

ORLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Orlestone Parish Council's Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2024 at 7pm in Hamstreet Sports Pavilion, Pound Lees, Hamstreet.

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

Also Present: Borough Councillor David Robey and numerous members of the public

1. **To Elect The Chairman of the Parish Council for the Municipal year 2024/25 and to receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.** Nominations for Chairman for the ensuring year were requested. Mike Wady nominated Andy Othen. David Farrell seconded this nomination; no other nominations were received. Andy Othen agreed to act as Chairman for the next 12 months and thanked those present for his nomination, he completed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
2. **To Elect the Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the Municipal Year 2024/25 and to Receive Declaration of Acceptance of Office** The Chairman requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman. Mags Wellsted-Boorman proposed Mike Wady; David White seconded this nomination; no other nominations were received. Mike Wady agreed to act as Vice-Chairman for the next 12 months and completed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
3. **To Receive and Approve the:**
 - i) Inventory/Asset Register of Council Property
 - ii) Risk Management Analysis
 - iii) Standing Orders
 - iv) Internal Financial Controls and Procedures
 - v) Freedom of Information Act – Policy
 - vi) Retention & Disposal of Documents Policy
 - vii) Data Protection Policy
 - viii) Safe Guarding Policy
 - ix) Complaints Procedure Policy
 - x) Social Media Policy

The Chairman highlighted that the policies had been circulated prior the meeting via email and in summary they asked for members to act with decorum when representing the Parish Council. No questions or queries arose and it was unanimously agreed that the policies and asset register be approved.

During a brief discussion it was agreed that one policy be examined on a monthly basis rather than all the policies at the same time which would allow better discussion for each.

4. **To Appoint Members (including Chairman and Vice-Chairman) to Orlestone Parish Council's Planning Committee.** During discussion the following was agreed:
Chairman: Mike Wady
Vice-Chairman: Sid Gittens
Members: All members
Terms of Reference: To meet on the third Monday of every month, if necessary, to discuss planning applications received and have delegated power to comment. At the discretion of the Chairman of the Planning Committee, a site meeting could replace a sit-down meeting as could a digital meeting.
5. **Appointment of Representatives onto Outside Bodies:** The following was agreed:

HDSLA:	Andy Othen & Mags Wellsted-Boorman
Victory Hall Committee:	Basil Smith
Friends of St Mary's Church	Basil Smith
Bowls Club	David White & David Farrell
Hamstreet Shed Men	Sid Gittens, David Farrell, Basil Smith
Royal British Legion: Hamstreet Branch	Andy Othen

6. Allocation of Councillors' Responsibilities: The following was agreed:

Website/Facebook	Andy Othen
Highway Issues	Mike Wady/Sid Gittens/Steve Newton
Planning:	Mike Wady & Steve Newton
Johnsons Corner	Andy Othen/Mike Wady
Designated Finance Officer	Mike Wady
Allotments	David White
Flood Wardens	Mike Wady and Dave Farrell
Forge Gardens	Sid Gittens (& Linda Gittens)
Defibrillator	Mags Wellsted-Boorman
Local Community Liaison Officer	Sadie Michell
Noticeboards	Mags Wellsted-Boorman
War Memorial	Sid Gittens
Flags	Mags/Andy Othen (All Members to Help)

7. To Fix Date & Times of Parish Council Meetings for the Ensuing Year: It was agreed that Parish Council meetings would continue to be held on the first Monday of each month except January and August, at 7pm in the Hamstreet Sports Pavilion. Confirmation of the date of the next meeting would be agreed at the meeting prior to it. Planning meetings would be held on the third Monday of each month when necessary.

8. Finance: Discuss/Agree Annual Return & End of Year Accounts, Review Internal Auditor Report, Review Annual Budget; Review Grant Applications Received Since the Last Meeting, Review Parish Councillor Allowances, Review Parish Clerk's Salary, Authorisation of Cheques

Review End of Year Accounts and Annual Governance Statement: These had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. An end of year bank reconciliation and an explanation of variations in income and expenditure from the previous financial year had also been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was unanimously agreed that the items listed from 1 to 9 in section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2023/2024 could be agreed and signed by the Chairman; that the Accounting Statements in the Annual Governance Statement were correct and could be signed by the Chairman as being so.

