

ORLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Orlestone Parish Council's Meeting held on Monday 5th February 2024 at 7pm in Hamstreet Sports Pavilion, Pound Lees, Hamstreet.

Present: Parish Councillors: Andy Othen (Chairman), Mike Wady (Vice-Chairman), Dave Farrell, Sid Gittens, Sadie Mitchell, Basil Smith, Mags Wellsted-Boorman, David White and the Parish Clerk (Sue Stiffell).

Also Present: Borough Councillors Aline Hicks and David Ledger.

Public Comments & Observations: *This being an opportunity for parishioners to speak or ask questions.*
No questions arose.

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Steve Newton (prior engagement) those present agreed that these apologies be accepted. Apologies were also received from Kent County Councillor David Robey.

2. **Declarations of Interest:**

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest (relating to items on this agenda made in order to comply with the Kent Code of Conduct): None were made at this point from Councillors present.

Declarations of Significant Interest (relating to items on this agenda made in order to comply with the Kent Code of Conduct): The following declarations of interest were received: Sid Gittens and Dave Farrell, Basil Smith members of The Hamstreet Men in Sheds, Mags Wellsted-Boorman: HDSL A Member, David White: Allotment Holder.

3 **Minutes From OPC's Meeting Held on 4th December 2023: To be Authorised As Being A Correct Record:** Basil Smith proposed that the minutes from the meeting held on 4th December 2023 be accepted as a correct record and signed/authorised by the Chairman of the current meeting. Dave Farrell seconded this proposal which was agreed by those present.

4. **Matters Arising From Minutes of The Meeting Held on 4th December 2023**

- Willow Trees – Pond Area (near Cotton Hill House): Aspire had been contacted and asked where it would be best to plant the two willow trees. They had passed this query on to ABC; no further response had been received. Cotton Hill House had been contacted and asked where they thought the best place would be to plant the 2 willow trees; no response to date had been received.

Those present agreed that due to the lack of response the trees would be planted in the most suitable spot and ABC would be informed, arrangements would be made to have tree protectors placed around the trees.

- Southern Water: No response had been received relating to the parish council's queries asking if there were any type of planned extension to the sewage works in Warehorne Road and a request that the parish council be kept up to date regarding issues in the parish.

During discussion regarding the boundary of Orlestone Parish Council it was agreed that a map showing the existing boundaries be sought.

5. **Extension to Pounds Leas Recreation Ground: Finance & Loan Review:** Following the last meeting the Chief Executive at the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) had been sent an application for borrowing approval; information provided included the minutes from the last meeting held on 4th December 2023, a business plan, financial information including Precept details, a financial forecast and information regarding the parish council's public consultation held on the project. The Clerk had contacted the Chief Executive over the weekend asking for an update and if further information was required.

During discussion it was noted that the Precept request had been made and would rise by some 52%; in real terms this equated to approximately £1.39 a month rise for a band D property. The Clerk was asked to find out when the Precept was last raised. The Clerk is to chase for a response

at the end of the week and provide a copy of the minutes from the last meeting that were now authorised.

Mags reported that the HDSLAs were looking at fund raising and being proactive with various projects including an external gym.

For Information: Section 1 of The Localism Act 2011 The General Power of Competence enables a local authority to borrow and to make loans under this Act.

A parish council may borrow funds but will normally require the formal written approval of the Secretary of State. Councils wishing to borrow will have to get in touch with the County Association, whether a member or not, to discuss the proposal and to obtain the Application Form for the approval.

The Public Works Loan Board The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) is a statutory body that issues loans to local authorities, and other specified bodies, from the National Loans Fund. In practice, the PWLB function has been carried out by the United Kingdom Debt Management Office (DMO) since July 2002. The PWLB currently operates within a policy framework set by HM Treasury

The PWLB's interest rates are determined by HM Treasury in accordance with section 5 of the National Loans Act 1968. Since 2004, major local authorities have been able to borrow (mainly for capital projects) without government consent, provided they can afford the borrowing costs. To this end, they are required by law to have regard to the Prudential Code

The PWLB does not require information on the purpose for a loan. Responsibility for local authority spending and borrowing decisions lies with the locally-elected members of the council, who are democratically accountable to their electorates

- 6. War Memorial Project: Update & Finance:** Sid reported that he and Paul Hirst had met to discuss which building contractors should be contacted for the project and were now currently waiting for quotations. The Clerk was asked to contact Abby Shepherd who dealt with grants at ABC to find out if there are any funds that OPC could apply for.

- 7. Johnsons Corner: 80th Anniversary:** Denis Seton from the Hamstreet Branch of the Royal British Legion is helping to co-ordinate a service on Saturday 13th April 2024. There will be a minute's silence at 11am followed by a service and refreshments in the Victory Hall. He is hoping that representatives from the parish council will be able to attend. It was agreed that OPC would provide a wreath for the service; the parish clerk is to contact Dennis Seton to organise this.

- 8. Reports/Updates Received From Representatives of the Community Including Kent County Councillor David Robey & Borough Councillors:**

Kent County Councillor David Robey: on tendering his apologies had provided a report that had been circulated to members via email. Paper copies were made available.

