

**WICKHAMBREAUX PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 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
Parish Cllr Emma Denning (from Item 04)

Mrs Chenice Howard-Sparkes, Clerk to the Council

2no 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. Apologies for absence were received from City Cllr Lee Castle (Work Commitments) and County Cllr Mike Sole (Work Commitments).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Wrightson declared an interest in planning application CA/24/01178 as owner of the property.

3. CO-OPTION

Cllr Collinson proposed and Cllr Twyman seconded, and all councillors voted in favour, that voting be held via signed ballot rather than a show of hands, as permitted under Section 3(s) in the Standing Orders. To be elected, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of votes, as outlined under Section 8 in the Standing Orders.

After a signed ballot for each vacancy in turn, the following candidates were co-opted onto the Parish Council:

- First Vacancy – Emma Denning with 5 votes,
- Second Vacancy – Laura Tarling with 5 votes.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2024

It was proposed by Cllr Wrightson, seconded by Cllr Barber and AGREED that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 16 July 2024 be accepted as a true record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

5. INFORMATION FROM MATTERS ARISING

11(Footpaths) – The Clerk reported that Hazel Walters, KCC Operations Manager, has confirmed an official request for a directional sign in Stodmarsh needs to be submitted to the Highways Improvement Team for further investigation and consideration. The Clerk confirmed a request was submitted on 01 September 2024 and agreed to chase for a response.

6. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS

County Cllr Mike Sole

Cllr Sole reported that he has been liaising with KCC on the progress of a number of highway improvements across parishes. Locally, some of the upcoming projects include additional SLOW markings near Cherville Lane and work on the Drill Lane ford in Ickham, and 20mph limits along Jubilee Road, Church Lane and Nargate Street in Littlebourne.

Long overdue changes to bin collection rounds this summer resulted in significantly more problems than anticipated. Many bins were missed as crews got used to new rounds. Collections were worst in the rural areas and where there are communal bins but once settled in, the new rounds will be more efficient. CCC has apologised to residents for the poor service

experienced. If you have any problems with bin collections, please report online or call 01227 947860.

Cllr Sole has also been assisting residents with housing issues, bins, council tax, parish council funding, anti-social behaviour and potholes. Cllr Sole also visited the Canterbury Mosque to show support during the significant trouble elsewhere in the country last month. Following on from the successful joint surgery with Bridge Parish Council, another one is being organised for late September.

City Cllr Lee Castle

Cllr Castle commented it was excellent to hear that all the hard work from residents, councillors and parish councils helped to push back the scheduled A257 closure. Cllr Mike Sole took the lead in pushing for the closure to be amended or cancelled. When the closure does take place (no date announced), it is hoped there will be more joined up thinking to minimise disruption. Cllr Twyman reported that the A257 Group has requested an action plan for the closure, but this has not been received to date.

As referenced in Cllr Sole's report above, there have been a number of issues with bin collections. The changes to rounds, working practices, more engagement from management and the IT support team have seen improvements.

Elsewhere, in Patricbourne the 20mph speed limit zone is moving forward and Cllr Castle has been dealing with case work around social housing and bin collections, in Wickhambreaux Cllr Castle has been chasing outstanding issues relating to housing and waste collections, and in Adisham Cllr Castle has been chasing tree and bin problems, flytipping and housing cases. On 31 August 2024, Cllr Castle attended the Ickham Fayre and Dog Show, and he also attended the Police Engagement Session in Littlebourne on 03 September 2024.

Cllr Castle was pleased to see progress from KCC and various agencies with regards to a court order to stop waste-dumping along Swanton Lane. There appears to have been an increase in flytipping in mostly rural and remote roads over the summer. Residents are encouraged to report these online to CCC.

7. HIGHWAYS

Cllr Twyman reported he has submitted a fault report to KCC regarding the 30mph limit sign near Kelsey Farms which needs realigning, and the signpost at the bottom of Wickham Court Lane which needs repairing. A number of potholes have also been reported.

In the interim period, Cllr Twyman also reported that KCC closed Drill Lane from 16 August 2024 for up to 21 days 100m either side of the ford due to slippery road surface conditions. Ickham Parish Council is pushing KCC for more improvements to minimise the risk of accidents in the future.

The Clerk reported that she has received a response from Hazel Walters, KCC Operations Manager, regarding Burnt House Hill in Stodmarsh. Whilst some remedial works were undertaken earlier this year to address the defects at the side of the road, Hazel Walters advised that KCC will not be resurfacing the road at this point as it is mainly used as a short cut for a local farmer. If the road has significantly deteriorated again, KCC may need to close the road altogether. Cllr Twyman suggested a site meeting with Hazel Walters and the local farmer to discuss this further, which was unanimously agreed. The Clerk agreed to request a meeting.

Cllr Twyman reported that due to works planned to be undertaken by Openreach, KCC has given notice that Grove Road in the vicinity of the junction with Grove Ferry Road will be closed on 10 October 2024, for up to one day, between the hours of 09:30 and 15:30.

8. PLANNING

New Applications

CA/24/01178 – Wickhambreaux Court, The Green

In the interim period, a retrospective application was received for the installation of a boundary fence to the east boundary together with a sauna. Deadline for comments was 30 August 2024. The Parish Council had no objections.

Pending Application Updates

Cllr Collinson reported that he understands from Cllr Castle that the Stodmarsh SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) catchment area is being reconsidered. If the boundary changes, it may impact on a number of pending applications in the locality.

EN/21/00287 – Grove Road Caravans on Preston Marshes

Cllr Twyman reported that some unauthorised landscaping works and informal dumping of waste appear to be undertaken on the site. The Clerk was asked to contact CCC Enforcement and the Environment Agency.

Determined Applications

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

CCC has granted the application for an open sided outbuilding for use as a music stage.

CA/24/00953 – The Red Lion, Stodmarsh Road

CCC has granted the application for various works to 4no trees in the rear garden area subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

CA/24/00912 – 17 Grove Road

CCC has granted the application for an outbuilding for use as an annexe.

9. NALC MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Clerk advised that NALC has updated their model financial regulations. Cllr Collinson proposed and Cllr Rees seconded, and all councillors RESOLVED to adopt the new Financial Regulations to reflect the NALC model template with the following two amendments:

- 7.1 – the model regulations now state the clerk can be a signatory. This will be amended to state “the clerk may be an authorised signatory in *extenuating circumstances*”.
- 9.1 – addition to state “*debit cards can also be issued to members of the Parish Council Committees at the discretion and resolution of the relevant Committee*”.

10. QUOTATIONS FOR VARIOUS TREE WORKS

Cllr Wrightson reported that he approached 3no companies for quotations to undertake various tree works identified in the latest annual survey. Two quotations have been received to date as follows:

- Contractor A – £1,560.00 including VAT
- Contractor B – £1,370.00 including VAT

All councillors RESOLVED to instruct Contractor B, Beechwood Tree Specialists. Cllr Wrightson agreed to instruct Beechwood Tree Specialists on behalf of the Parish Council.

11. FOOTPATH MAP

Following Faith Wright’s resignation, Cllr Barber has been following up on the printing of the replacement parish footpath map, now to be located on the small green rather. Mickle Printing Solutions previously produced a draft following various meetings with Faith Wright, but the map had not been sent to print due to Covid-19 and other factors.

Following discussions with Faith Wright and a local resident, Cllr Barber suggested a number of alterations to Mickle Printing Solutions including updating identification boxes to match KCC PROW (Public Rights of Way) map colour, match legend colours, and addition of QR code to access KCC PROW map. To undertake these amendments, in addition to the work already carried out to date, amounts to £465.00 plus VAT. Printing of the map itself will be £45.00 plus VAT.

The Clerk advised that £300.00 was initially budgeted for the project in April 2018. However, at the Parish Council meeting on 15 October 2019, Faith Wright advised the map would likely be in the region of £500.00 to £600.00.