The Internal Auditor's report was contained in the AGAR and in a covering letter the internal auditor stated: *'I provided an Internal Audit service to Orlestone Parish Council for the financial year ending 31st March 2024 and acting independently, I examined the system of internal control by undertaking a variety of tests guided by the questions raised in the Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24 of the Local Councils Annual Return Form. On the basis of my examination, in my view the Council's system of internal controls is adequate for the purpose intended and effective.'*

Review Annual Budget: An annual budget that had been drawn up while discussing Precept setting in December 2023 was circulated with an updated budget. No questions or queries were brought forward.

Review Grant Applications Received Since the Last Meeting: An application had been received from Mr Sillibourne requesting funding of £800 plus VAT to purchase one load of type 1 roadstone to keep the surface of the Royal Military Canal footpath and byway in good enough condition for easy walking for the general public. During discussion it was noted that funding needed to be available in the case of extra expenditure relating to the proposed land purchase and that it was not the responsibility of the Parish Council to maintain footpaths. It was unanimously agreed that the grant would not be provided. The Parish Clerk was asked to contact the Borough Councillors and Kent County Councillor asking if they could help.

BREAK: A break was taken during which discussions were held regarding Planning Application No 2024/0773 with members of the public. Following discussions all members of the public left the meeting.

Review Parish Councillor Allowances: It was noted that members could apply for an allowance to cover their expenses and time being a Parish Council. During a brief discussion it was unanimously agreed that all expenses would be reimbursed to members on the provision of a receipt but an allowance would not be sought.

Review Parish Clerk's Salary: It was noted that the Parish Clerk was currently paid £15 per hour and paid to work for eight hours a week. This being £6,240 a year, £520 a month, £120 a week. The Clerk is also paid £120 a month for the use of her home as an office. During discussion it was unanimously agreed to increase the Clerk's hourly rate to £16.50 per hour.

Authorisation of Cheques: Those present agreed that the following cheques be authorized. It was noted that the Chairman had authorized various cheques since the last full meeting held in March.

To	Details	Amount	Cheque No
Parish Clerk	Salary for April	520.00	1821
Parish Clerk	Expenses: Use of Home as An Office	120.00	1821
Reimburse Clerk	Frame for Map	43.95	1822
Reimburse Clerk	Community Awards & Gifts	162.95	1822
Reimburse Clerk	Print Maps	66.00	1822
Reimburse Clerk	Print Maps (offer)	24.00	1822
ABC	Annual License Fee For Pound Leas	31.00	1823
Cosy Kettle	Refreshments: Johnsons Corner/Annual Assembly	600.00	1824
Reimburse Clerk	Flowers: Annual Assembly	20.00	1825
M Wady	Materials for Johnsons Corner: Tidy Up	45.75	1825
Land Registry	Land Registry Search (Land Next to Pound Leas)	6.00	1825
Parish Clerk	Expenses: Use of Home as An Office	120.00	1825
Parish Clerk	Salary for May	572.00	1825/1826
Internal Auditor	Internal Audit	62.00	1826
S Gittens	Reimburse Costs for Upkeep of Forge Gardens	67.93	1826
S Weeks	Tidyman: Work May to Nov 2023	367.50	1827

Those present agreed that Agenda Item No 12 be brought forward at this point of the meeting.

12. Reports/Updates Received From Representatives of the Community

Borough Councillor David Ledger: reported that the Ashford Borough Council would be going forward informally with the Local Plan 2041. It was planned that roadshows would be held during July and August in some areas. On 23rd May ABC would be holding a full council meeting during which a new Mayor would be elected and the Leader of Administration.

Parish Councillor Reports:

War Memorial: Sid Gittens reported that he had sought quotations from various builders but had yet to receive one.

