

WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES 217

Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 28th September 2023

The meeting started at 7.00 pm.

In attendance:

Cllrs Lucy Quinn (chairperson), Catherine Sales, Wade Nash, Julian West and Robert Woods.

Also in attendance were Mary Philo Clerk, KCC Councillor David Robey, Peter New Neighbourhood Watch, and 5 other members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Nicola Job and Richard George had both resigned due to family and work commitments.

Councillors Gina and Neil McKay absence had been previously approved.

District Councillors Aline Hick and David Ledger had sent their apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Nash regarding the discussion of the Hub lease.

2.2. Other Significant Interests

None

2.3. Other Interests

None

3. Notice of Casual Vacancy

The notice for Nicola Job has been posted on the website and on the noticeboard. Electors have until 12th October to come forward with 10 signatories for election to be called for the position. The Notice for Richard George will be posted the week following the meeting.

4. Acceptance of Minutes:

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on the 24th of August 2023 were accepted as a true record.

Proposer: Cllr Catherine Sales	Seconder: Cllr Wade Nash	Against:0
Abstain:0	In favour:5	Motion: Carried

Meeting adjourned for public participation 19.03 pm

Councillor David Robey Report

The county council had exceeded its budget by £37 million as a result of increasing costs in particular in adult social care which represents around 75% of the budget. All services were under review for the next year's budget.

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It had received a £35 million grant from central government, split £25 million on engineering measures like bus lanes and £10 million for new bus services. It is not a legal duty for the county council to provide bus services, but it does subsidise some services.

Discussions were being held about modern nuclear reactors for Dungeness Power Station to assist with reaching 'net zero' by 2023 and provide jobs for the local area with a knock-on effect on the local economy.

The county Council, via Kent Business Loan Scheme was offering loans, from ring-fenced funds, to small businesses of under 250 employees, for 15 years, to create new jobs.

The council cabinet had been restructured and Councillor Robey was now deputy cabinet member for Highways. He had been in contact with the Department for Transport lobbying for rural residents who must use the car.

Other local issues reported to David were: buses using Back Lane to reverse to turn around and road surface 'slow' marking for the corner at Hengehurst.

CALA Homes – Land off Front Road

A resident made inquiries about the drop-in session, raising concern that Cala Homes would not faithfully report residents' comments and views. Their main concern was the flooding on Lower Road due to sewer pipes not being able to deal with large amounts of surface water draining along with the usual sewage flows. A further development would make this worse unless 569 meters of sewage pipes were increased in size as per Southern Water Report 20 July 2012.

G H Bromley Haulage

A member of the family advised that they were considering developing part of the site beside Shirkoak Caravan Park. The council thanked them for the advanced notice and suggested that they seek planning advice through a pre-application to the local planning authority.

Neighbourhood Watch Presentation by Peter New

With the continuing reduction in policing as service provision is cut to match costs, prevention is ever more important to protect residents from burglary and scams. Burglary ranges from theft of personal ID left visible in cars, parcels left on doorsteps, break-ins to sheds/vans to scams tricking residents into handing over life savings. Neighbourhood watch provides you with practical measures that you can take and warns you, if you sign up to 'crime alerts', of the latest scams and any criminal activity in your area and/or areas where you may have vulnerable family members. The neighbourhood task force has been revamped to bring back the warranted beat officer (Police Constable Manning) who will occasionally attend schools, parish council meetings and the Hub. It was stressed that it was important to report all crimes to build a true area picture and detect criminal gang movements. Minor crimes can be reported online or by calling 101.

AND RECONVENED at 20.15 pm

5. Planning applications

5.1. PA/2023/1503

Shirkoak Lodge, Bethersden Road, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent TN26 3QW

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New porch/entrance, changes to fenestration, loft conversion with new balcony and increased ridge. The Parish Council resolved to support.

Proposer: Cllr Robert Woods	Seconded: Cllr Lucy Quinn	Against:0
Abstain:0	In favour:5	Motion: Carried

5.2. PA/2023/2023/1613

Gower Farm Barn, Susans Hill, Woodchurch, TN26 3RE

Changes to fenestration including relocation of front door with canopy and removal of chimney flue. The Parish Council resolved to support.