As Mickle Printing Solutions own the copyright to the draft, it is not possible to obtain comparison quotations. All councillors RESOLVED to instruct Mickle Printing Solutions to proceed with making the changes outlined above and print the map for £510.00 plus VAT. Cllr Barber agreed to instruct and liaise with Mickle Printing Solutions on behalf of the Parish Council.

12. QUOTATIONS FOR CLEANING AND TREATING PLAY EQUIPMENT

Cllr Rees reported that the Playing Field Committee is recommending that all the play equipment and the benches in the playing field be professionally cleaned and treated. By cleaning the moss and re-treating the timber play equipment and benches, this should assist with extending the longevity of the assets. This has not been undertaken previously.

Cllr Rees and the Clerk have undertaken site visits with two companies at the playing field, and a further two companies have indicated they will provide a desk-based quotation based on existing knowledge of the playing field and/or photos. Two quotations have been received to date. It was unanimously agreed to defer this item until further quotations have been received.

13. QUOTATIONS FOR REGULAR MAINTENANCE OF NATURE AREA

Whilst volunteer working groups have been used in the past to maintain the nature area, a long-term solution needs to be agreed to ensure this is managed properly as required. The local gardening group has been approached, but they do not feel in a position to commit to this long-term.

Cllr Rees reported she has approached Majestic Garden Care, who currently mow the playing field, to ask how much they would charge to add this to their existing contract.

14. QUOTATIONS FOR PAYROLL SERVICES

The Clerk reported that payroll provider DM Payroll has given notice of an increase in the administration of the Parish Council's payroll from £132.00 to £144.00 annually, amounting to £12.00 a month. The Clerk contacted two companies to seek comparison quotations to ensure value for money. One company did not respond and the other quoted £240.00 annually (£20.00 a month). The Clerk recommended remaining with DM Payroll, which was unanimously RESOLVED.

15. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is seeking views on how the Government might revise national planning policy to achieve sustainable growth. Further information can be found by clicking the following link – [Proposed Planning Changes](#).

Specified proposals included in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied, include:

- Make the standard method for assessing housing needs mandatory, requiring local authorities to plan for the resulting housing need figure, planning for a lower figure only

when they can demonstrate hard constraints and that they have exhausted all other options

- Reverse other changes to the NPPF made in December 2023 which were detrimental to housing supply
- Implement a new standard method and calculation to ensure local plans are ambitious enough to support the government's manifesto commitment of 1.5 million new homes in this Parliament
- Broaden the existing definition of brownfield land, set a strengthened expectation that applications on brownfield land will be approved and that plans should promote an uplift in density in urban areas
- Identify grey belt land within the Green Belt, to be brought forward into the planning system through both plan and decision-making to meet development needs
- Improve the operation of 'the presumption' in favour of sustainable development, to ensure it acts as an effective fail safe to support housing supply by clarifying the circumstances in which it applies; and introducing new safeguards to make clear that its application cannot justify poor quality development
- Deliver affordable, well-designed homes, with new "golden rules" for land released in the Green Belt to ensure it delivers in the public interest
- Make wider changes to ensure that local planning authorities are able to prioritise the types of affordable homes their communities need on all housing development and that the planning system supports a more diverse housebuilding sector
- Support economic growth in key sectors, aligned with the government's industrial strategy and future local growth plans, including laboratories, gigafactories, datacentres, digital economies and freight and logistics – given their importance to our economic future
- Deliver community needs to support society and the creation of healthy places
- Support clean energy and the environment, including through support for onshore wind and renewables

Alongside these specific changes, the consultation is also seeking views on:

- Whether to reform the way the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime applies to onshore wind, solar, data centres, laboratories, gigafactories and water projects, as the first step of the Government's NSIP reform plans;
- Whether the local plan intervention policy criteria should be updated or removed, so the Government can intervene where necessary to ensure housing delivery; and
- Proposals to increase some planning fees, including for householder applications, so that local planning authorities are properly resourced to support a sustained increase in development and improve performance.

