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Minutes of the Parish Council held on Thursday 13th July 2023 at 7.30pm in Chilham Village Hall

Councillors Present: G. Schofield (Chair), K. Uncle (KU) (Deputy Chair), G. Meaden, S. Barrett, A. Watkins, V Hutchinson & A. Webb.

Also Present: P. Coles (PC) (Clerk to the Council), and six members of the public.

Councillor Apologies: Not applicable

Councillor Absentee: S. T. Dixon

AGENDA

Item

2023/090 Apologies for Absence
S.T. Dixon

2023/091 Declarations of Interests And / Or Lobbying Councillors S. Barrett & A. Watkins fruit from farm shop for COSY

2023/092 Minutes Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council

2023/092.1 To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2023.

2023/092.2 To receive an update on any matters arising not included in the agenda.

2023/093 Questions from Residents

Question raised from the public. Are the Parish Council aware that a 5 Day Notification NOT/2023/1289 to fell 22 trees that are described as being in poor condition in Woodland on Taylors Hill, has been lodged with Ashford Borough Council. Will the Parish Council be opposing the application.

Responding to the Question. The Parish Council are aware of the application. The application to fell the Trees is supported by Ashford Borough Council's Tree Officer. The owner of the land provided information on their plans for the site, including the report produced by Invicta Arboriculture on the state of the Trees requiring felling. The Chair asked Councillors to confirm whether they accepted the recommendation of the Tree Officer. **Decision: Councillors agreed to support the decision of the Tree Officer.**

**2023/094 Borough Councillors, Policing:
Borough Councillor's Report – July 13th 2023**

Since the last CPC meeting, I seem to have been particularly busy. I have attended several other Parish Council meetings, a couple of OWL Big Breakfasts (which I can thoroughly recommend), handled a large number of individual casework type problems, attended three ABC Councillor training sessions, have read

through an what seems to be an enormous number of reports and just this week have been to the ABC Ashford offices 5 times for assorted meetings.

Some more specific points to mention:

As I probably mentioned last time, but it needs reinforcing, there are increasing problems with overgrown trees and hedges. This is proving very challenging especially at this time of the year when growth is prolific. There are several places where overgrown hedges are bad such as along the paved side of the Selling Road. There are also places where the Council says that there is no problem when patently there is, e.g. opposite Dave Cauldron's garage on the Street in Chilham. In Old Wives Lees there are at least three street lamps that are hidden in high hedges or trees.

Noise is another perennial problem. Two particularly bad cases that I'm trying to address are (1) loud music being played on our own Latin Field and which is annoying several residents in both Green Lane and Selling Road, and (2) the almost continuing dog barking coming from the back garden of a house in Lower Lees (part of Cobbs Hill). I have been sent two recordings of this barking and it does indeed seem to be excessive. In fact, earlier this week I stood outside the front of the premises in question for about 15 minutes and the barking was indeed almost continuous. It was in my opinion totally unacceptable. The Council say that they have visited the premises but when they went there no dogs were to be found; my informant told me that, knowing the Council were doing an inspection, the dogs had been temporarily removed.

I still have no news on the gas converter due to be sited on the village green near the corner of Cobbs Hill and Cherry Orchard. A reminder has been sent to the Council on this. And also, I am still waiting to hear from the Council about a potential compulsory purchase of the dilapidated Peacock building on Chilham Square, i.e. a listed building which has been neglected for perhaps 25 years. There has been no noticeable advancement on the proposed solar farm at North Court Farm though we can assume that things have been going on behind the scenes. There are several major reasons why the solar farm "industry" nationally is almost on hold at present. In a similar vein, developments on the proposed artificial wetland on the Stour near the Chilham sewage processing plant are being slow to materialise, though this may be welcome by some.

And finally, to the issue that has most concerned me during the past month. No doubt most of you will be aware that some tree felling has commenced in the woodland alongside the A252 road near to Taylors Hill car park. This was mentioned at the last CPC meeting. This felling was unauthorised – permission should have been obtained because there are two Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on the trees here. Incidentally, and to put the record straight, at our previous Parish Council meeting we were given entirely incorrect information about the TPOs. The ABC tree people acted fairly quickly to stop the felling but not before some damage had been done to the understorey. In order keep an eye on what is going on here I recently had a lengthy meeting with ABC's tree officer plus some correspondence with site's new owner. The situation presently is that the owner has a right to fell diseased, dead, or dangerous trees on this site having gained knowledge about these trees from both the ABC tree officer and a qualified licenced Arbo culturalist. Contrary to what has been stated elsewhere, I am well satisfied that both of these persons are acting with due discretion. They have identified and marked 22 additional trees that can be felled or where remedial action needs to take place. This action will occur in the very near future.

