

# Alkham Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7 pm in Alkham Village Hall

Present: Alkham Parish Councillors: D Barnard Chairman, P Tapsell (Vice Chairman) S Edwards,  
T Johns, M Libaert, C Webber.  
In Attendance: Irene Bowie (Parish Clerk) and 3 Members of the Public  
DDC Cllr M Hibbert.

### 1. Apologies.

- 1.1 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 75(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 from Councillor Kaile.  
**RESOLVED: To accept the apology and reason given for absence from Councillor Kaile.**  
Apologies were also received from KCC Cllr Beaney.
- 1.2 Declaration of Changes to the Register of Interests. There were none.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 Requests for Dispensations. There were none.
- 1.5 Declarations of Lobbying. There were none.

### 2. Review of Standing Orders 3. X: To consider an increase of the time for meetings from two hours to a maximum of three hours.

**RESOLVED: To amend Standing Orders to increase the maximum time for a Parish Council meeting to three hours.**

### 3. Public comments and observations. (Maximum 15 minutes)

**The meeting will be adjourned to allow members of the public to speak. Individuals may speak for up to three minutes, at the discretion of the Chairman, on agenda items only. The minute book will be closed.**

Matter Raised:

- Village Maintenance
- Obstructed Footpath requiring clearance by KCC and or Landowner

### 4. Reports from external parties (if present).

Kent County Councillor David Beaney, Dover District Councillor Martin Hibbert, and Community Warden Jan Henry.  
Report received from KCC Councillor Beaney.

- You may have heard in the press that KCC could be looking at a S141 notice. That isn't correct for this year, at least. Cabinet members have been able to find a balanced budget this year. But unfortunately, this will mean having to try still and find savings next year.
- Holding meetings with KCC Highways to move forward with the Parish Council Highway Improvement Plans
- Meeting to be arranged for Alkham PC and KCC Highways
- Arranging a meeting with other local Parish Councils to share ideas and to enable collaborations.
- Reminder that the KCC Members Grant is still available to Parish Council

**AGREED:**

**To contact Councillor Beaney and enquire about the level of funding available from his KCC Members Grant towards new equipment for the Play area.**

### 5. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

To resolve that, the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th September 2023 are to be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 6. Planning:

- 6.1 **To table planning applications received for consideration:**

6.1.1 **22/01353 Drellingore Barns, Stombers Lane, Drellingore, CT18 7ER**

Change of use and conversion of 2no. farm buildings to dwelling, erection of an annexe for ancillary use/holiday let, alterations to granary building, erection of car barn, outbuilding, associated car parking, boundary wall, formation of new gated vehicular access, landscaping, biodiversity enhancements and installation of cesspool (existing buildings to be demolished).

**APC Objection**

6.2 **To Table and Validate Planning Applications dealt with since the last meeting.** There were none.

6.3 **To table decisions by Dover District Council (DDC) since the last meeting (to be provided at the meeting).** Planning Portal not available

6.4 **Dover District Local Plan Examination – Hearing Sessions. Opening 14<sup>th</sup> November**

It was confirmed that Councillor Barnard would represent the Parish Council at the Hearing Sessions on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of December.

6.5 **To Table late planning matters:** There were none.

**7. To receive Reports and agree actions if appropriate.**

7.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported on the progress of the Community Led Plan.

7.2 KALC Area Meeting Alkham Parish Council Representative.

Councillor Tapsell attended the KALC Area Committee Meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October. He reported on the following key matters.

- Lack of availability of affordable and social housing
- Lack of DDC planning enforcement when developments have less than 30% affordable housing.
- Parish Council notification of available Section 106 Funds.

The next area meeting will be held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 at Guston Village Hall starting at 7 pm.

7.3 Clerks Report (on matters not included in other agenda items)

- Bin on the Village Green. Following contact with DDC Waste Management, it was AGREED to increase the emptying of the bin to three times per week. If this is not sufficient, then an additional bin will be agreed to by DDC Waste Management.
- PC Signage. Clerk to follow up. Dog Fouling signs had been dispatched but not received. Litter Signage for Village Green Clerk to follow up.
- Planting of Fruit Trees on the Village Green. Application for a grant as part of the Celebrating the King's Coronation – A new Living Heritage Fund for tree planting was unsuccessful. The clerk had contacted the KCC Tree Planning Officer with a view to inclusion as either a backup for the current year planting or the 2024/25 planting programme.

**AGREED: The Clerk would arrange a meeting for Councillors Webber, Libaert and Johns to attend with the KCC Tree Planting Officer.**

- It was reported that all available Parish Council land ownership documents had been collated and filed.

