

ALKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 5th May at 7.00pm

This meeting was held via Zoom under The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 in force to allow local authorities to conduct meetings remotely.

**Present: Cllr's: N Burrows– Chairman; M Hibbert; A Barrier;
Also present: I Bowie (Clerk); 5 members of the public**

PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MEETING:

To discuss, for a maximum of fifteen minutes, questions received by email from members of the public.

The minute book was closed.

Emails received were discussed under the relevant agenda headings.

- 1. To elect a Chairman and receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.**
It was RESOLVED to duly elect Councillor Burrows as Chairman. Cllr Burrows signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the Chair.
- 2. To elect a Vice-Chairman**
It was RESOLVED to duly elect Councillor Hibbert as Vice-Chairman
- 3. Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:**
 - 3.1 Apologies for absence received and confirmed by the Council.
Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.
Apologies were received and the reason given accepted from Cllr Prince.
 - 3.2 Declaration of Changes to the Register of Interests. There were none
 - 3.3 To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda.
In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.
There were none.
 - 3.4 Requests for Dispensations. There were none
 - 3.5 Declarations of Lobbying. There were none
- 4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting:**
It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14th December 2020 and 18th February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- 5. Consideration of items to be taken in private (Exclusion of Public and Press)**
In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting by the reason of its confidential nature.
There were none
- 6. Finance: (Appendix 1)**
 - 6.1 To note Receipts of Income: It was noted that the precept of £13,138 and 0.46p bank interest had been received in April 2021.
 - 6.2 To authorise Payments listed on the schedule. It was RESOLVED to authorise the payments on the schedule.

6.3 The bank reconciliation was presented and AGREED. The reconciled balance of all accounts was £48,795.73 as at 31/03/2021

7. Planning:

7.1 To table planning applications received for consideration:

7.1.1 21/00544 Upper Westhill Farm Belsey Lane Ewell Minnis CT15 7DY
Erection of an outbuilding with 4no. rooflights (retrospective). It was AGREED that the Clerk would contact DDC Planning and request more detailed drawings were supplied.

7.2 To receive late planning applications and other late planning matters: There were none

7.3 To table planning applications dealt with since last meeting:

7.3.1 21/00035 Spring Meadow Alkham Valley Road Drellingore CT15 7EL
Erection of a detached dwelling and garage with associated parking (existing caravan to be removed) Application Withdrawn

7.3.2 21/00213 Rhodus Mead Wolverton Hill Alkham CT15 7DErection of two storey side extension APC No Objection

7.3.3 21/00468 Spring Meadow Alkham Valley Road Drellingore CT15 7EL
Erection of a detached dwelling with first floor balcony and detached garage (existing residential caravan to be removed) APC Defer to DDC

7.3.4 21/00358 Upton Farm House Alkham Valley Road Alkham Dover Kent CT15 7EL
Erection of part boundary wall, piers, 2.4m gates, to facilitate creation of a new vehicular access and extension to existing driveway (part existing boundary wall, piers and gates to be demolished) Application Withdrawn

7.4 To table decisions by the Planning Authority since the last meeting:

7.4.1 20/01409 Hogbrook Farm Hogbrook Hill Lane Alkham CT15 7BU
Change of use and conversion of existing outbuilding to dwelling, erection of a wall, single storey side extension and rear hydrotherapy pool, landscaping and associated parking (part demolition of outbuilding and wall). DDC Application Permitted

7.4.2 20/01104 Corton Alkham Valley Road Drellingore CT18 7EP
Erection of a detached summer house DDC Application Permitted

7.4.3 21/00213 Rhodus Mead Wolverton Hill Alkham CT15 7DT
Erection of two storey side extension DDC Application Permitted

7.5 Dover Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation APC Objected to the proposed sites in Alkham

8. Allocation of Responsibilities:

It was AGREED that Councillor responsibilities would remain unchanged.

9. To receive reports from: (Appendix 2)

10.1 Kent County Councillor Cllr Lymer

The Chairman thanked outgoing KCC Councillor Lymer for his outstanding service to the community and wished him well for the future.

10.2 District Councillor No Report Cllr Rose

It was NOTED that Cllr Rose has stepped down as the DDC Councillor.

