



ACOL PARISH COUNCIL

The Village Hall

The Street

Acol

Kent CT7 0JA

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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 26th October 2023 at 7.30pm, Acol Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors Richard Steel – Chairman [RS], Chenice Butterworth [CB], Sarah Corby [SC], Gavin Winpenny [GW]

In Attendance: Sara Archer – Clerk, District Cllr Abi Smith, KCC Councillor Derek Crow-Brown plus 7 members of the public.

16/23-24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Wendy Winpenny, District Cllr Sam Bambridge, PC Beth Ninnim

17/23-24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Steel and Cllr G Winpenny declared an interest in item 25/23-24 (b).

18/23-24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: To accept the minutes of the previous two Parish Council meetings held on 24th August 2023 as a true record. These were proposed by Cllr Gavin Winpenny and Seconded by Cllr Corby and duly signed by the Chair.

19/23-24 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a) Cllr Steel advised that arrangements were being made to repaint the BT kiosk, and clarification was being sought with regard to its ownership. It was noted that the community library was at capacity, and therefore suggested that some of the books and puzzles could be relocated into the kiosk.

Celebrations for the D-Day anniversary next year were discussed. Suggestions to commemorate the anniversary included lighting a beacon, fish 'n' chip supper, music on the green. Volunteers to assist with the arrangements would be welcomed.

The Chair confirmed that the budget would be agreed at the next meeting, therefore, any suggestions from residents with regard to potential expenditure should be forwarded to the Clerk or Chair for consideration.

Cllr Steel was awaiting a quote from Hughes and Son to remove the four diseased Ash trees and hedge cutting at the Recreation Ground. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

20/23-24 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk advised she had requested an independent safety inspection of the equipment in the play area. This would then be carried out on an annual basis. Enquiries had been made with Cllr Derek Crow-Brown with regard to grant funding to purchase a bench for the Recreation Ground. A number of policies had been updated which had been circulated for approval in item 26. The Clerk confirmed she had registered the Parish Council with the Information Commissioners Office, this was a necessary requirement due to the handling of data for CCTV purposes.

21/23-24 COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllr Wendy Winpenny was unable to attend the meeting, however, she reported that she had met with Cllr Hudson at Birchington, to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan. The first stage in preparing for the Plan, was to carry out a Village Appraisal. This would gather information about the demographics of the Village and requirements/issues of residents. Cllr Crow-Brown advised of the potential protection of 'green wedges', following a presentation from Dr Hannah Scott, Climate Change Officer. Minster Parish Council had recently successfully completed an application to protect the 'green wedge' between Minster and Cliffsend. Adrain Verrall was suggested as a point of contact at TDC to discuss this further and seek advice regarding Neighbourhood Plans.

Cllr Gavin Winpenny noted the traffic issues in the Village, particularly the number of vehicles breaching the weight limit. Cllr Steel would be writing to the haulage companies who regularly contravene this highways regulation to respectfully request they adhere to the weight restrictions.

Cllr Crow-Brown confirmed he continued to lobby for improvements with regard to the highways issues. The North Thanet Link Road would be progressing as it had now been allocated funding, however, he would seek clarification as to whether the full amount of funding had been secured.

The speedwatch campaign had been stepped up in the Village with every Councillor taking part in sessions. PC Beth Ninnim was also working in conjunction with the Parish Council to enforce action against speeding and highways contraventions.

Cllr Butterworth had met the Managing Director of Quex Park Estates, together with Cllr Steel, to discuss the options available to implement a safer pedestrian route from Acol village to Birchington. He had offered to give a presentation on sustainable, nature friendly farming and Cllr Butterworth would be approaching the Horticultural Society to see if this would be of interest to them.

Cllr Corby confirmed the new signage at the Recreation Ground to keep dogs on leads had been met with a positive response and improvements appeared to have been made.

Quotes were being obtained for the new benches and would be passed to the Clerk in due course.

22/23-24 INDIVIDUAL OFFICER REPORTS

a) **County Councillor Derek Crow-Brown** informed the meeting that he was liaising with Lezanne Ceazar, KCC Highways, to highlight the impact of road closures on the local economy and surrounding villages, and to raise concerns with regard to Highways issues on behalf of the Parishes.

Cllr Crow-Brown had attended an opening ceremony for the Parkway Station and it was noted that both the Leaders of KCC and TDC recognised the need for infrastructure to be put in place before the substantial amount of new homes were built.

The road closures planned for Acol in the forthcoming week had not been notified to the Parish Council direct, however, Cllr Steel had contacted KCC and asked for the contact details for the Parish Council to be updated.

b) **District Councillor Abi Smith** advised that the motion to consider a moratorium on larger housing developments had been debated at the Full Council Meeting in October, however, it had not been supported and was felt that the Planning Inspectorate would overrule any such decisions should they go to appeal.

Cllr Smith had spent much of her time responding to the recent planning application by the National Grid to build an electricity converter station on the Minster Marshes. The consent for the proposal was disappointing as the land had a diverse habitat for wildlife. Public consultations had been arranged to discuss the application, in Ramsgate, Minster and Sandwich. Residents were encouraged to attend one of these meetings and express their concerns.

c) **Ward Police Officer – PC Beth Ninnim** was unable to attend the meeting, however, she reported as follows:

'Since the period of 01/09/2023 to 24/09/2023 there have been 6 calls to Kent Police for Acol Village.

