

**WICKHAMBREAUX PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2024 AT
WICKHAMBREAUX VILLAGE HALL, THE STREET, WICKHAMBREAUX, CT3 1RJ**

Present: Parish Cllr Peter Collinson
Parish Cllr Caroline Rees
Parish Cllr Martin Twyman
Parish Cllr Mark Wrightson
Parish Cllr Philippa Barber

County Cllr Mike Sole

Mrs Chenice Howard-Sparkes, Clerk to the Council

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for apologies for absence. Apologies for absence were received from City Cllr Lee Castle (Holiday).

Cllr Collinson reported that Faith Wright and Theresa McRobbie have resigned from the Parish Council. Canterbury City Council (CCC) has issued the required Notice of Vacancies, which have been displayed in the noticeboard. If by 30 July 2024 a request for an election to fill said vacancy is made in writing to the Returning Officer by 10 electors, an election will be held to fill the vacancies, otherwise they will be filled by co-option. Should the Parish Council be permitted to co-opt, it was unanimously agreed to hold an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on 06 August 2024 to co-opt candidates.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES AND GROUPS FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2024-2025

The only change from the May 2024 appointments was to unanimously vote Cllr Barber as lead representative for footpaths. Faith Wright was also removed from Planning following her resignation. Membership will be further reviewed once the two vacancies have been filled.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2024

It was proposed by Cllr Wrightson, seconded by Cllr Rees and AGREED that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19 June 2024 be accepted as a true record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

5. INFORMATION FROM MATTERS ARISING

2) Cllr Collinson confirmed that the blue box that has appeared as part of the works to install the new electricity sub-station is a water pump. The installers have encountered issues establishing an electrical earth and are hampered by the high water table, so pumps are required to enable works to progress.

2) Cllr Rees confirmed that she spoke to the landowner who promptly cut the main footpath through their land. The resident contacted Cllr Rees to chase for the other footpath to be cut, which was passed onto the landowner. As the land is in Ickham parish, the Clerk was asked to go back to the resident to ensure they liaise with Ickham Parish Council.

4(9) The Clerk reported that the KCC (Kent County Council) Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) team have provide more detailed feedback on the request to extend the 30mph speed limit to the cottages further along Grove Road. The feedback received states *"It is not feasible to extend the 30mph speed limit to the junction by Gate Lodge Cottage. The environment is not suitable as properties are sporadic and on one side of the carriageway. 30mph are for more built up areas, so there is a high risk of non compliance if a 30mph is extended in this environment as drivers will not comply."*

8) The Clerk confirmed that the annual return was submitted to Mazars LLP on 23 June 2024. The Exercise of Public Rights to inspect the accounts runs from 24 June to 02 August 2024.
12) The Clerk confirmed that news items were published for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) screening and the Canterbury Pathways Initiative.

6. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS

County Cllr Mike Sole

Due to the General Election campaign taking place throughout June, Cllr Sole has not attended parish council meetings due to purdah rules but has been busy assisting residents with various issues.

The main issue of concern for many residents is the planned A257 closure near St Martin's Hospital from 24 July 2024 with estimated completion by 22 October 2024. There remains no plan for buses and chaos is expected, especially around the country lanes and villages. Cllr Sole has been in regular contact with KCC regarding the closure and they have been speaking to the contractors working for the housing developers to try and agree alternative arrangements. KCC cannot insist on any changes, and Cllr Sole is due to meet with senior transport officers tomorrow (17 July 2024) for an update.

Another road closure, this time the overnight works on the A2, resulted in several lorries ignoring the diversion signs and getting stuck in Barham. The lorries caused damage to property and disturbance to residents, who had to help reverse them back and warn others not to follow. Cllr Sole pushed for improved signage from KCC, but unfortunately the problems persisted. Barham Parish Council were in regular contact with National Highways and KCC too.

Cllr Sole also visited Stagecoach to hand in a petition signed by hundreds of residents in Bridgeway Stores about the changes to the 89 bus service through Bridge. Unfortunately, there has to date been no restoration of the original route.

