

WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES 221

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 25th January 2024

The meeting started at 7.00 pm.

In attendance:

Cllrs Lucy Quinn (Chair), Wade Nash, Neil McKay and Gina McKay.

Also in attendance were Ian Philo Clerk, David Ledger Ashford Borough Councillor and one member of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Catherine Sales and Rob Woods sent their apologies, and the absences were approved.

Councillor Julian West was absent.

County Councillor David Robey and Councillor Aline Hicks had sent their apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

2.2. Other Significant Interests

None

2.3. Other Interests

Councillors Lucy Quinn and Wade Nash declared their interest in item 8 as trustees of the Woodchurch Village Green Charity

3. Acceptance of Minutes:

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on the 21st December 2023 were agreed as a true record.

Proposed by Councillor Wade Nash, seconded by Councillor Neil McKay. Motion carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned for public participation 7.08 pm

The Chairperson, Lucy Quinn, awarded Philippa Jones the Kent Community Awards Certificate.

The three new designs regarding dog foul signs were presented, these signs will now be ordered, but the council requested some notice before being fixed to any litter bin as replacements are to be discussed as per item 6 on the agenda.

Borough Councillor David Ledger explained that Suez will be replacing Biffa on 24th March as the waste collection contractor, and that the transition should be seamless. Ashford Borough Council now has one of the best recycling schemes in Kent. A new

recycle and general waste bins will be rolled out in Ashford town centre, and that parish councils should register any interest in new recycling bins.

There will be a move away from collection of small electrical appliances, to be replaced with a new recycle and repair shop scheme.

There were 285 sites identified across the entire borough, in the call for sites, and those in Woodchurch likely to be revealed in February.

Ashford Borough Council are mindful of disposing of their windmills in the most efficient way. The Woodchurch windmill renovation is estimated at around £300,000 with maintenance likely to be around £25,000 every 5 years. Friends of Woodchurch Windmill are awaiting feedback from Ashford Borough Council and have been advised to copy in Simon Betty on any correspondence.

David Ledger offered to be part of the Parish Council Windmill working group.

A report from Kent County Councillor David Robey was read out by the Chair, Councillor Lucy Quinn. KCC expected to balance the budget for 2023-2024 however next financial year was proving more problematic due to the rising cost in areas such as adult social care and some cuts were likely in other areas to help fund this. There is a review on how highways deal with utility works.

Councillor Robey and KCC Cabinet Member Neil Baker are looking at the approach to Active travel, with a view to releasing more money for basic road maintenance especially potholes.

Ashford Borough Councillors Aline Hicks and David Ledger visited Boldshaves Oast in Woodchurch along with KCC Councillor David Robey. This is a home (some long term) for a number of people with disabilities, and has recently got into financial difficulty.

They discussed plans to resolve these, and there is some confidence of finding a way to do this, at least in the medium term.

Meeting reconvened at 7:40 pm

4. Planning applications

4.1. PA/2024/0016

Harlakenden Farm, Plurenden Road, Woodchurch, TN26 3PS. Conversion of existing agricultural barn into two proposed residential dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. The council had concerns that this was developing into a mini estate by stealth, as 4 applications for 11 buildings have been approved in the past.

The council 4-0 voted to abstain (neither support nor object to this application). Proposed by Councillor Wade Nash and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

4.2. PA/2023/2350

Annexe, Crettenden Farm, Brook Street, Woodchurch, TN26 3SR.

Change of use from a business to a residential dwelling, including conversion of the remainder of barn 1 with associated alterations, landscaping enhancements and parking provision.

There was some concern raised at the pitch of the roof seemed quite high, however the council felt that it was far enough outside the built up area of the

village.

The council voted 4-0 to support the application. Proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

4.3. PA/2023/2326

8 Plurenden Manor Farm Cottages, Plurenden Road, Woodchurch, TN26 3JW. Proposed conversion and infill extension of existing outbuilding to create a home office/gym for incidental use to the main building. There were no objections or concerns raised.

The council voted 4-0 to support the application. Proposed by Councillor Neil McKay and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

5. Agree to Budget and Request for Precept for 2024-2025

The Chair, Lucy Quinn, changed the order of the items, to go through the budget items before deciding on the precept.

The council agreed to the following projects:

5.1. Power Supply Upgrade to The Hub. The council agreed that the power cable to The Hub needs upgrading to a 25mm-35mm cable as identified by a UK Power Networks surveyor. The supply also needs upgrading to 100 Amps and be 3 phase, in order to supply electricity to the Village Green.

5.2. Power to Supply to the Village Green. The council also agreed to provide power to the green. It was decided that the most cost-effective option would be to have a trench dug across the carpark with two conduits laid to simultaneously bring the needed upgraded power in one cable to The Hub, and allow the second cable to carry electricity back out from the hub to the Village Green.

The council agreed to earmark a total of £20,000 for 5.1 and 5.2 combined provided there are competitive quotes from private contractors.

The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Neil McKay and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

5.3. Refurbishment of the Public Convenience. The council agreed to allocate £8,000 to refurbishing and updating the public convenience at The Hub, to improve the sanitary and hygiene conditions.

The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

5.4. Yellow Lines at Designated Points around the Village. In response to feedback from the village survey the council agreed to allocate £3,000 for exploratory purposes on the feasibility of yellow lines at designated locations in the village. The council will put together a Highways Improvement Plan for 2024-2025.