10.3 Byways: Cllr Barrier

Cllr Barrier reported on a recent meeting with the KPROW Area Manager. It was noted that the PROW officer's priority is to keep the Byways open. It was also reported that with regards to the Consultation on a permanent seasonal closure was not a high priority and was unlikely to be progressed for some time. Cllrs at the meeting raised specific issues re the byways within ALKHAM and these were noted. The PROW Officer asked that if there is illegal activity on the Byways (when they are closed) that residents report it to Kent Police. A warning letter will be sent on the first offence if there is a second offence by the same person the car can be seized by police. It was AGREED to have regular meetings with the PROW Area Manager.

10.4 Parish Plan Cllr Burrows

It was reported that a meeting with the Chairman of the Parish Plan Team was to be arranged

to discuss further.

10.5 Drainage and Flood Warden Report
Appendix 2

Cllr Hibbert

10.6 Highway Matters

Cllr Hibbert

Cllr Hibbert reported that all highways matters must be dealt with via a Highways Improvement Plan and that wherever possible the recommendations of the TAG report had been incorporated.

It was noted that KCC Highways would only consider 2 priorities per year per parish council and that additional funding available was not available. This meant that the parish council may have to fund any or all highways' improvements.

10.8 PCSO Report

PCSO Keehner

10.9 Lorry Watch

Cllr Hibbert

It was reported that the parish council volunteer forms/risk assessment were approved for use when Lorry watch was able to restart.

10. Clerks Report:

The Clerk reported that BT had responded regarding the telephone box at Ewell Minnis and that the usage data for the last year was awaited. The grant from KCC for the bus stop had been confirmed and would be paid directly to KCC Highways rather than to the parish council. The website had been set up and had received positive reviews from several residents. The dedicated parish council emails had been set up and emails from the Clerk would only be sent to these addresses not to Cllrs personal emails.

11. To receive an update on progress Ewell Minnis Bus Stop:

It was reported that the design of the bus shelter had been agreed and that the full cost would be covered by the KCC Members Grant. It was noted that the bus shelter should be installed during the summer.

12. Parish Council Policy Review:

It was AGREED to defer this agenda item to a future meeting.

13. Correspondence :

13.1 Resident email re changes to bus timetable 91 It was AGREED that the Clerk would put a link to the Stagecoach timetable onto the APC Website.

13.2 Residents email re litter on the Village Green Clerk to follow up with DDC

13.2 Residents email re footpath ER162 This was noted and discussed under agenda item 10.3

13.4 MHCLG Electronic Communications Infrastructure Consultation. Noted

13.5 Bitesize Courses at KALC

13.6 DCMS Rural Broadband Consultation It was AGREED that as many Cllrs as possible would complete the Consultation and that it would be added to the PC Website. A resident's email on this matter was also reviewed. It was AGREED that the Clerk would contact KCC and ascertain when the Broadband Voucher Scheme would re-start and circulate the details.

There being no further business to be transacted the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:20

Signed : *Neil Burrows*

Chairman:

Date: 28th June 2021

APPENDIX:

6.2 Payment Schedule

New Bus Stop	KCC	£11,608.22
Membership Fee	KALC	337.78
Insurance	Hiscox	555.61
Invoice 18372	Harmer and Sons Ground Maintenance	248.40

6.3

Bank Reconciliation		Financial year ending 31/03/2021	
Council name	Alkham Parish Council		
Balances per bank statements at 31/03/2021			
Community Account		4,034.46	
Business Manager		46,725.79	
Total bank balances			50,760.25
Community Account Uncleared payments			
Date	Customer / supplier	Reference	Amount
31/03/2021	KCC Highways		-1,964.52
			-1,964.52
Total net balances at 31/03/2021			48,795.73

Appendix 2:

10.1 KCC Councillor Lymer

Geoff Lyner Report Alkham AMP 5th March 2021

This year has seen a totally different way of operating at County, District and Parish Council level regarding having virtual meetings.

Overall, it has been business as usual and much has been achieved.

However, Whitfield on the Dover West Ward has seen some government moves which have been taken without the full wide consultation with the local community regarding the Inland Border Facility (IBF) which the DfT are keen to tell us it is not a "lorry park," so I suppose Tesco supermarket should be telling us they have a "customer goods loading facility" because they do not have a car park.