Other issues dealt with in June included planning enforcement in Wick Lane, Woolage Green, missed bin collections, reporting of verges and hedges for cutting back, assisting with council housing repairs, school transport appeals, chasing up drain clearance in Iffin Lane, repairs to damage verge and assisting residents with planning application questions. As a positive, the new Canterbury Market opens again tomorrow.

City Cllr Lee Castle

In June, Cllr Castle attended the 80th D-Day Commemoration event in Wickhambreax, which put on a full day of events, including a coffee morning in the village hall and a fish and chip supper and beacon lighting in the evening. Ickham also unveiled a new memorial bench, which will take pride of place on the green.

Cllr Castle also attended Littlebourne Parish Council's meeting who, like all the village and residents, have concerns regarding the lengthy A257 closure. Cllr Castle has been working closely with Cllr Sole, but progress to solve the issue of buses and the excessive length of the closure have not been satisfactory (please see Cllr Sole's report above).

In other areas, Cllr Castle has been dealing with an increase in dog fouling in Littlebourne, especially around the Laurels development. Cllr Castle encourages anyone to report instances they find and he has spoken to an officer to arrange visits to try and catch the culprits. In Adisham, the sites involved with the ancient woodland are going to appeal in September.

Bins in small pockets are still causing issues. Cllr Castle has raised with the cabinet member for Waste and Recycling that there has been recent problems with bins being marked as collected or access blocked when neither are the case, which results in residents unable to report them as missed. A few individuals are being missed regularly, and these cases are being escalated.

Towards the end of the month, Cllr Castle has been visiting sites and locations of historical issues to resolve such as tree works, blocked drains, overgrown verges, and general issues CCC have a responsibility to resolve. Up to date photos were taken and sent to chase for a resolution.

Neighbourhood Watch

Two drug dealers, one of whom lived in Littlebourne, have been jailed after being arrested in Canterbury by Kent Police's County Lines and Gangs team. They were supplying heroin and cocaine.

Motorists in Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay have been warned to ensure their vehicles are locked overnight following a series of thefts. They also advise motorists to close vehicle windows and sunroofs when left unattended. Most importantly, do not leave anything of value inside and do not allow anything to be on display.

Kent Police's Rural Task Force has recovered three vehicles in their ongoing initiative to tackle the theft of caravans and motorhomes across the county. This proactive work will continue throughout the summer by offering advice to owners on how to avoid becoming a victim of this type of crime. They will also be out and about checking to ensure these vehicles are being driven or towed by their rightful owners.

Residents are reminded to follow the summer burglary advice:

- Lock doors and windows at night and during the day when you're not in the vicinity (even if you are just popping upstairs for something)
- Lock your back doors and windows when you answer the front door. Some burglars use distraction techniques.
- Consider fitting extra security measures such as spy holes, door chains, door locks and intruder alarms.
- Install CCTV
- Mark your valuables and register them online at www.immobilise.com so that recovered items can be returned
- Keep gates, boundaries and sheds secure
- Lock away bikes, tools and garden items that could be used to break into your home
- Don't leave spare keys hidden outside under pots or in garages
- Think before posting holiday photos on social media and ask neighbours to keep an eye out and perhaps encourage them to park on your drive

7. HIGHWAYS

Cllr Twyman reported that since the last meeting he has met with the Highways Steward to show them a number of potholes around the parish. Six potholes were repaired within 24 hours, but other smaller ones identified are not considered sufficiently deep enough to be repaired.

Cllr Twyman also reported that Bekesbourne Road, Bridge and Bifrons Hill in Patrichtown will be closed between Upper Lodge and the A2 Bridge offslip on 22 and 23 July 2024.

8. PLANNING

New Applications

CA/24/00912 – 17 Grove Road

An application has been received for a proposed outbuilding for use as an annexe. Cllr Collinson agreed to speak with the Planning Officer for additional information on certain aspects of the plan, including the internal water tank, and circulate their response to councillors in the interim period.

Pending Application Updates

CA/24/00375 – Grove Ferry Inn, Grove Ferry Road

Cllr Sole reported that this application will be determined by CCC Planning Committee, date to be confirmed.