2 of these calls relate to the same road incident.

1 Road Traffic Collision

1 call in relation to a house alarm

1 animal enquiry concerning a dog in the road.

There is a planned operation on 16th November, in the afternoon/evening whereby the Road Safety Unit from Kent Police will be analysing data and hitting the most prevalent locations in Thanet for speed.

I have made a case that The Street, Acol Hill, and Margate Hill should be factored into these plans, albeit the final decision does not fall with me.'

23/23-24 HIGHWAYS

a) Speedwatch – All Parish Councillors are now involved in a monthly programme of Speedwatch sessions to monitor both speed and breaches of vehicle weight limit in the Village. Volunteers to join the initiative would be welcomed.

b) 7.5 tonne weight limit – data was being collected regarding overweight vehicles travelling through the Village and passed on to the relevant bodies.

c) Footpath to Quex – As discussed under item 21.

d) Street Cleansing, litter, fly-tipping – The Clerk would raise issues at the regular Litter Forum meeting. A copy of the street cleaning schedule would be requested again. It was noted that a significant amount of litter is left following the waste collection, this would be fed back to TDC.

e) Highways Improvement Plan – No further update.

24/23-24 PLANNING

TPO/TH/23/1353 - St Mildreds Church, Plumstone Road, Acol

TH/TPO/14(1986) – 2 No Horse Chestnut(T1, T2) – Reduce overhanging branches from north boundary by approx.2m to appropriate growth points retaining a minimum crown spread of 3m to3.5m

It was agreed to defer to the Tree Officer – TDC.

25/23-24 FINANCE

a) The Clerk presented the monthly bank reconciliation between the cash book and bank accounts.

RESOLVED: To approve the monthly bank reconciliation for August & September (Proposed: Cllr Steel, seconded Cllr Butterworth).

b) The Clerk presented the monthly payment schedule which included the following payments:

KALC - Cllr Training	£120.00
Sunstone - CCTV repair	£252.00
Unipair Service - Speedgun repair	£294.00
Hughes - mowing	£240.00
R. Steel - Repayment	£208.80
HMRC - Employee PAYE	£176.20
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	£485.05
Unity Trust - Service Charge	£1.50

Unity Trust - Service Charge	£7.83
Hughes - mowing	£160.00
Lionel Robbins - Internal Audit	£90.00
Defib Machines - Defib hire charge	£920.68
Hugofox - Website hosting	£11.99
G. Winpenny - Repayment Rec Grd Signage	£44.00
D. Hayfield - CCTV electricity	£60.00

Receipts:

Community Fundraiser	£297.60
Bank Interest	£55.32
TDC - Precept	£5,038.50
Acol VHMC - Defib costs	£960.68

RESOLVED: To approve payment of invoices included in the monthly payment schedule for October.

(Proposed: Cllr Butterworth, Seconded: Cllr Steel)

c) The Clerk advised that the registration with the Information Commissioner's Office was an annual cost of £40.00. This would be paid by direct debit from the Unity Trust Current Account.

RESOLVED: To approve the payment of the annual registration fee of £40.00 by direct debit. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr G Winpenny)

d) The defibrillator and its cabinet are financed by a five year rental contract between Defib Machines Ltd and Acol Parish Council, commencing on 1st December 2021. The Acol Village Hall Management Committee has paid the fees on behalf of the Parish Council, in full, to 30th November 2024 and have agreed to continue to do so. Councillors were asked to retrospectively approve the contract, noting the continued commitment to 1st December 2026 and potential cost of approx. £1600, should the Village Hall Committee not be able to provide financial assistance for the defibrillator and cabinet.

RESOLVED: To retrospectively approve the contract between Defib Machines Ltd and the Parish Council, and note the potential costs of approx. £1600, liable for payment in the event that the Village Hall Management Committee are unable to cover the costs. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr G Winpenny)

e) Cllr Steel advised of the proposal to install four road safety mirrors to be sited at specific locations in the Village to assist with sightlines. Cllr G Winpenny would make the necessary enquiries with property owners if appropriate and arrange for the mirrors to be purchased and installed.

RESOLVED: To purchase four road safety mirrors and locate in appropriate sites in the Village. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr Corby)

26/23-24 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Clerk presented the following policies which had been previously circulated to Councillors for review: CCTV Code of Practice & Policy, Grant Scheme, FOI Policy, Internal Control Systems, Publication Scheme, Risk Management Statement, Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations & Standing Orders.

No further comments were made, therefore the policies were approved.

RESOLVED: To approve the policies reviewed and identified above. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr Corby)

27/23-24 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- A resident advised he would take advantage of the road closure to weed along the corners of Plumstone Road which was gratefully acknowledged.

- It was requested that the street cleaners are instructed to clean closer to the kerb sides as this is where detritus builds up and becomes hazardous for pedestrians.

28/23-24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held on Thursday 21st December, 7:30pm, Acol Village Hall

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 20:30hrs.