All councillors RESOLVED to respond to the application, focusing on the requirement to submit applications for tree works and the potential introduction of fees. Cllr Collinson agreed to submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council.

16. VILLAGE CARETAKER

All councillors RESOLVED to defer this item until budget setting in November 2024.

17. REQUEST FOR PARKING ON THE LARGE GREEN

A request has been received from a local military vehicle club to park on the large green on either 13 or 20 October 2024 from 12pm to 2.30pm while they hold a lunch meeting in The Rose Public House. Parking would be for approximately 12 vehicles the size of a jeep. All councillors RESOLVED to decline the request due to concerns regarding potential damage due to the drainage run, as well as the likelihood of poor weather in October.

18. CLLRS' REPORTS

KALC

The most recent KALC Canterbury Area Committee meeting was held on 02 September 2024. Main items of discussion included the government consultation on proposed changes to the

NPPF (Item 15 above) and reimbursement of expenses and cost of KALC training. A presentation was also given by the Kent Resilience Team on Community Resilience Planning. The next meeting will be held in January 2025, date to be confirmed.

Village Hall Committee

Cllr Rees reported that the refurbishment works to the toilets and various other minor works have now been completed. The family BBQ Social Saturday event on 31 August 2024 had to be cancelled as the works had not been completed prior to the event. The next Social Saturday will be 'Soup Saturday' on 12 October 2024 from 12pm to 1.30pm.

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

Playing Field Committee

The most recent meeting was held on 11 September 2024. Main items of discussions included an update on the basketball hoop project, the Classic Car Show, maintenance of the nature area, and cleaning and treating of the play equipment. Cllr Rees also wished to thank the 11 residents who volunteered during the nature area clear up on behalf of the Committee.

C. Rees confirmed that the Classic Car Show will be held on Sunday 18 May 2025 from 11am to 4pm. Initial enquiries are being made whether it's possible to have permanent utility connections in the playing field for use at events, which would be locked away when not in use.

Cllr Rees reported that the replacement double balance beam was installed on 09 August 2024. The current bank balance as at 11 September 2024 is £7,238.85, including £500.00 from the Four Villages Post Office and Shop (4VPOS) towards the replacement balance beams. Cllr Rees reported that the Committee has received a very generous donation of £2,000 towards obtaining raffle prizes for the Classic Car Show from a member of the public.

Cllr Rees reported that a section of fencing in private ownership adjacent to the public footpath running from The List to Seaton Road was in poor state of repair and has had to be replaced with temporary fencing. The entire stretch of fencing will need to be replaced, and Cllr Rees recommended the landowner apply to KCC to temporarily shut the footpath to enable the works to be carried out as efficiently and safely as possible. The Committee had no objections to a temporary closure of the footpath.

The next Committee meeting will be held on 15 January 2025 at 6pm. An informal meeting has also been scheduled for 30 October 2024 to discuss Classic Car Show arrangements.

Village Greens

At the Parish Council meeting on 19 June 2024, it was agreed a review will be undertaken of the contract to ensure it is meeting resident and Parish Council expectations. In tandem with this, Cllr Wrightson proposed obtaining quotations to address the weeds and patchy areas, which was unanimously agreed.

Flood Protection

Cllr Twyman reported that the aquifer is very high so if there is heavy rainfall over the autumn and winter months, there is the potential for localised flooding. Cllr Twyman reported that the next meeting of the Little Stour and Nailbourne River Group will likely be brought forward from February 2025 to November 2024, date to be confirmed.

Speedwatch

The Clerk reported that Ickham Parish Council has a new lead councillor, Cllr Sandra Claxton. Following the co-option of two new councillors, Wickhambreaux Parish Council will look to appoint a lead councillor/s at the next Parish Council meeting. Once a lead has been appointed, the two councils will discuss how to move forward with getting the joint group more active.