Report: The budget issue continues to dominate at KCC, but we will achieve a balanced budget in 2023/2024. Next year, 2024/2025, is still proving problematical, due to Adult Social Care & Health & Children's Services. This will lead to cuts in other services that will affect many people, but which are unavoidable. The Government announced two weeks ago another £500m nationally for Local Authorities to help with Adult Social Care, but this is a drop in the ocean, and although helpful, will not significantly impact the underlying issue, and its consequences.

We have now started the project to completely revise how we approach roadworks, particularly those undertaken by the utilities. This will not be easy, but I am confident that we can improve the current unsatisfactory situation.

Neil Baker, the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways, and I, are looking to revise our approach to Active Travel, with a view to releasing more money for basic road maintenance, especially potholes. We are also looking at new ways of actually fixing potholes.

I have had some discussions with Kent Highways about making the temporary traffic lights around the development in Hamstreet near the school work better, but if this is still a problem, then please let me know.

We need to think about the whole Loading Bay issue from scratch.

Borough Councillor Aline Hicks: reported that she had attended a seminar regarding ABC's new waste contract that was due to commence on 24th March. The good news being that there will be a narrow vehicle that will be able to travel down narrow lanes and another that cleans pavements. Aline concluded reporting that the housing crisis continued with almost 200 homeless living in temporary accommodation in the borough.

Borough Councillor David Ledger: reported that the New Local Plan 2041 was progressing with some 280 sites coming forward for inclusion. The next steps would be; these being investigated for suitability, publication of those put forward followed eventually with public consultations.

Aline Hicks and David Ledger left the meeting

6. Parish Councillor Updates/Reports:

Mags Wellsted-Boorman: reported

- The HDSLAs were making plans to decorate the pavilion internally and were looking for volunteers to help.
- Car Parking: investigation to increase car parking spaces was taking place. It was hoped that 20 bays would be installed either side of the 'lane' that run from the existing car park to the pavilion.

During discussion it was unanimously agreed that OPC would fund the creation of the new parking bays and that the HDSLAs, through fund raising would provide funding towards the project.

- A community funday was being planned for 13th and 14th July on Pound Leas Recreation Space.
- For Sale Signs: There were numerous 'For Sale' signs on public land by Lancaster Close. It was agreed that as they were not sitting on private land they would be removed. Some being in an abandoned state.

Sid Gittens: highlighted that the padlocks for the gate into Pound Leas had no padlock on it and there were numerous pot holes in the car park. It was agreed that the Clerk approach ABC (Alan Brind) and ask if this could be remedied.

During discussion it was noted that the pavements in the village were in poor condition and a tripping hazard and that McColls were considering the closing of their car park behind their shop.

Dave Farrell: reported:

- The temporary traffic lights on the road outside the school would soon be removed as the road works were nearing completion.
- Various new street signs in this area were hidden by overgrowth. During a brief discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk would put in a request to Highways to have the shrubs cut back.
- A new and improved pumping station had been installed by the canal near the garden centre.

David White: highlighted that the allotments were extremely wet at the moment and the path/track had been damaged by vans visiting the southern water pump.

Basil Smith: noted that there was a large number of rats being seen in the village; during discussion it was agreed that this was most likely caused by the two developments and ground works that were taking place which could be disturbing them.

Mike Wady: highlighted that he continued to report pot hole problems and street lights not working and was surprised recently when he reported some potholes in Dukes Meadow and Ruckinge Road that within an hour they had been marked with white lines showing that they were due to be repaired.

Sadie Mitchell: reported that there had been two road traffic incidences on Friday and another earlier on in the week. She expressed concern regarding the speed of cars travelling through the centre of the village. During discussion it was agreed that the Clerk contact the beat officer (Darren Laker) and ask him if could help and if he could think of a solution.

Chairman: noted that the play area in Lancaster Close had been upgraded and had new equipment installed.

7. Planning Update & Review Applications Received:

OTH/2024/0017

Ashstone House, Hamstreet Road, Hamstreet, Ashford, TN26 2EB – T1 – 51no. Beech – prune up

to 4m height to form a hedge-like feature on the lower crowns on both sides of the trees. It is proposed that this is undertaken up to twice annually over a ten-year period

Decision: Approved

8. **Correspondence Received:** not covered under other agenda items:

- Circulars and News Bulletins from various organisations had been forwarded via email to members.
- The gift of wine to Theroune had been sent prior Christmas, to date no reply had been received.

9. **Finance:**

Budget Review/Update: had been circulated to members prior the meeting, paper copies were made available.

Authorisation of Cheques: The following cheques were authorised for signature with the Chairman having delegated authority to approve cheques if required before the next meeting.

To	For	Amount	Cheque No
Sid Gittens	Forge Gardens: Expenses	42.72	1817
Parish Clerk	Salary for February	520.00	1817
Parish Clerk	Home as Office Expenses	120.00	1817
Community Heartbeat	Defibrillator Equipment	200.28	1816

10. **Items for Next Agenda/Any Other Business:** During discussion it was agreed that the Community Award be placed on the agenda.

11. **Date & Time of Next Meetings:**

Parish Council Meeting: Monday 4th March 2024 at 7pm

Meeting Concluded 8.50pm

Chairman's Signature: