

CHART SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7.45PM ON 8TH APRIL 2024 AT CHART SUTTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: - Cllr P Forknall (Chair), Cllrs S Waring, V Underdown, M FitzGerald MBE,
P. Ward, C. Webb
Mrs Lesley Windless (Clerk)

IN ATTENDANCE: - Borough Councillor Steve Munford, 2 members of the public

PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A resident expressed his satisfaction with the recent drainage work carried out by KCC on Plough Wents Road.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Sagrott.

2. FILMING OF MEETINGS

There were no requests for notification of whether anyone intends to film, photograph or record any items.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were declared :

Cllr Underdown – items 14.1 (village shop CCTV) and 14.2 (village shop toilet)

Cllr Waring – items 14.1 (village shop CCTV) and 14.2 (village shop toilet)

Cllr Webb – item 11 (Three Suttons D-Day anniversary event)

Cllr Fitzgerald – item 18.4 (Village News printing payment)

4. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

There were no requests for dispensation.

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11TH MARCH 2024

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved “**that the draft Minutes of both meetings be approved as a correct record**”. This was **Agreed** and the Chairman was authorised to sign off the official copies.

6. POLICE / KCC WARDEN MATTERS

There were no recent reported crimes on the e-watch.co website :

A written report had been received from Police beat officer, PC Harry Greenfield which was read out at the meeting and is summarised below :

- Parishes covered by PC Greenfield are Sutton Valence, Langley, Chart Sutton, Boughton Monchelsea, Linton, Loose, Coxheath, Hunton, East Farleigh and West Farleigh. Also assisting in Park Wood, Barming, Teston, South and Allington wards. Sometimes called away to assist with property searches etc
- Issues arising locally include straying animals, traffic offences and vehicle theft

Cllr Fitzgerald expressed concern at the number of parishes being covered by the beat officer. The clerk advised that she was in regular correspondence with PC Greefield in relation to Boughton Monchelsea issues and that he was able to seek support from the task force and response teams, as required.

Disappointment was expressed regarding the length of time taken for the Police to view CCTV footage of the flower planter being stolen from the village green. Police had now viewed the footage but the clerk was asked to write to the Police Commissioner to express concern. **CLERK**

A written report had been received from KCC Warden team leader, Sandra Edmonds which is summarised below :

- Consultation process is ongoing. Plan is for Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling to have 1 Operational Team Leader and 5 Community Wardens
- Due to the reduction in wardens, work is having to be prioritised to ensure vulnerable residents are safe
- The arrival of Spring has brought an increase in doorstep callers. Advice is to always use people recommended by a friend or someone you know. Get 3 quotes if possible and if in doubt look on Trading Standards Checked <https://tschecked.kent.gov.uk> for vetted tradespeople. If residents feel threatened they should report doorstep callers to the Police via 101 or 999

7. CLIMATE CHANGE & BIODIVERSITY

It was noted that 5 members of the Parish Council had attended the recent Carbon Literacy training sessions in Boughton Monchelsea.

8. THREE YEAR STRATEGY

It was agreed that the clerk should contact the Salmon Trust again regarding potential acquisition of land for use as a playing field car park. **CLERK**

9. HIGHWAYS

Cllr Waring noted that the hedge on Norton Road was being cut.

Concern was expressed at the condition of the road surface on Plough Wents Road. The clerk advised that any highway faults should be reported via the KCC website <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>

Cllr Fitzgerald stated that the village gateway had been installed in a different position to that agreed at the site meeting with KCC. Cllr Forknall felt that the gateway position was fine as it was. The clerk was asked to make KCC aware of the difference in position. **CLERK**

10. VILLAGE HALL UPGRADE WORKS

The clerk updated members as follows :

- MBC grant agreement signed and returned
- Pre-app advice from MBC indicates that planning permission is not required
- UK Power Networks have confirmed they can use the existing overhead line for the new 3 phase electric supply. Quote awaited and should be around £4,000. Work will be programmed for May half term when the hall is not in use. It was agreed that the gas supply would be capped off at the same time and the existing boiler and radiators removed. It was noted that a new electric cooker would be installed at the same time, to replace the existing gas cooker
- A revised quote for the electrical work has been received and will be accepted
- Consideration will be given to installing additional solar panels on the roof, to maximise energy production. This will be a decision for the village hall committee. It was noted that the hedge bordering the farmers field could be reduced in height to maximise area of roof suitable for solar panel installation
- BT will be installing broadband to the hall by the end of the week

11. THREE SUTTONS D-DAY ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Cllr Webb noted that a further event planning meeting had taken place on 4th April. Details as follows:

- Attending VIPs will be Deputy Lieutenant, Nick Marden, the Mayor of Maidstone and the Chairmen of Chart Sutton, Sutton Valence and East Sutton Parish Councils
- Event on Sutton Valence recreation ground will start at 7pm and has been advertised in the three parish newsletters and will be advertised again nearer the time via flyers, posters and banners
- BBQ food and drink will be available, for a nominal charge
- Flag and lamp have been ordered. The beacon will be adapted for use at the event
- Need volunteers to help set up and put away on the day
- Any profits from the event will be donated to the Armed Forces charity, SSAFA
- Next event planning meeting will be on 23rd April at Sutton Valence village hall
- Total funds of £1,400 are available for the event - £500 from Chart Sutton Parish Council (KCC member grant), £500 from Sutton Valence Parish Council, £100 donation from RBL and up to £300 from East Sutton Parish Council

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the Parish Council should donate a further £500 towards the cost of the event, if required.

12. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 22ND APRIL

It was noted that Cllr Sagrott had asked one of the KCC carbon literacy trainers if he could do a presentation at the meeting.

The clerk stated that she would advertise the meeting on the Parish Council's Facebook page and in the noticeboards. Cllr Fitzgerald agreed to put up notices on the village green. **CLERK / CLLR FITZGERALD**

13. LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2023

It was noted that the agreed new pay rate for SCP23 was £16.67 per hour, effective from 1st April 2023. The clerk had started work for the Parish Council on 2nd May 2023 and was therefore due a back payment of £658 to cover this £1 / hour increase in salary. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to pay the clerk a back payment of £658 (some of which would be tax and NI).

14. VILLAGE SHOP

14.1 CCTV

It was noted that two new CCTV cameras were needed to replace existing faulty equipment. The faulty cameras were less than a year old and therefore still under warranty. The clerk had been in correspondence with the supplier about this.

Post meeting note : Supplier has agreed to supply and fit 2 new CCTV cameras free of charge

14.2 Shop toilet

Cllr Waring stated that the cost of servicing the shop toilet is £25 + VAT per fortnight. He added that the shop is struggling financially due to a lack of footfall and noted that the electric bill is around £400 per month due to the fridges and freezers. Following discussion it was proposed, seconded and agreed that the Parish Council would give an annual grant to the shop committee of £650 to cover the cost of the servicing the toilet. **CLERK**

15. KALC CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING COMMUNITY WELLBEING

It was noted that correspondence had been received from KALC regarding resources and support available to Parish Councils who may wish to set up community wellbeing projects. It was agreed not to pursue this at the moment.

16. FOOTBALL PITCH

It was noted that Staplehurst Monarchs adult football team had contacted the Parish Council with a request to share use of the pitch with Coxheath on Sunday mornings. Concern was expressed that, due to increasingly wet weather, the pitch condition would be adversely affected by another men's team using it. It was therefore agreed that the clerk should advise Staplehurst Monarchs that the Parish Council do not wish to hire the pitch to them at the moment.

It was noted that Bearsted youth teams had indicated that they would like to use the pitch on Sunday mornings if Coxheath ever decide to give up.

It was agreed that Cllr Waring should obtain a quote for pitch drainage work, for discussion at the next meeting.

CLLR WARING

17.. MATTERS OF REPORT

17.1 County and Borough Councillors Reports

Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid was not present at the meeting.

Cllr Munford noted that MBC had now adopted the Local Plan review. He stated that MBC had recently changed waste contractor but the transition had not gone well, with major service failures. He advised members to report any areas with missed bins to him so he could advise MBC accordingly.

It was noted that the Parish Council election in Chart Sutton was uncontested, with fewer candidates than places. There were 3 candidates for the Borough Council election (Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton ward).

17.2 Chairman's Report

Cllr Forknall stated that he had reported fly tipping to MBC. He expressed concern about the condition of roads and at dog walkers trespassing on farmers fields. It was suggested that the Parish Council could limit the number of dogs per walker on the playing field but no decision was made.

17.3 Individual Councillors Reports

Cllr Waring reported as follows :

- Funds from the clothing bank will be sent to the Parish Council soon. The possibility of a second clothes bin in the village hall car park was discussed.

Cllr Underdown reported as follows :

- Anti-social and criminal behaviour appears to be taking place in the village hall car park at night, including drug taking and drug dealing. Vehicles and occupants can be seen on the village hall CCTV but number plates are not visible. The clerk stated that she would make the PC Greenfield aware of this. The

possibility of additional external lighting was discussed

- Cars are parking in the bus stop layby at the village green, sometimes for extended periods of time. It was suggested that notices be placed on windscreens advising drivers not to block the layby

Cllrs Fitzgerald reported as follows :

- Suggested projects that might be paid for from the village embellishment fund were discussed, including painting the bus shelter and purchase and installation of a Lest We Forget soldier statue. To be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

CLERK

Cllrs Webb and Ward and had nothing further to report.

17.4 Clerk's Report

The clerk had provided a written report which was circulated to members in advance of the meeting. She expanded on this by advising that the Parish Council internal accounts audit will take place on 28th May.

18. FINANCE

18.1 Budget Monitoring to 31st March 2024

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st March 2024 was **Noted**

18.2 To note Income received since the meeting held on 22nd January 2024

Members **Noted** payments received during the period as follows:

HMRC VAT reclaim 1/5/23 to 31/1/24	£1,628.78
Coxheath football club – second instalment of football pitch fees	£300.00
Bearsted football club – second instalment of football pitch fees	£300.00
HSBC Bank Interest	£0.04
Unity Trust Bank Interest	£388.46

18.3 To approve payments already made

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved “**that the following payments should be ratified**”. This was **Agreed**.

SO - Clerk's salary and office allowance – March	£805.45
DR – Unity Trust Bank – bank charges 5/12/23 to 4/3/24	£18.00
DD – BT – village hall broadband charges	£3.29

18.4 To resolve to make payments as presented for authorisation

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved **that the Council approve the following payments**. This was **Agreed**.

Online payments :

001 – HMRC – Tax and NI – March	£216.58
002 – L. Windless – travel expenses 2/5/23 to 31/3/24	£75.60
003 – L. Windless – back pay due for period 2/5/23 to 31/3/24	£459.12
004 – HMRC – Tax and NI related to clerk's back pay	£316.27
005 – L. Windless – clerk's expenses (stamps)	£6.80
006 – M. Fitzgerald – Village News printing	£480.00
007 – S. Whitehead – litter picking – March	£60.00
008 – N Power – electric supply – street lighting	£58.08
009 – Castle Water – water supply to pavilion	£6.75

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the next meeting will be held on Monday 13th May 2024 at Chart Sutton Village Hall.

There being no further matters to be discussed, the meeting closed at 9.45pm.