Footpaths

Cllr Barber provided the following updates:

- Footpath CB130 – Cllr Barber has spoken with the landowner directly, who has subsequently cut back overgrown vegetation.
- Footpath CB139 – Cllr Barber has reported one missing and one dangerous stile, missing footpath sign from the main road going into Stodmarsh, and that the entrance to footpath is blocked to KCC PROW. No response received to date.
- Footpath CB140 – Cllr Barber has spoken with the landowner directly, who has cleared a tree that was blocking the path.
- Footpath CB184 – Cllr Barber confirmed KCC PROW has allocated cutting back vegetation on the footpath and this should be carried out within 10 weeks. As the footpath is located in Ickham, Ickham Parish Council took the lead with KCC.

19. FINANCE

Payments

The expenditure totalling £5,279.47 was authorised, made up of:

- DM Payroll Services Ltd – Administration of payroll April-September 2024 - £66.00
- Chenice Howard-Sparkes – Reimbursement for annual Microsoft 365 Subscription - £59.99
- Majestic Garden Care – Playing Field Grass Cutting August 2024 - £180.00
- Collett Builders – VAT shortfall for Village Hall WC Cubicles and Internal Door Widening works - £1,818.54
- Collett Builders – Final balance for Village Hall WC Cubicles and other miscellaneous works including installation of 2no soap dispensers, outside tap and fixing sensor light - £2,599.26
- Caroline Rees – Reimbursement for additional Sum-Up card machines - £50.00
- Chenice Howard-Sparkes – Clerk Salary September 2024
- Gail Hubbard – 2no hours overtime to cover the Clerk while on holiday on 06 August 2024
- HMRC – Employee and PAYE September 2024
- Moss Stevens – Village Hall Cleaning September 2024

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

The following payments totalling £4,727.00 were authorised in the interim period:

- KALC – Charing Meetings Effectively Training Course 18 July 2024 (Cllr Peter Collinson) - £44.40
- KALC – Charing Meetings Effectively Training Course 23 September 2024 (Cllr Caroline Rees) - £44.40
- Majestic Garden Care – Playing Field Grass Cutting July 2024 - £270.00
- Collett - VAT Shortfall for Internal Upgrading Works - £2,171.36
- Safeplay – Installation of replacement double balance beam - £1,674.00
- Chenice Howard-Sparkes – Clerk Salary August 2024
- HMRC – Employee and PAYE August 2024
- Moss Stevens – Village Hall Cleaning August 2024

It was unanimously RESOLVED to add Cllr Denning and Cllr Tarling to the bank mandate as signatories.

20. CLERK REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

- i) The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) has a new training course available to clerks on the Principles of Internal Auditing Local Councils (PIALC). This course is an online sector specific learning course designed to establish a more regulated and standardised process for internal auditing within local councils. The course covers essential principles and guidelines to ensure effective and efficient internal audit practices. Normally the course is £120.00 plus VAT however, the Clerk has successfully secured a bursary to attend free of charge. The course needs to be started within 30 days and the Clerk has 12

months to complete it. It was unanimously RESOLVED the Clerk should undertake the training.

- ii) KCC is seeking views on their draft Local Transport Plan – Striking the Balance. The document sets out a clear plan for transport in Kent, which aims to improve all types of journeys. Deadline for comments is 08 October 2024. For more information and to comment, please visit www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5.
- iii) NALC has recently unveiled a newly updated list of template HR policies. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Collinson check the policies, with a view to recommending relevant policies to full council for adoption at a future meeting.
- iv) The next virtual Parish Engagement Meeting with CCC will be held on 09 October 2024. The agenda includes Climate Change Action Plan, Consultation Strategy, Concurrent Function Funding and Capital Grants. The deadline for submitting Capital Grant applications is midday on 06 December 2024.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (i) Cllr Twyman reported that St Andrew’s Church Harvest Festival will be held on 20 October 2024.

The meeting closed at 9.12pm.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....