



## **Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 7 February 2023 in Detling Village Hall**

Present: Cllr Geoff Cosgrove Chairman, Cllr Chris Evernden, Cllr Mark Housden, Cllr Karl Pay and Cllr Lawrence Rustem;  
and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

Also present were PCSO John Boyd, PCSO Brian Amorim, Community Protection Officer Laura Bullen and thirteen members of the public.

Cllr Cosgrove welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Public Time**

*The meeting was adjourned for the Public Time*

*A member of the public asked if issues with professional dog walkers in Monk's Meadow was being discussed.*

*The meeting was reconvened.*

### **2023/008 Councillor Vacancy**

The Clerk reported that Maidstone Borough Council has scheduled an election for 9 March. If there are no nominations, they will not plan any further elections until the May elections when the entire Council is up for election.

### **2023/09 Apologies.**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Gemma Nauman (unwell)

Cllr Housden **PROPOSED** to accept the apologies; **SECONDED** by Cllr Evernden: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Apologies had been received from County Councillor Shellina Prendergast (at another meeting), apology noted.

### **2023/10 Declaration of Interest.**

None were declared.

### **2023/11 Approval of the minutes of the meetings held on 6 December 2022 and the Extraordinary Meeting on 3 January 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022 were amended.

Cllr Housden **PROPOSED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022, as amended, as a true record: **SECONDED** by Cllr Pay: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Cllr Cosgrove duly signed the minutes as a true record.

Cllr Housden **PROPOSED** to accept the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 3 January 2023 as a true record: **SECONDED** by Cllr Pay: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.  
Cllr Cosgrove duly signed the minutes as a true record.

### **2023/12 Correspondence**

Cllr Cosgrove said a letter of complaint had been received regarding professional dog walkers in Monk's Meadow. This had been reported to Maidstone Borough Council and it was confirmed that the person had a licence. The situation needs to be monitored.

Ms Bullen said the Community Protection Team can run events in villages.

Cllr Housden said dog owners in Detling are responsible for their pets, Monk's Meadow is an inappropriate area for dogs to be off their leads.

Cllr Housden **PROPOSED** that signage prohibiting professional dog walker in Monk's Meadow and Horish Woods be installed; **SECONDED** by Cllr Evernden: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Cllr Cosgrove reported that the light in the phone box is not working.

*ACTION: Clerk to contact contractor.*

### **2023/13 Reports from External Parties:**

#### **a) County Councillor Report.**

KCCllr Prendergast was unable to attend and sent the following report:

2022 was undoubtedly a difficult year for many of us and there is little doubt that many more challenges lay ahead – the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite residents and businesses, inflation remains high and global issues such as the invasion of Ukraine have had a huge impact on us all – including Local Government.

Whilst KCC received a better than anticipated financial settlement from the government last autumn the reality is that this simply isn't going to be enough to keep pace with the rising demand and costs that are needed to deliver services – especially when it comes to the most vulnerable amongst us. KCC's draft budget for 2023/24 will be considered by Members at our Budget County Council meeting on 9th February and will stimulate a lot of debate around some really difficult decisions that will have to be made so KCC can continue to deliver services in the most sustainable and effective way.

As part of these challenges, KCC has had to look ahead and plan for how things can be done differently and still maintain an effective level of support for residents who need it. One of the proposals under consideration is looking at changes in the way buildings are used to deliver some of the community services – ranging from children's centres and youth hubs, public health services for children and families, community services for adults with learning difficulties, the adult education offer and Gateways. The Community Services consultation outlining these proposals was launched last week and any help you can provide in encouraging residents to have their say before it closes on 26th March would be really good. I know it's a hefty document to read – as one or two of you have already pointed out to me – but there are ways of navigating to information at relevant district/ward level and there's also a list of drop-in sessions where people can find out more and ask any questions.

Finally, there is an e-newsletter which goes out on a regular basis to those who have subscribed to receive it directly into their inbox. It contains information about the Community Services consultation amongst other things and, as ever, I would be grateful if you could share widely including on parish websites, magazines and social media.

I'm hoping to provide more regular – and localised – updates as we go through this year but I think you all know me well enough by now to know that I'm always at the end of an email or telephone to help with any issues you may have. And that I never find it easy to turn down a challenge when it comes to doing the right thing for the communities within Maidstone Rural East.

#### **b) Ward Member Report.**

There was no report.