7.4 Councillors Report (on matters not included in other agenda items)

7.6 Flood and Drainage Warden. Councillor Libaert spoke to her report.

*Den has been in touch with the drainage department for Kent asking for the sump to be emptied and the swale cleared before winter. Work started on on the 3rd October when Hogbrook Lane was cleared and swept of silt. The 2 metal drains were also cleared at the same time and leaves and the swale redug and the sump cleared both side of the bridge outside the village hall.*

*On Friday 6th October we met Andy Godden, the Kent drainage manager on site and he explained the procedure for reporting drainage problems and the timescale involved.*

*He hopes to get a maintenance plan arranged so the sump can be cleared regularly. The settlement tank comes under the Cleansing Division of Kent Highways Drainage. This was completed on 31st October.*

*We have since had heavy rain and the drains and swale seem to be coping well. We will be following up with Andy Godden to ensure regular cleaning.*

7.7 Footpath Warden. Councillor Tapsell reported that there were no matters had been raised with KCC PROW.

Team.

7.8 To nominate a representative to the Village Hall Management Committee.

**RESOLVED: Councillor Webber would be the Parish Council representative to the Village Hall Management Committee.**

## 8. Finance:

- 8.1 To receive and authorise payments listed on the schedule (to be provided at the meeting)  
**RESOLVED: To approve the schedule of payments.**
- 8.2 Late Payment Request/s to be discussed for approval and payment. There were none.
- 8.3 To note receipts of Income. Not available.
- 8.4 To receive the bank reconciliation. Not available
- 8.5 BT Telephone Box Ewell Minnis. Adoption papers had not been received. The Clerk reported that the funds left to pay for the BT telephone box were depleted and that the PC had not paid for the telephone box since 2020. Follow-up with BT required.
- 8.6 To consider the process for setting the 2024/25 Budget and Precept.

### **AGREED:**

1. **Councillors would identify projects and indicative costings. These would be forwarded to the Clerk/RFO**
2. **Clerk /RFO to circulate current financials to all Councillors.**
3. **Clerk/RFO to meet with Councillor Johns in December.**
4. **Budget and precept demand to be agreed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January APC Financial Meeting**

## 9. Review of Parish Council Policies and Procedures.

- 9.1 Volunteer Policy  
**RESOLVED: The updated policy to be circulated to all Councillors for approval**
- 9.2 Communications Policy
- 9.2.1 Clarification of the Proper Officer's role and responsibilities.  
This was discussed as a confidential matter.
- 9.2.2 To Agree the policy. It was discussed as a confidential matter.

## 10. To consider the following working groups:

- 10.1 Highways Working Group
- 10.1.1 Co-option of members.  
**RESOLVED:**  
**To co-opt as a non-voting member, Mr G Jones.**
- 10.1.2 To receive an update on the KCC Highways Design Plan for Alkham Safety Improvements. Due to staff shortages and long-term illness, the updated design plan was not available.
- 10.1.3 To consider the New Highways Improvement Plan.  
**AGREED: The Clerk would request the 30 mph Toolkit from KCC Highways.**
- 10.1.5 To review setting up Lorrywatch.  
Councillor Edwards reported that he had not had a response From the KCC Freight Team.
- 10.1.6 To receive the parish portal report. Not available.
- 10.1.7 To receive updates and recommendations.  
Report from the Working Group:  
*In preparation for a full working group (hopefully including keen volunteers), we have been looking at historical documents and information regarding proposed and actioned highways works along AVR and it's feeder road network.  
Our intention is to create a chronological list going back to when the B2060 (the Alkham Valley Road) was declassified in 1991 due to the opening of the A20 extension.  
We asked for, and have now received, a consolidated HIP document from Kent highways with all the original requirements reinstated. This gives us the option to revisit, and amend, any improvements that we, and you, feel are still relevant.  
This, together with the chronology, will form the basis for an updated HIP proposal to be developed by the working group once fully constituted with local volunteers.  
We must also note, that Kent Highways has still not responded to the issues raised at our last meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> August, where we asked that the proposed Speed Camera warning sign locations be moved further towards the village entrances.  
Long term sickness and staff holidays are the reasons given.  
We have since been told that we are still on their "to-do-list".*

### **RESOLVED:**

1. **To request via KCC and DDC that decisions agreed in 1996 under the Channel Tunnel Act regarding transport plans for Alkham are implemented.**
2. **Request that Alkham should be included in the KCC and DDC plans for transport.**
3. **To raise these matters with the Highways Manager of KCC.**