Forge Gardens: Sid Gittens reported that the noticeboard located at Forge Gardens was in the process of being refurbished.

Highways: It was noted that Long Rope Road was full of pot holes and needed repairing. The Clerk is to put in a request to KCC Highways.

Following discussions Borough Councillor David Ledger left the meeting

9. Apologies: Apologies were received from Parish Councillor Basil Smith who was away; those present agreed that these apologies be accepted.

Apologies were also received from Kent County Councillor David Robey whose report had been circulated prior the meeting and Borough Councillor Aline Hicks.

10. 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: Mike Wady conflict of interest with the HDLSA, Sadie Michell: proprietor of the Cosy Kettle, Mags Wellsted-Boorman: HDLSA Member, David White: Allotment Holder.

11.Approval of Minutes From OPC's Meeting Held on 4th March 2024 and Notes From the Annual Assembly held on 15th April 2023: David White proposed that the minutes from the meeting held on 4th March 2024 be accepted as correct records and signed/authorised by the Chairman. Mike Wady seconded this proposal which was agreed by those present.

13.Matters Arising From Minutes of The Meeting Held on 4th March 2024 and The Annual Assembly

- It was agreed that discussion be held prior the next Annual Assembly as to whether to re-introduce reports from organisations.
- Allotment Track: no further correspondence had been received from Southern Water regarding the track leading to the pumping station. The Clerk is to chase for a reply.

14.Correspondence Received & Planning:

Correspondence: not covered under other agenda items. The Clerk had circulated via email various updates from Ashford Borough Council and emails she had been requested to send out.

Planning:

Application: 2024/0773

Location: Land between Hillside and Carter House south of Hamstreet Road

Proposal: Outline application for the construction of up to 170 new homes and formation of a new access From Hamstreet, Road, green infrastructure including landscape planting, habitat creation and open space, drainage infrastructure include a new pumping station, pedestrian and cycle route and associated works and infrastructure with all matters reserved save for access.

Discussion: During discussion it was agreed that the application be objected to. A draft reply is to be put together and circulated to members before presenting it to ABC.

It was noted that a group of residents had formed an action group called the Hamstreet and Ruckinge Conservation Group who were strongly opposed to the application. Members unanimously agreed that the flyers and posters informing residents of the application be paid for by the Parish Council.

Update:

Application: No 2024/0574

Proposal: New access to create additional staff car parking and associated works.

Location: Hamstreet Surgery, Ruckinge Road, TN26 2NJ

Decision: Approved with conditions

15. Update Regarding Land Purchase: An application for a loan has been made to the Public Works Loan Board. On receiving it they asked for various items of supporting information. The Clerk is in the process of obtaining this and cannot proceed until it is all collated. During a brief discussion it was noted that negotiations continues with the Parish Council and those selling the land.

16. Items for Next Agenda/Any Other Business: It was agreed that discussion be held on Neighbourhood Plans.

17. Date & Time of Next Meetings: Monday 3rd June 2024 at 7pm in the Hamstreet Sports Pavilion

Meeting Concluded 8.52pm

Chairman's Signature:

Key activities during 2023/2024 have been:

- Working to ensure that KCC has sound finances and a Balanced Budget, not going bust like Birmingham City Council.
- Providing more 'good' and 'outstanding' schools, 'outstanding' Children's Services and supporting vulnerable residents
- Making best use of the Highways Budget for road maintenance, against a background of years of underfunding.
- Running a project to try and find ways of reducing the negative impact of roadworks on road users in Kent.
- Supporting practical Climate Change measures, like working to get Modular Nuclear Reactors into Dungeness to provide plentiful green energy, not restrictive anti - car policies.
- Running the Kent & Medway Business Fund Loan Scheme, which has helped hundreds of businesses across Kent & Medway, and created thousands of jobs over the last ten years.
- Striving to find lasting solutions to a large variety of residents' issues, by promoting more joined up and imaginative thinking by the County Council and other bodies.
- Working with Orlestone Parish Council on numerous issues, especially Highways and drainage.