Determined Applications

CA/24/00791 – Springtime. The List

CCC has granted the application for a single storey rear extension, two storey rear extension and dormer to rear together with porch to front, pergola to rear, three rooflights and slate/PV slate roof tiles following demolition of conservatory.

CA/24/00791 – The Moorings, Wickham Lane

CCC has granted the application for a single storey detached outbuilding for use as ancillary accommodation following the demolition of an existing outbuilding.

9. REQUEST FOR 2NO PICNIC BENCHES ON THE SMALL GREEN

Following the success of the D-Day Commemoration Event on 06 June 2024, The Rose Inn Public House enquired whether they could place 2no picnic benches on the small green. Historically, there has been a formal agreement reviewed annually to allow The Rose Inn picnic benches on the green, with various conditions attached to the consent. The last agreement was in 2015.

Councillors discussed the suggestion but unanimously agreed not to permit the picnic benches due to challenges regarding public liability. The Parish Council wishes to support local businesses, and it was unanimously agreed to consider future ad-hoc requests for picnic benches for large events such as weddings, etc. Cllr Wrightson agreed to notify The Rose Inn of the decision.

10. VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

It is the 80th Anniversary of VE Day on 08 May 2025, and local communities are being encouraged to hold events similar to the 80th Anniversary of D-Day earlier this year. As the Classic Car Show is scheduled for 18 May 2025, councillors felt there was not the resources to hold two large events in such close proximity.

Ickham Parish Council has been in contact to enquire whether a joint event could be organised. It was agreed that volunteers from Wickhambreaux, who helped plan and run the D-Day Commemoration event, may be able to assist Ickham Parish Council should they wish to host an event.

11. CLLRS' REPORTS

Trees

Cllr Wrightson advised that he is in the process of obtaining quotations to undertake tree works advised in the recent annual survey. These will be discussed at the September Parish Council meeting.

KALC

The KALC Canterbury Area Committee Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 27 June 2024 in Littlebourne War Memorial Hall. Steve Bailey from Chestfield Parish Council was elected as Chairman, Jack Brabham from Hersden Parish Council was elected as Vice-Chairman, and the Clerk was re-elected as Secretary. The next meeting will be held on 02 September 2024 in Hersden Community Centre.

Village Hall Committee

The most recent meeting was the AGM held on 03 July 2024. Lucy Rushbrooke was re-elected as Chairman, Karen Newton-Anker was re-elected as Vice-Chairman, Patrick Duffy was re-elected as Treasurer, Tebiena Martin was elected as Bookings Secretary, and the Clerk was re-appointed as Secretary.

Main items of discussion included an update on the building works, trialling a membership film club, replacement of first aid kit, choosing a photo of Stodmarsh to display in the hall and changing the front garden area to become more usable and practical.

The remaining dates for the Social Saturdays for 2024 were provisionally confirmed as 31 August for a 'family BBQ' from 12pm to 1.30pm, 12 October for 'Soup Saturday' from 12pm to 1.30pm, and 14 December for 'Christmas' from 10.30pm to 12pm. Dates subject to availability of volunteers.

The next Committee meeting will be held on 09 October 2024 at 7pm.

Cllr Rees reported that the School has advised one of the main door hinges is not working properly. This will be addressed during the improvement works in the summer holidays.

Playing Field Committee

The most recent meeting was the AGM held on 10 July 2024. Linda Lodge was re-elected as Chairman, Caroline Rees was re-elected as Vice Chairman and Treasurer, and the Clerk was re-appointed as Secretary.

Main items of discussion included the Classic Car Show on 18 May 2025, managing maintenance of the nature area by a contractor rather than volunteers, and consultation with residents on the proposed goal end basketball and netball hoop. The next meeting will be held on 11 September 2024 at 7pm, predominantly to discuss Classic Car Show preparations.