The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Neil McKay and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

5.5. CCTV on The Hub and Pavilion. The council agreed to earmark £6,000 for the provision of CCTV surveillance on The Hub and the pavilion. Subsequently a CCTV policy would have to be drawn up and agreed by the parish council. The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Neil McKay and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

5.6. Updating/Extending the Pavilion. Upgrading the Play Area and Installing a Multi Surface Games Area (MUGA). In response to feedback from the village survey, the council agreed as part of a long-term plan, to earmark £9600 for a feasibility study into improving the pavilion, play area and the possibility of installing a multi surface games area (MUGA). The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Wade Nash and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

5.7. Bird and Bat Boxes. The council agreed to allocate £500 to putting up bird and bat boxes at selected locations which are to be confirmed. The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Neil McKay and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

5.8. Restoration of Village Pump and Village Sign. The council agreed to earmark £2,700 for the restoration of the village pump and £1,900 for the restoration of the village sign. It was agreed compare the cost of a replacement sign versus that of renovation. The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Wade Nash and seconded by Councillor Gina McKay.

5.9. War Memorial Cleaning. The council agreed to defer the cleaning of the war memorial to the following year (2025-2026), until it is in more need of a clean given the cost involved for specialised cleaning required as recommended by The War Memorial Trust to maintain the integrity of the structure. The council voted 4-0 to defer, proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

The council requested an amendment to the 2024-2025 budget agenda item. It was agreed to allocate £500 to running costs for Environment. The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

The council resolved to agree:

The total budget including the cost of items recommended by the survey working group at £90,506.00.

To use £45,500 of free reserves to fund the gap.

To set the precept for 2024-2025 at £45,006.00 for the year. The average council taxpayer (Band D) would pay an estimated £51.67 per annum.

The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

6. Litter Bins.

The council agreed to defer this item to a later date, pending clarity from Ashford Borough Council on their proposal for rolling out new litter bins across the borough.

7. Parish Noticeboard.

The council discussed the material construction options but finally agreed to erect a recycled plastic and post mounted noticeboard. This is to be located near to The Hub, precise position TBC. The clerk to research the "pin boarding" is of the appropriate material.

The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

8. Review the Grants and Donations Policy.

It was decided to postpone this item to a later meeting, and that there is an informal meeting between the Parish Council and Village Green Trustees, to discuss how the split will work going forward.

9. Replacement General Noticeboard Opposite the Surgery.

It was decided that this item is deferred to 2024-2025 as this is already in the budget for the new financial year, and the material should be the same as the new official Parish Council noticeboard. The council will need to consider the management of all the noticeboards.

10. Finances

Note that December payments totalling £1,679.33 did not clear the account until 2nd January 2024.

Bank Reconciliation.

Bank Reconciliation	December 2023
Opening Balance	£8841.24
Salaries	0.00
HMRC	0.00
Pavilion Utilities	66.00
Total	66.00
Income (Play area grant)	4483.25
Expenditure	66.00
Cashbook Closing Balance	£13258.49
Bank Statement Balance	£8841.24
Income	4483.25
Expenditure	66.00
Bank Closing Balance	£13258.49
Difference	0.00

Reserve Account

Opening Balance	70328.49
Interest	77.80
Balance	£70406.49

Items for Payment.

Items for Payment.	January 2024	VAT
EDF	66.00	
Castle Water	00.00	
Salaries and HMRC	1310.04	
W. Nash (village green fence posts)	18.24	
Maiden Accountancy (Quarterly Payrol)	36.00	6.00
KCC (Traffic Monitoring)	425.00	
Woodchurch Memorial Hall	156.00	
I.Philo (Clerks Petrol)	32.40	
Total	£2043.68	6.00

The council agreed to the bank reconciliation and to authorise the items for payment.

The council voted 4-0 in favour, proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

11. Correspondence and Information

Correspondence.

It was reported to the clerk on 12th January that the temporary pedestrian crossing in Front Road, near Woodchurch Garage, was causing a great deal of traffic confusion - both to drivers and pedestrians. Could some action be taken to simplify the system? These were only temporary but the traffic lights have now been removed.

A resident was dismayed that Brook Street was not on the traffic monitoring program. In response the clerk explained that KCC had previously declined to conduct traffic monitoring along Brook Street. The monitoring along Redbrook Street however was in response to a petition signed by the residents there in both Woodchurch and High Halden parishes.

In prior correspondence, KCC stated that would not consider speed reduction along this section of the road. If the residents were to form a signed petition, this may have some sway in achieving their objectives.

There have been some complaints at the use of a megaphone and a drum being used as a means of support to the teams at a football match on Sunday 14th January. Whereas support for the clubs playing on the green is welcome, the use of these items was felt a little excessive. The clerk has contacted the club to request a little restraint at future matches.

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

Information.

Currently the Memorial Hall Annexe is fully booked on the 4th Thursday of May 2024, therefore May meeting will be held the following week on 30th May.

Items for the next meeting agenda

13. Date and venue of next meeting

Thursday 22nd February 2024 starting at 7.00 pm in the Memorial Hall Annexe

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 10:06pm.

Signed _____
Chair

Dated _____