However, what I am not satisfied with are the owner's intentions for the future of this site. This site forms part of the Chilham Conservation area. Conservation means precisely what it "says on the tin." In this case it is the preservation of the existing desirable ambience. And conservation is not just about buildings – it can also refer to the existing natural environment. But, contrary to the conservation ethos, the new owner of the woodland has just this week said that he has engaged a garden designer to present plans for the development of the public area with footpaths, and a sculpture trail. But I have reason to believe that he has (or has had) intentions to go further than this. In my humble opinion almost all local small areas of what we might call "more natural nature" need to be conserved. Surely, we can all see that the planet is already being figuratively "trampled to death." Nature is being squeezed out and England is now the most de-natured country in Europe. Biodiversity is crashing at an accelerating rate. But thankfully many of us are fighting back and doing our best to re-install some of our natural environments. The saving of what is left of our more nature friendly environments must be continued in our Parish.

Finally, Can I suggest that our relevant committee seeks to establish the limitations of development in a rural conservation area such as Chilham? From what I have found to date it appears that the owner can, within small limitations, do pretty much as he pleases.

Geoff Meaden

2023/095 Bike Racks

Proposed investigating whether bike racks can be installed at Old Wives Lees Village Hall, Chilham Square, Chilham Village Hall and the Sports Hall

2023/096 Proposal to set up working group to oversee Village Green, Latins Fields including Childrens play areas.

Decision: Agreed.

Working Group: Councillors K. Uncle, S. Barrett & A. Watkins

2023/097 Dog Bin

Decision: Agreed to approach Ashford Borough Council to site a Dog Bin by the Salt Bin on Mulberry Hill

2023/098 Chilham Fete-deferred

2023/099 Working Groups

To receive reports

2023/099.1 Finance & General Purposes:

2023/099.1.1 Financial Transactions-Appendix 1 refers

2023/099.1.2 Update on the annual accounts.

Annual accounts submitted to External Auditors, unaudited accounts published on the website and in all Parish Council Notice Boards.

2023/099.2 Planning

2023/099.2.1 Planning Applications

Case Reference: PA/2023/1098

Location: 1 Vernon Cottages, Beaney's Lane, Chilham, Canterbury, Kent CT4 8JB

Proposal: First floor side extension

Decision: The Parish Council has no objections to the application

2023/099.2.2 Planning Decisions

None received.

2023/099.3 Communications and Information technology

2023/077.3.1 To receive a report from the Working Group on Communications

The WG has met 3 times.

- 1) 21 Jun 23 by Zoom to convene and decide how to run the group, review "portfolio" of projects, tasks, urgencies, and priorities.
- 2) 27 Jun 23 by Zoom (with Clerk) – to progress implementation of new website/mail hosting.
- 3) 12 Jul 23 in person – detailed planning of practical communications strategies and tools plus themes for future newsletters and blogs for remainder of 2023.

A number of our discussions are still "works in progress" and we look forward to sharing with full Council when they become solid proposals as soon as possible.

Following Colin Topley's resignation from Council, we agreed that for the interim period, Gill Schofield joins the WG to ensure a full complement of members and critical mass.

There are two key matters the Working Group wishes to bring to Council for resolution.

A. Telephone dedicated for use by Clerk

At full CPC meeting on 15th June 2023 it was noted that telephone number for Clerk on website and Parish Magazine was out of date (minute 2023/084). This has been removed and it was agreed to provide mobile phone for Clerk's use.

When looking at options, possibility of a subscription to an on line service (Voice Over Internet Protocol – VOIP) was identified. This would allow call diversion to personal phone numbers which would be withheld.

www.bOnline.com has been identified as a suitable service, providing unlimited incoming call time for £6.00+VAT monthly (12 month subscription) - comparable with a basic mobile phone subscription.