Proposer: Cllr Robert Woods	Seconded: Cllr Wade Nash	Against:0
Abstain:0	In favour:5	Motion: Carried

5.3. PA/2023/1685

Great Robhurst Oast, Swain Road, Tenterden, TN26 3TB

Proposed single-storey rear extension. The Parish Council resolved to support.

Proposer: Cllr Robert Woods	Seconded: Cllr Catherine Sales	Against:0
Abstain:0	In favour:5	Motion: Carried

5.4. OTH/2023/1659

26, Shirkoak Park, Woodchurch, TN26 3RP. T1 Oak: Fell- due to its decline and significant dead wood. Replanting with another English Oak. The Parish Council resolved to support.

Proposer: Cllr Robert Woods	Seconded: Cllr Neil McKay	Against:0
Abstain:0	In favour:5	Motion: Carried

5.5. PA/2023/1516

130A Front Road, Woodchurch, TN26 3SF

Conversion of garage to annex. The Parish Council resolved to support in principle but was concerned about the style of the fenestration of the new picture windows.

Proposer: Cllr Robert Woods	Seconded: Cllr Wade Nash	Against:0
Abstain:0	In favour:5	Motion: Carried

5.6. PA/2023/1048 land adjoining 37 The Green

The parish council had the option to speak for 3 minutes in front of the committee before it made its decision. It was resolved that Councillor Woods would speak on the council's behalf.

Proposer: Cllr Lucy Quinn	Seconded: Cllr Wade Nash	Against:0
Abstain:0	In favour:5	Motion: Carried

6. Migration of Councillors' Email to Microsoft Business Basics/ Website Update Report

This item along with the update on a new website was deferred to the next meeting to check the capability to support the .gov address/domain and costs across the possible providers on the basis that the council would have an independent council website separate but linked to the Hub's website.

Councillor Sales left the meeting.

7. New Hub Lease

The item was deferred to next month to allow time for Councillor Nash to consult with the Directors of Woodchurch Community Information Exchange CIC, and report back to the council.

8. Website Update

See point 6.

9. Wreaths and Donations for Remembrance Sunday

It was resolved to donate £50 in total to include a wreath to the Poppy Appeal.

Proposer: Cllr Lucy Quinn	Seconder: Cllr Nash	Against:0
Abstain:0	In favour:4	Motion: Carried

10. Village Consultation Progress Report

A paper draft survey was provided at the meeting as well as a youth survey. The number of questions had been reduced again to shorten it. The Hub was covering the cost of contracting out the printing of it and the newsletter team would deliver it. The deadline for returning the survey was set for 30th November in order to discuss the results at the 14th December meeting with a view to shaping the budget for next year. It was resolve to agree the questions, survey format and issuance.

Proposer: Cllr Wade Nash	Seconder: Cllr Rob Wood	Against:0
Abstain:0	In favour:4	Motion: Carried

11. Noticeboards

The general feeling was that it would be good to focus on a new board for the Hub and a larger board for the one at the doctor's surgery. Councillors to look at the recycled noticeboard in Wittersham.

Action: All Councillors

12. Finance

12.1. Items for Payment

The parish council agreed to the items of payment and acknowledged the bank reconciliation.

Payments Made	Since the last meeting	Description	Total payable	VAT
Direct.Debit	EDF Monthly	Pavilion Electricity	£ 302.29	
Direct Debit	Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£ 37.03	
		Total	£ 339.32	

Payment Method	Items for Approval July	Description	Total payable	VAT
Bacs	Salaries	Employee salaries August	£ 517.74	
Bacs	HMRC	Employer contribution	£ 129.40	
Bacs	Quantec	Clerk Services	£ 748.00	
Bacs	Woodchurch Memorial Hall	18 th July Room Hire	£ 15.00	£
				£
		Total	£ 1,410.14	£
Payment received				
Bacs	Lloyds	Interest	£ 45.02	
		Total	£ 45.02	

