

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL held in Capel Village Hall At 7.30pm on Monday 30 January 2023

Present: Cllrs Patterson, (Chair), Fenton, Mackonochie, Mackenzie, Malpas, Rich, Saunders, and Sawyer

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith, Clerk, 3 members of the public

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- | Minute No | Agenda No |
|-----------|---|
| | 1. Administration – Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones, Sanitisation measures, intention to record or film the meeting. – Noted. |
| 983 | 2. APOLOGIES:
An apology for absence was received from County Councillor Sarah Hamilton and Cllr. Young and their reasons for absence were accepted. |
| 984 | 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:
Cllrs. Rich and Fenton declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 8. |
| 985 | 4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: None. |
| 986 | 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 19 December 2022 be signed as a true and accurate record. |
| 987 | 6. CLERKS REPORT/PAST MATTERS:
Falmouth Place: The PCSO has been notified about the issues of cars blocking the sight lines and Highways have also been made aware. |
| 988 | 7. OPEN SESSION:
It was resolved to lower Standing Orders and allow members of the public to pass comment on any issues raised during agenda item 8. |
| 989 | <i>8.06pm Cllrs. Rich & Fenton declared a pecuniary interest and left the room.</i>
8. PLANNING CONSULTATION: 22/03563/FULL – REEDS SOLAR FARM, ALDERS ROAD Construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm and battery storage facility with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.
Members discussed the planning proposal and listened to comments from members of the public.

Resolved: Recommend Refusal.
We note that most of the professional statutory consultees object/have concerns to/about the proposal and have asked for additional information. We share their concerns and in particular in relation to the following:

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Highway safety - Alders Road is a rural lane which is completely inappropriate for the construction traffic needed. The entrance to the site with a large dip in the ground adjoining a sharp bend in the road will present a danger to construction traffic and other users. Please note the junction with the A228 Colts Hill is dangerous and has a record of accidents. The Parish Council could not see how this could be mitigated.2. The site is adjoining and visible from the AONB - there seems to be no assessment of the impact of the site development on the AONB.3. Although there are assessments of the impact of the development on the listed buildings adjoining the site there is no assessment of the impact on the buildings of this historic rural farmstead taken as a whole. There is no mention of the heritage of this area which is referred to in our emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan. The assessment of harm posed by this development is therefore understated.4. The site is in the Green Belt and is the last producer of hops in the parish (far from being in decline it has expanded its acreage in the recent past). Although we cannot lay down which crops are produced we would draw your attention to the fact that 75% of the land is Category 2 or 3a best and most versatile land which would seem a waste, given the |

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

derelict heritage orchard next door. Capel is really the historic heart of hop growing and to lose the last hop garden and its very fertile soil is not just a big loss for the cultural history of the parish, but also for Kent as a whole.

5. We would draw your attention to the comments of KCC Flood and water management on the inadequacy of the surface water drainage strategy prepared by AECOM. In addition we would point out that the root structure of the hops (some of which are forty years old) are very water demanding. Their removal would increase the likelihood of surface flooding. This seems not to have been taken into account.
6. We would echo the comments of KCC Archaeology on the weakness of the Archaeological DBA, which like many of the assessments seems to have been done as desktop exercises with little familiarity with the site.
7. We would draw your attention to the comments from Kent Police that the proposed fencing is not suitable for providing the necessary security.
8. We feel there is insufficient screening of the area and do not agree for with their calculations for biodiversity.
9. We are concerned about the cumulative impact of 3 solar farms on the landscape and footpath network in our parish.

The Parish Council also request that if TWBC are minded to approve, despite the above, that it be subject to a Section 106 request for a contribution to leisure facilities (planned new village hall) and/or highways (planned 40 mph speed limit on Alders Road) given the extra burden this will place on the community.

Cllrs. Fenton and Rich re-joined the meeting.

990

9. EXTERNAL REPORTS

a) Borough Councillors Report – Planning officers are still working through the implications of the Inspector's initial findings on the Local Plan. This seems to be taking a huge amount of officer time and may severely delay the plan. It may be the council will have to revise its growth strategy and reduce the number of houses planned. The options on the way forward are not expected to be presented to Borough Councillors until June at the earliest. One of the choices they face is between finding the evidence to support the inclusion of Tudeley, which is time-consuming and expensive, or as the Inspector strongly suggested, dropping it entirely. TWBC are also clearly having issues with the way forward in East Capel as the Inspector's comments on flooding, based on the guidance in the NPPF, are a major obstacle to building much of what they had planned west of Paddock Wood, as was pointed out during the Public Enquiry. The effect of the LP proposals in this part of the Borough on the local road network was also highlighted, at online meetings on the Kippings Cross Roundabout, by the realisation that the A21 as a strategic route takes precedence over the local roads which will have to cope with all the traffic from the proposed development. It will also be interesting to see if and how the Government's proposed policy changes and revisions to the NPPF influence TWBC's approach. They are out to consultation <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy> ending on 2 March 2023. The Borough Council meeting on 14 December 2022 rejected the overwhelming view of the parish councils in rural areas that there should be a system of all out elections. This would have allowed the Local Government Boundary Commission to draw up a warding pattern that better represented rural communities. The LGBC's final report on 3 member wards (necessitated because the TWBC has opted for elections by thirds) is due to be published on the 16 May 2023.