- 10.2 Communications and Community Involvement Working Group
- 10.2.1 Co-option of Members: There were no co-options
- 10.2.2 To agree on the Administrators of the Parish Council Website.  
**RESOLVED:**
1. **That the Clerk would be the Administrator, but Councillor Kaile would have limited access.**
  2. **Councillor Kaile would not have access to the section of the website pages. 'Parish Council'**
  3. **The Clerk and Councillor Kaile would agree on any changes/updates to the website.**
  4. **The Clerk would set up a Members Section of the website.**
- 10.2.3 To set up a new PC Facebook page and agree on the administrators.  
**RESOLVED:**  
**The trial Facebook page would be closed.**
- 10.2.4 To receive suggestions from the Working Group  
**RESOLVED**  
**To set up Parish Council 'Surgeries' to improve contact and communication within the Parish.**
- 10.3 Parish Plan Evolution and Delivery Working Group
- 10.3.1 Co-option of members.  
**RESOLVED:**  
**To co-opt as a non-voting member, Mr G Jones and Mrs M Jones.**
- 10.3.2 To receive suggestions from the Working Group  
**RESOLVED:**
1. **To undertake a Neighbourhood Plan**
  2. **Clerk to contact DDC to register.**
- 10.4 Green Spaces and Environment Working Group
- 10.4.1 To agree the Terms of Reference.  
**RESOLVED:**  
**To adopt the Terms of Reference.**
- 10.4.2 Co-option of members.  
**RESOLVED:**  
**To co-opt as a non-voting members: Mr D O'Brien, Mrs E Lyddiard, Mrs M Jones.**
- 10.4.3 To receive suggestions from the Working Group  
**RESOLVED:**
1. **To identify new play equipment and obtain indicative costings with and without installation (liaise with Councillor Kaile)**
  2. **To meet on-site with contractors, all quotes must be sent to the Clerk.**
  3. **Meeting with KCC Tree Plant Officer re new mini orchard on Village Green**
  4. **Identify grants for a new mini orchard on the Village Green**
  5. **Identify works required to prevent or mitigate flooding on the Village Green (Liaise with APC Flood Warden)**
  6. **Councillor Webber to complete the Green Infrastructure Consultation on behalf of the Parish Council**
- RESOLVED:**
1. **That Mr H Webber and Mr M Hibbert were available on a non-permanent advisory capacity to the Parish Council**
  2. **Full Council agreement to be sought before being utilised.**
- 11. Play area, Village Green and Chalksole Green**
- 11.1 To receive the Monthly Playground Inspection Report. The report was received.
- 11.2 To consider any other matters pertaining to the play area and/or the Village Green, Chalksole Green
- 12. To consider commissioning a Tree Survey.**  
**RESOLVED:**
1. **The Parish Council would commission a tree survey and management plan.**
  2. **The Clerk would obtain quotations from Qualified contractors.**
  3. **Parish Councillor members of the Green Spaces and Environment Group would meet with contractors on-site to discuss requirements.**
- 13. Correspondence:**
- 13.1 To table items of late correspondence :
- 13.1.1 Connect your community to the Slow Ways national walking network

It was agreed to add the information to the Parish Council Website.

13.2 Items circulated.

13.2.1 Resident emails re no 91 Bus

The Clerk reported that the matter of buses leaving earlier than scheduled and /or being cancelled at the Folkestone depot had been reported to the KCC Head of Transport, who will investigate further.

13.2.2 Community Transport Grant Scheme

13.2.3 Elections Act changes - absent voters, overseas electors and digital imprints

13.2.4 FOIA Request

14. Agenda Items for the next meeting:

**To Agree Meeting Dates for 2024. 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024**

**Additional dates are to be confirmed.**

15. Consideration of items to be taken in private (Exclusion of Public and Press):

There are only a few reasons as to why, legally, the public and press can be excluded from a meeting. The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec 1 (2) states, "A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies." It is generally considered acceptable to exclude the press and public if the agenda item relates to the consideration of tenders, leases, purchases of assets, for matters relating to staffing covered by the Data Protection Act and to consider complaints against the council or a code of conduct complaint.

15.1 Enforcement Matters.

Councillors were updated on any DDC Enforcement Matters. No action required by the Parish Council

15.2 Freedom of Information Act Request.

The Clerk outlined the process for responding to a recent FOIA Request.

**RESOLVED:**

**To approve the placement and usage of compost bins on the Village Green for Parish Council use only.**

15.3 Council Land Ownership.

The Deeds and other documents were reviewed.

**RESOLVED:**

1. The Parish Council would register Chalksole Green with the Land Registry.

2. If required, the Clerk would instruct a conveyancing solicitor.

9.2.1 Clarification of the Proper Officer's role and responsibilities.

**RESOLVED:**

**1. All communication will be in accordance with the Communications Policy in particular:**

*Wherever possible, all communications with Councillors should be made through the Clerk. The Clerk, as the Proper Officer of the Council, is authorised to receive all communications from residents, the press or third parties and to issue statements on behalf of the Council in consultation with the Chairman. In the absence of the Clerk, all communications will be handled by the Chairman in consultation with the Vice-Chairman. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman and/or relevant Working Group Lead will be consulted.*

**2. Councillors will not issue statements on behalf of the Parish Council unless these have been approved by the Clerk and the Chairman.**

9.2.2 To Agree the policy.

**RESOLVED: To adopt the Communication Policy**

Notes on declarations of interest

Any Member arriving after the start of the meeting is asked to declare pecuniary interests, as necessary, as soon as practicable after their arrival, even if the item in question has been considered.

National rules about pecuniary interests are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and in secondary Legislation made under the Act, in particular The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)

Regulations 2012

**There being no further business to be transacted, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.00 pm.**

***These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting but a record of decisions made at the meeting.***

**Signed:**

**Chairman**

**Date:**