Bank Reconciliation

Aug-23

Bank Opening Balance	£19,916.81
Precept	£0.00
Salary	£829.72
HMRC	£371.00
Pavillion Utilities	£145.03
Running Costs	£3,038.11
Income in Transit	£0.00
Outstanding Payments	£0.00
Bank Charges	£0.00
Interest Income	£0.00
Income	£0.00
Expenditure	£4,383.86
Cashbook Balance	£15,532.95

Bank Statement Balance	£19,916.81
Income	£0.00
Expenditure	£4,383.86
Bank Closing Balance	£15,532.95
Difference	£0.00

Saver Account	
Bank Opening Balance	£48,150.35
Income	£35.62
Expenditure	£0.00
Closing Balance	£48,185.97

12.2. Budget Monitoring

The first budget monitoring document is rather late due to the changeover of Clerks. It reflects that the council has been slow to get going in the new financial year. At this stage it is not possible to make any judgement about the council's expenditure against budget. The second quarter budget comparison will be produced for the next month's meeting. The document will be available on the website.

12.3. Submissions to HMRC

Following consideration of the risks presented to the council, it was resolved to contract the payroll to Maiden Accountancy at £10.00 per month plus vat.

Proposer: Cllr Robert Woods	Seconder: Cllr Lucy Quinn	Against:0
Abstain:	In favour:4	Motion: Carried

12.4. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022-2023

There has been some correspondence with the External Auditor Mazars as the return was inaccurate. The accounts have been redone and the form and cash book needed correcting. The external auditor requires all charitable trusts to be separated from the parish council by the end of the current financial year.

We are waiting for the audit report to be signed off but are already aware that it has one qualification regarding the figures stated on the AGAR 2022-23 which did not agree with the bank reconciliation provided. This can be corrected in next year's return. It will also have other minor matters regarding the 'No' responses in section 1, and the fact the council is holding funds in excess of twice the precept. There would only be an extra charge if the council corrected the figures in Section 2 now but there will be a qualification there will be no additional fee.

13. Consider Funding for the Carnival in June 2024

It was suggested that the Carnival Committee should make a request to the Windmill Trust as funding local initiatives is its aim. Beacon Lighting cost should be considered as part of next year's budget.

14. Correspondence and Information

The Parish Council received several correspondences from residents mainly concerning the following:

- Highways - Henghurst Corner: There had been another recent accident witnessed by the Police. Highways and since agreed to paint 'slow' sign on the road surface.
- Complaint about parking outside the school. The Neighbourhood Watch advised he would request the Police to review the issue. The school already writes to parents about considerate parking.
- Speeding issue along Redbrook Street. The probability of injury to pedestrians, in particular after dark in the winter months as school children alight from school bus had been raised by a resident. The Neighbourhood watch advised that he would request the Police to review the issue.
- Letter from Kirkwood Avenue Residents Association requesting land north of 14/15 Kirkwood Avenue be designated as Local Green Space if the appeal on application 21/2142/AS is upheld. The council would await the outcome of the appeal before considering.

15. Items for information and items to be included on the next agenda

Information

- Ashford Borough Council as Local Planning Authority call for sites (land) to be included in the Local Plan to 2041 is running from 8th September to 5pm on the 20th November.
- CALA Homes will be hosting a drop-in session in the Memorial Hall Annexe on Wednesday 4th October 1pm to 8pm.
- The flag Marshal had requested that information was published about the flags flown.
- Request for funds for the crocus bulbs that the school plants along the village green verges. It was suggested that an approach be made to the Windmill Trust.

Items for the next meeting agenda

- Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- Councillor Roles

- Plantain on the village green

16. Date and venue of next meeting

Thursday 26th October 2023 starting at 7.00 pm in the Memorial Hall Annexe

17. Pursuant to section 1) of the Public Bodies (Admissions Act) 1960, it was resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during the item regarding the new Clerk's contract.

It was resolved to increase the Clerk's monthly hours to 55 and to pay 45p per mile for one journey a week to the hub.

Proposer: Cllr Robert Woods	Seconder: Cllr Lucy Quinn	Against:0
Abstain:	In favour:4	Motion: Carried

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 22.20 pm

Signed _____
Chair

Dated _____