Cllr Rees confirmed that the Classic Car Show on Sunday 18 May 2025 will also be held to celebrate the 40th anniversary since the Frank Montgomery Playing Field was gifted to the parish. All proceeds from the event will be used towards new equipment for the playing field. St Andrew's Church, Village Hall and the Primary School be invited to have stall/s for their own fundraising purposes. The number of cars can be limited accordingly to accommodate a potential increase in stalls. The School Sports Day took place today (16 July 2024) having been previously postponed due to poor weather.

Cllr Rees reported that a survey of the playing field to assess the best location for the goal end basketball and netball hoop will be undertaken on 24 July 2024. Once potential locations have been identified, residents bordering the field will be informed and invited to comment on the proposals along with the wider community.

Whilst enquiries into potential contractors to manage going forward remain ongoing, a volunteer clear-up day of the nature area has been scheduled for 10 August 2024. Cllr Rees reported that the gate padlock had to be replaced recently.

Cllr Rees also reported that a tent was found in the playing field on 14 July 2024. Cllr Rees put a post on Facebook to ask the local community if they knew of anything, for example a young person wanting to try camping for the night. This was also reported to the Police for safeguarding reasons, and officers attended to speak to the owner of the tent. The tent and its inhabitants have since moved on.

Flood Protection

Cllr Twyman reported that the Kent and South London Water Situation Report for June 2024 has been received. In summary, the Kent and South London (KSL) area received 36% of the long-term average rainfall during June. Rainfall received across catchments in the area ranged from notably low to below normal. Monthly mean flows ranged from notably low to exceptionally high. The majority of the key flow sites saw normal or above normal monthly mean flows during June. Groundwater levels continue to fall consistently across Kent and South London aquifers.

Footpaths

Cllr Sole advised Theresa McRobbie that the Parish Council needs to contact Hazel Walters at KCC to discuss the possibility of a directional sign in Stodmarsh. This follows a resident suggestion for additional signage due to an increase in vehicles using Lambkin Wall expecting to gain access to the A28 at Hersden, and drivers having difficulty locating Stodmarsh Nature Reserve. The resident has canvassed other local residents and the majority of those approached are in favour of additional signage. The Clerk agreed to contact Hazel Walters to discuss what signage may be permissible on Stodmarsh Green.

12. FINANCE

Payments

The expenditure totalling £1,899.24 was authorised, made up of:

- Safeplay Playground Services Ltd – Replacement of 2no cradle swing seats - £1,061.76
- KOMPAN – Operational Quarterly Inspection June 2024 - £96.00
- Majestic Garden Care – Playing Field Grass Cutting June 2024 - £270.00
- Chenice Howard-Sparkes – Clerk Salary July 2024
- HMRC – Employee and PAYE July 2024
- Moss Stevens – Village Hall Cleaning July 2024

The above payments were proposed by Cllr Collinson, seconded by Cllr Wrightson and AGREED thus authorised for payment.

13. CLERK REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

- i) KCC is taking part in the NHT (National Highways and Transport) Public Satisfaction Survey on highways and transport services and is inviting local councils and members of the public to participate too. Six independent surveys have been provided on the following topics; highway maintenance, accessibility, walking and cycling, public transport, road safety and tackling congestion. Each survey takes approximately a few minutes to complete and the greater the take-up of the surveys, the more useful they will be in helping to understand the priorities and concerns of people who live or work in Kent. Deadline for comments is 28 February 2025. Visit <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/nht-survey-2024-25> to take part.
- ii) The first Road Safety & Active Travel Group (RSATG) quarterly newsletter has been received and circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting.
- iii) KALC circulated information on Southeast Landbased Training Courses. Cllr Wrightson expressed an interest in attending the Basic Tree Inspection Course, and the Clerk agreed to make further enquiries.
- iv) Parish councils are being asked to support The Safety of Electric-Powered Micromobility Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill, which aims to ensure greater safety in the use and disposal of lithium batteries. The Bill includes the requirement for third party independent testing for e-bikes, e-scooters and their batteries, introduction of regulations for the safe disposal of used lithium-ion batteries, and implementing a standardised approach to conversion kits to establish design and installation controls. The Parish Council was supportive of the suggestions included in the Bill and the Clerk was asked to write a letter of support.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The meeting closed at 9.07pm.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....