Working Group supported this proposal (21Jun 23).

Decision: Agreed

B. Provision of laptop computers exclusively for Parish Council business

While this has been discussed previously by Council, the WG seeks a resolution to progress this high priority project. Full details of the proposal are in the attached paper.

Decision: Agreed

2023/099.4.1 Events

2023/099.4.1 To receive a report from the Working Group on Events
None received.

2023/099.5 Environment & Open Spaces

2023/099.5.1 To receive a report from the Working Group
Decision: Agreed to Quote from D Todd of £250 for labour and materials to install shelves in the phone box at Old Wives Lees Village Hall.

2023/099.6 Chilham Parish Youth Club

2023/099.6.1 To receive a report from the Working Group
Report delivered at the Annual Parish Meeting

2023/099.7 Chilham Square

2023/099.7.1 To receive a report of the Working Group
No update

2023/100 Correspondence

List of items received during the period 1st June 2023 – 30th June 2023, (Appendix 2)

2023/101 Matters for Further Discussion

Decision: The Clerk is authorised to sign Southern Gas Networks Heads of Terms for gas governor replacement at Cherry Trees, Old Wives Lees.

2023/102 Date and Time of Next Meeting

To confirm the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 7th September 2023 at 7.00 pm in Old Wives Lees Village Hall

Appendix 1

Transaction Date	Transaction Description	Debit Amount
30/06/2023	NEST	28.26
26/06/2023	P E COLES EXPENSES	191.13
21/06/2023	OFFCUMDUNS	150
21/06/2023	A J KILBEE	100
21/06/2023	BOURNE TO GARDEN	390
21/06/2023	BILTING FARM SELF	46
21/06/2023	CHILHAM PARISH REC	80
21/06/2023	VICTORY CLEANING	679.7
14/06/2023	SPOTON.NET LTD	64.8
12/06/2023	RENTOKIL INITIAL	86.94
02/06/2023	P E COLES EXPENSES	112.73

02/06/2023	AJGIBL GBP CLIENT	1373.08
02/06/2023	BOURNE TO GARDEN	390

Appendix 2

Item	Date
Chief Executive's Briefing - Handlebars v cars campaign	02/06/2023
Adult Social Care - Digital Front Door Webinar Training	02/06/2023
Chief Executive's Briefing - Ashford Food and Drink Festival	05/06/2023
Kent Bus Service Changes Bulletin - May, June, July, August 2023	06/06/2023
KALC ASHFORD: INVOLVEMENT IN HIGHWAYS ASPECTS OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS	06/06/2023
Black Mirror - Season 6 (2023) - Kent Film Office - FILMED IN KENT	08/06/2023
Join KALC for our Venue Based Introduction to Planning Learning Event at Tenterden Town Council!	08/06/2023
Join KALC for a venue based Dynamic Councillor Learning Event at Stone Parish Council	08/06/2023
Training Events - Woodland Management and Community Resilience	09/06/2023
Update on rural policing in Kent OPCC/MS/OG/006/23	12/06/2023
Map to show building confines for Old Wives Lees re planning application PA/2023/0878	12/06/2023
Updated list of contact details for Parish Clerks	13/06/2023
Draft Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 and Draft Kent Mineral Sites Plan - Regulation 18 Public Consultation June 2023	13/06/2023
Your latest news from South East Water	13/06/2023
Kent PCC Newsletter - Special Edition 2023 OPCC/MS/OG/007/23	13/06/2023
Update on water supply problems	14/06/2023
Urgent Road Closure - Mulberry Hill and Cobbs Hill, Chilham - 20th June 2023 (Ashford)	15/06/2023

Invitation for D-Day 80 - 6th June 2024	15/06/2023
Chief Executive Briefing no.7	15/06/2023
D-Day 80 celebrations	20/06/2023
FW: Free Energy Champion webinar	20/06/2023
Chief Executive Briefing - Council takes rough sleeping outreach service in-house	21/06/2023
KALC Ashford: Agenda for meeting on Wednesday 5th July 2023	22/06/2023
Chief Executive Briefing - Festival in the Park	27/06/2023
RE: Grass Pitch Funding - Town & Parish Council	28/06/2023
Chief Executive Briefing - The Victoria Park Extravaganza	29/06/2023