This is the nonsense of semantics and I for one am not prepared to play their puerile games.

I have fought hard to protect the village of Whitfield, Pineham and Guston from having such a site on the White Cliffs Business Park, where the local shoppers experience will become a nightmare as many car drivers and cyclists will have to mix it with diesel fumed belching left hand drive HGVs all jockeying to reach the B&Q roundabout to gain access to the Inland Border Facility the south side of the roundabout.

At night this will be a highly lit (for health and safety reasons) noisy facility.

At certain times I can envisage traffic problems as some HGVs break down, whilst queuing to enter the site, as was evidenced on the Meridian News three weeks ago when I was interviewed giving an update of events.

I was disappointed the MP for the Dover area, who right from the start, proclaimed this is what Dover needs to create jobs, so she stated she would be in full support of the freight facility, lorry park being constructed on the proposed site at Whitfield.

When I became first aware of the project, my first concern went immediately to those whose properties will border that facility and some of the community of Whitfield, Pineham, Guston and the Buckland Estate.

Having advised those residents immediately bordering the site to obtain professional valuations of their properties last October and to then obtain a second valuation some three months later, some properties have been de-valued by £100,000, since the initial valuation.

This is not just and any politician should be considering how such government projects will impact on the wider local community who voted them into office before announcing an immediate support for the government project.

After all the DfT insistence on not referring the Whitfield project as a lorry park, when I questioned the DfT about the frequent occurrences of freight being unable to cross the seas due to

poor weather or industrial disputes, would the freight facility just remain empty, the DfT did concede they had considered using the facility to park up lorries. So it came close to them accepting it could be a lorry park.

When I questioned the inordinate spend of tax payers money for a facility with a projected life span of just five years, I was told that it could still remain under HM Customs. So we are not being told the full intentions alternatively the DfT do not have an exit strategy formulated yet.

I am also critical of many of the Dover District Councillors who voted to support the government project regarding the IBF, when as I write, none of us including the DfT have any idea of the final plans for the site, nor the intentions for the site following the supposed closing down in five years time. How on earth can any councillor vote to support a project when no one knows the final plans. I find this incredulous and a point of serious concern.

Then we had the Dover Fast Track rapid bus transport system which the government, through Homes England, is contributing just around £16 million and the balance will be paid by the tax and rate payers.

So we have a project which was considered over ten years ago to take the residents from the proposed 5750 homes planned to be built in Whitfield back in 2008 to the shops in Dover town and Dover Priory Railway station to commute to London and elsewhere for work.

The only problem is the project has not kept pace with life.

Many Rapid Bus Transport systems established in the Midlands and the North have failed due to lack of passenger commitment, due to various factors, for example the Dartford Fast Track had been popular when it offered free travel to local residents, however, when the bus company started charging fares, combined with long delays at the Dartford Tunnel feeding back into the town, this affected the bus system and the initial popularity has waned.

As we know now at Whitfield the housing development has been delayed due to flooding problems partially created by the concreting over of phase 1&2 of the White Cliffs Business park which may be exacerbated with the development of phase 3.

I spoke to one of the foreman involved in the construction of those houses a while back who predicted a good twenty five years before all the houses will be built on that site. So not the footfall the Dover Fast Track had anticipated. Then we come back to the initial remit " to take passengers to the shops in Dover Town." What shops? they are all closing down.

Then the other promotion to take commuters to Dover Priory Rail way Station. Well two points have occurred since then. The sea wall being washed away a few years back closed down the railway line from Dover Priory to Folkestone. Network rail rebuilt the line at a cost of £40 million and stated this would be a final reprieve, any further incidents such as a major cliff fall and they would close the line permanently. We have had two cliff falls recently, so the future for that line is precarious, then since the pandemic commuting has dropped off dramatically and it is considered this trend will not reverse. Since the pandemic more grocery and other shopping is carried out on line having increased three fold once more a trend predicted to remain. Stage Coach can not run their many rural busses profitably at the moment, so what can the Fast Track achieve that Stage Coach have not been able to to date? So will the Dover Fast Track be dead in the water before it has been constructed to become another white elephant to go into the Dover Zoo with its other white elephants.