#### **c) PCSO Report**

PCSO Boyd reported that PCSOs in Wards will be non-existent from June when their numbers will be cut to one hundred and four. There will be a restructuring of neighbourhood policing and from June there will be Police Officers in Wards and the Ward Police Officers will form a task force with the remaining PCSOs. There will also be a Children's Task Force and a Rural

Task Force. The whole structure of Police Officers is changing. Crime statistics can be found on the Kent Police website or e-watch; they are up to date and finalised by the Home Office. PCSOs access and help other agencies and work with Maidstone Borough Council Community Protection Team.

Incidents must be reported via 101, online or by phone, or to Crimestoppers. There is also an online chat facility and reports can be made anonymously.

Cllr Cosgrove thanked PCSO Boyd and PCSO Amorim for attending and for their report.

Ms Bullen said the Community Protection Team has statutory powers regarding anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance, light nuisance, pest control, public health, powers of entry and issue fines. The Team covers the whole of the borough with seven officers and also administration staff. The Team works with housing, KCC Community Wardens and Social Services.

Residents must report issues via 101, online or by phone, Crimestoppers or direct to the Community Protection Team. There are cluster meetings for Councillors to attend held by Martin Jeynes, Community Protection Team Manager.

The Community Protection Team is willing to attend community events.

Cllr Cosgrove thanked Ms Bullen for attending the meeting and for her report.

### **2023/14 Detling Sustainable Community Power Hub**

*The meeting was adjourned for a resident to give a presentation on a Detling Sustainable Community Power Hub*

*A representation was made regarding possible innovations for a sustainable community power hub in Detling including wind generation from a 149m wind generator; solar using the two fields to the south with a 10% slope; and electric vehicle chargers using six or seven of the parking spaces at the Village Hall with the potential for profit share.*

Cllr Cosgrove said such a scheme would need the support of the community. Councillors will consider the suggestion. He thanked the resident for his presentation.

*The meeting was reconvened.*

### **2023/15 Planning**

a) Ref: 22/505727/FULL

Address: Tawanda Pilgrims Way Detling Kent ME14 3JY

Proposal: Erection of part replacement close boarded fence to boundary

Councillors considered the application and noted the address was for the field. Concern was raised that the proposal is out of keeping with the area; it is in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; it urbanises the site.

Cllr Housden **PROPOSED** to object to the application: **SECONDED** by Cllr Evernden: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

b) Ref: 23/500110/FULL

Address: Woodside Scragged Oak Road Detling Maidstone Kent ME14 3HJ

Proposal: Conversion of a former agricultural building to a three bedroom residential dwelling with associated parking and landscaping.

Councillors considered the application and questioned that the site was only two kilometres from the village. The proposal is unsustainable and would lead to an increased usage of cars as there is no pavement and people would be unlikely to walk.

Cllr Evernden **PROPOSED** to object to the proposal: **SECONDED** by Cllr Housden: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

c) Ref: 23/500157/AGRIC

Address: Newlands Wood Detling Kent

Proposal: Prior Notification for the upgrading of existing woodland access tracks. For its prior approval to: siting and means of construction of the private way.  
Prior approval not required.

d) Ref: 19/506349/FULL PINS Ref: APP/U2235/W/20/3259339

Address: Lynch Bank Farm Barn Detling Hill Detling Kent ME14 3EX

Proposal: Change of use of land for use as a residential gypsy caravan site for 1no. gypsy family (retrospective).

Cllr Evernden informed Members that the delay regarding the hearing was due to finding a Planning Inspector familiar with Gypsy and Traveller legislation. A date had been set but Maidstone Borough Council failed to provide a room for the hearing and they are now in the process of arranging another suitable date and venue. The Parish Council will be informed in due course. All previous correspondence has been sent to the Planning Inspector and all written submissions will be given consideration and all who have commented will be invited to the hearing.

e) Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation

Councillors agreed not to respond to the consultation.

## **2023/16 Highways and Transportation**

Cllr Pay reported that the Working Group had met on 23 January. The Highways Improvement Plan was discussed as well as issues with parking, looking at the potential dangers and risks. The group tried to identify a method which could be adopted to enable safe parking without disruption to the village, for example permits and restrictions. Lorries are using the village as a rat run. It was also recognised that if lines are put on the road it would impact on others. The group will meet again and discuss what measures could be taken forward.

Consideration was given to the bus service and how more buses could serve the village especially as some residents do not have cars and taxis are expensive. Bearsted Parish Council has come forward with a proposal.

