to Bridge and flowing well through Littlebourne and Drill Lane. The aquifer is rising but unless there is substantial rain over the next few months, there is likely to be water shortages again in the summer. The Emergency Committee is due to meet on 27 February and the Little Stour and Nailbourne River Group is due to meet in Littlebourne Village Hall on 01 April 2023.

### **Website**

It was agreed to post a news item on the recently introduced requirement to bring photographic ID when voting. It was further agreed to post reminders a week before polling day and the day before.

## **11. FINANCE**

The expenditure totalling £942.65 was authorised, made up of:

- Wickhambreaux Parochial Church Council – Annual burial maintenance - £500.00
- Stodmarsh Parochial Church Council – Annual burial maintenance - £60.00
- Chenice Howard-Sparkes - Clerk Salary February 2023
- HMRC - Employee and PAYE February 2023

The Clerk advised that the Section 137(4)(a) limit of the 1972 Local Government Act for parish and town councils has increased from £8.82 to £9.93 per elector for financial year 2023-2024. This is as a result of increasing the amount of £8.82 for 2022-2023 by the percentage increase in the retail index between September 2021 and September 2022, in accordance with Schedule 12B of the 1972 Act.

## 12. CLERK REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

- (i) KCC is consulting on proposed changes to its Adult Social Care Charging Policy relating to Savings Credit Disregard. Deadline for comments is 21 March 2023. For further information and to comment, please visit KCC's website – [Adult Social Care Charging Policy](#).
- (ii) KCC is consulting on its Home to School Transport Policy and Post-16 Transport Policy, including the transport provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs. Deadline for comments is 21 March 2023. For further information and to comment, please visit KCC's website – [Home to School and Post-16 Transport Policies](#).
- (iii) KCC is consulting on proposed changes to the way it uses their buildings to deliver some of their community services. This includes the closure of 35 children centres across Kent. Deadline for comments is 26 March 2023. For further information and to comment, please visit KCC's website – [Community Services Consultation](#).
- (iv) CCC has launched a survey to gather views on electric vehicles and infrastructure. They wish to understand the levels of demand for electric vehicles, the charging habits of people who own electric vehicles, and demand for new electric vehicle charging points and locations. Deadline for completing the survey is 13 March 2023. For more information and to complete the survey, please visit CCC's website – [Electric Vehicle and Infrastructure Survey](#).

## 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The meeting closed at 9.07pm

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....