There is proposed an over bridge to take the Dover Fast Track from the Archers Court Road area over the A2 towards the B&Q roundabout. However, the local MP has stated she is determined to have the dualling of the A2 at Whitfield carried out as a priority.

I look at the A2 at Whitfield and find it difficult to envisage how they can dual the area around Whitfield roundabout, due to the number of properties involved. The only solution is to construct a dual carriageway from Coldred via Eythorne, Waldershare to return to the east of Whitfield on the A256.

If that is the projected route which has been discussed, then millions of pounds of rate payers money will have been wasted on constructing an over bridge over the A2 for the Dover Fast Track to avoid traffic density which will be rendered redundant in the future due to a dramatically reduced traffic flow density.

We had further wasting of tax payers money on the Dover cycle lane, which brought Dover to a standstill causing absolute mayhem and now the Dover parklets. The Dover cycle lane cost the tax payer over a quarter of a million pounds.

So over the past year I feel the local areas have been let down by the government dictating certain projects via the County and District Council to the local communities without consulting, considering,

or contemplating how many of their projects often clearly vanity projects will impact adversely on the local community and could that money, now wasted, have been spent more wisely.

Geoffrey Lymer
Kent County Councillor
Dover West Ward

10.5 Drainage and Flood Warden Report

Alkham Drainage Work Progress Updates –April 2021

Latest work updates for submitted Alkham drainage fault reports to Kent Highways drainage department are as follows:

- 459824- Meggett Lane – water off Alkham Valley Road missing drain located adjacent to St Cedric due to road camber. Water flooding bottom of lane with no drainage grip in place to ditch. *Job attended 27/10/21, but more work required to resolve problem.*
 - 484959- Short Lane -all drains cleared -some evidence of water backing up when Nailbourne was in full flood Jan/Feb.
 - 480985-Green Wood Slip -blocked drain and gully – investigated and cleared. This area needs constant attention, especially when rainfall flows down from top of Slip.
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- Good news. Alkham VG sump and section of ditch alongside VH cleaned out on the 29th April 2021, and this area now falls under a perennial KCC maintenance schedule (see Dec 2020 report for details).
 - The Nailbourne was in full spate during Jan/Feb and coupled with the high-water table raised concerns about groundwater flooding. A groundwater flood alert was issued by the Environment Agency in Feb 2021. Flooding occurred on low lying land east and west of the village before the water flowed into the Alkham Ditch. At the west end water flood the immediate gardens of local properties, and at the east end water levels rose to partially flood the road at the bottom of Short Lane. The overspill water at the bottom of Short Lane was in part due to the double culvert under the roadway becoming blocked. KCC drainage teams informed and attended.
 - The double culvert underground pipes, linking the Garden Centre ditch to the ditch outside the entrance to the Meadows CV site, has been reported blocked or damaged with the water causing flooding on the entrance driveway to the CV site and in the surrounding area.
 - Unfortunately, the elevated groundwater levels caused increased infiltration into surface and foul water sewers, causing them to overflow at several locations in the village. Emergency calls were made to Southern Water to attend and pump out, but it was not until the Environment Agency was contacted that remedial action was undertaken. The Environment Agency understand that this is a very distressing experience for the resident

impacted and have said that they are working with Southern Water as a priority to ensure better future outcomes for the community and our local environment. Please report future overflowing sewers direct via their Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60.

- I have been in touch with Emma Burdett, KCC Land Drainage Engineer, to seek improvement work to the land east of the Short Lane culvert headwalls. The work to clear out accumulated rubbish alongside the restricted bridleway to help increase the flow of water when the Nailbourne is in flood. Emma will be contacting the landowner in late Spring to seek permissions and a workable outcome.
- Regarding the reports received regarding flooding just past Everden Cottages and the AVR flood relief pipe by Newlyn's (complete with photos) and forwarded to Ian Day, KCC Land Drainage Engineer, I am still awaiting further feedback.
- The newish sump work completed last year at Everden seems to be coping well. I have requested KCC drainage team for a copy of their maintenance schedule to help ensure the costly good work is not overlooked!

Martin Hibbert
Flood
Warden

3/05/2021