Cllr Cosgrove said Bearsted Parish Council wanted to put forward a plan, we asked them for details, they submitted a grant application and then informed us. We have a copy of the application, the scheme will provide essential community transport links for Bearsted and Detling. It is intended that the operator will be Compaid and the service will run between 9.30am- 2.30pm to provide a shopping service from Monday to Friday from Bearsted and Detling to Eclipse Park, Vinters Crematorium, Grove Green Tesco and King Street Maidstone. The total cost is £21,000 being £10,000 driver hours, £5,000 installation and operation of ticketer unit, £5,000 fuel and maintenance costs and £1,000 for marketing and awareness. A grant of £14,000 is being sought.

Cllr Pay said the Working Group will walk around the village on 12 February to look at any issues. There is a problem on the exits and entrances to the village that when it rains the roads floods creating a risk to road users, this needs to be resolved.

Cllr Housden said that approximately twenty-five years ago, KCC Highways created a soak away but it is not coping.

Cllr Cosgrove thanked Cllr Pay for his report.

## **2023/17 Financial Matters**

### a) Finance report

No matters were raised.

### b) Invoices

Cheque no	Payee	Reason	Nett	VAT	Total
500001-2	Staff	Salary/ HMRC			
500003	Administration	Expenses	132.29	1.28	<b>£133.57</b>
500004	KALC	Training	65.00	13.00	<b>£78.00</b>

500005	Commercial Services Trading Ltd	Grounds maintenance	519.78	118.36	<b>£710.14</b>
500006	DCK Accounting	Payroll	82.50	16.50	<b>£99.00</b>
500007	SLCC	Locum Clerk	2,121.60	424.32	<b>£2,545.92</b>
500008	Detling Village Hall	Committee Room Hire 23 January			<b>£18.00</b>

Cllr Housden **PROPOSED** to pay the invoices; **SECONDED** by Cllr Pay **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

c) To consider contribution toward bus service

Cllr Pay **PROPOSED** in principle to make a contribution of £1,000 towards the bus service scheme; **SECONDED** by Cllr Housden: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

d) To consider quotations for Independent Internal Auditor

Cllr Cosgrove said it is good practise to change the Independent Internal Auditor from time to time.

Cllr Pay **PROPOSED** to accept the quotation of £285 from April Skies; **SECONDED** by Cllr Housden: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**2023/18 Review of IT**

Further quotations to be obtained.

Cllr Housden **PROPOSED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue beyond two hours; **SECONDED** by Cllr Pay: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**2023/19 Review of Policies**

- a) Data Protection Policy
  - b) Environmental Policy
  - c) Safeguarding Policy
  - d) Bullying and Harassment Policy
  - e) Risk Assessment
- Deferred to next agenda*

**2023/20 Play Area**

a) To receive an update

Cllr Pay said the risks were unchanged from the previous report, the bolts have been tightened; the gate is a very low risk and as it is a light gate it is difficult to adjust the closing time.

The Clerk reported that she is trying to get bolt caps and a harness but has had no success yet.

b) January play area inspection report

Noted

**2023/21 Open Spaces**

a) Monk's Meadow -To receive an update

Mr Seal (volunteer) reported that cleaning up the area is in progress. The middle of the site has been waterlogged. The first cut is due next month. A management plan will be submitted. There are a few residents willing to volunteer.

b) Horish Woods- to receive an update

There was nothing to report.

c) Notice boards- to consider installation quotations

Cllr Housden **PROPOSED** to replace the current notice board in The Street and to accept the quotation from Octopus for £450 for five: **SECONDED** by Cllr Evernden: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**2023/22 King's Coronation**

Cllr Cosgrove said the church is leading the event for the village, the WI and Village Hall is also involved.

Cllr Evernden asked if there were any grants available.

*ACTION: Clerk to research availability of grants for the event.*

**2023/23 Reports from Members**

Cllr Housden reported that he had attended the meeting of the Village Hall Management Committee, there were thirteen people at the meeting representing lots of different organisations in the village. The committee was unanimously against the Community Power Hub proposal especially the suggestion of charging points in the car park, they are very upset. The Village Hall Management Committee's finances are looking good with bookings up to pre-Covid levels.

Cllr Cosgrove thanked Cllr Housden for his report.

Cllr Cosgrove reported that he had attended a one-to-one meeting with the County Councillor and also the Borough Councillor. He had spoken to Scottish power about the Community Power Hub scheme and they have distanced themselves from the project. It is hoped a meeting will be arranged to meet with the Police Inspector in the near future. The Parish Council must meet with the County Showground as there are shows coming up, especially with regards to traffic management.

**2023/24 Any other business**

No matters were raised.

**2023/25 Villager of the Year**

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the Villager of the Year Award

Members approved the recipient for the 2022 Villager of the Year Award.

**2023/26 Date of next meeting – Tuesday 7 March 2023**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chairman

Date: 7 March 2023