The next Borough Council meeting on 1 March 2023 at 6:30pm is open to the public and is viewable online via the TWBC website.

b) County Councillor – County Councillor Sarah Hamilton has advised the Clerk that she has spoken directly to MP Greg Clark about the concerns regarding Kippings Cross, see agenda item 11(a), who is going to discuss this with the appropriate Minister.

991

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Finance & Resources Committee:

- i) A report on the accounts as at the 31 December 2022 was noted.
- ii) The bank reconciliation as at the 31 December 2022 was noted.
- iii) A statement of the reserves was noted.
- iv) It was **resolved** to adopt the list of payments overleaf and for Cllrs. Patterson and Mackonochie to authorise the payments set up online by the Clerk. Cllr. Fenton checked the invoices against the payment list in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

- v) **Financial Position of the School:** Members noted an exchange of correspondence between County Councillor Sarah Hamilton and the KCC Education Department and that they would contact the school to discuss and review their financial position. It was agreed that the Parish Council would consider financially supporting a capital project for the school but that it should not be supporting maintenance costs.
- vi) **CCTV Tender Process:** Cllr. Mackonochie explained that Members of the Finance Committee met on the 26 January 2023 to discuss the tenders and review a summary of the quotes prepared by the Clerk. A preferred contractor has been identified. It was agreed that Cllr. Saunders and the Clerk should meet with the contractor to discuss the tender further and the requirements of the new system.

- b) **Staff, Office & Administration Working Committee:**
 - i) The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 January 2023 were noted.
 - ii) Members discussed the merits of introducing ID cards for the Clerk and Councillors. The Lone Worker Policy refers to ID cards being in place.
Resolved: The Clerk to prepare ID cards for Councillors and herself,
 - iii) Policies:
Resolved: To adopt the updated Health & Safety and Lone Worker Policies and an Equality & Diversity Policy.

- c) **Planning Committee:**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 December 2022 were received and noted.

- d) **Flooding Panel:**

Cllr. Mackonochie reported that between Christmas and New Year there was lot of water in the culvert. Southern Water were on site assisting with the drainage.

- e) **Memorial Cottages & Housing Working Group:**
 - i) The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 January 2023 were noted. It was also noted that the remedial works to the flooring in No. 10 and the new heating system are due to commence the w/c 20 February 2023.
8.48pm Cllr. Saunders declared a pecuniary interest and left the room.
 - ii) Rent Review:
Resolved: To accept the recommendation from the Memorial Cottages & Housing Working Group of a rent increase to both cottages of 2% from the 1 June 2023. The Clerk will notify the tenants of the increase once the works are complete in Number 10.
Cllr. Saunders re-joined the meeting.

- f) **Recreation Ground and Allotments Working Group:**
 - i) Cllr. Saunders reported that a number of shed locks were broken around the 15 January 2023. The Clerk has contacted all of the allotment holders and only a few chairs have been reported as missing. The Clerk has informed the PCSO and has advised the allotment holders to also report the incident. It is believed that entry was through the rear of the allotments and only plots in this area were affected.
 - ii) Rental status of the allotments: The Clerk reported that all of the plots are now let.

- g) **Neighbourhood Plan Working Party:**
 - i) The minutes of the meeting held on the 17 January 2023 were noted. Cllr, Patterson explained the next steps to Members which are detailed in the minutes.

992

11. PARISH MATTERS

- a) **Local Plan Examination Update:**

Cllr. Patterson advised that the Planning Policy Officers at TWBC are in the process of considering the issues raised in the Inspectors report, see item agenda 9 (a), and will not be reporting back to Members until June 2023. Cllr. Patterson also reported back on the two meetings recently held to discuss the impact of the proposals in the Local Plan on the A21 and in particular Kippings Cross. National Highways, KCC and TWBC attended the second meeting where it was apparent that the effect of the strategic proposals on the A21 have not been thought through particularly given National Highways are considering narrowing Kippings Cross. This will force traffic down the A228 and A26 road network which will not cope with the excessive traffic. MP Greg Clark, who attended one of the meetings, will be investigating this issue.

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

- b) **Network Rail: Siting of a welfare cabin and car parking spaces at the Village Hall**
The Clerk reported that Network Rail has paid the full amount of £11,000.00 to lease six parking spaces and the previous under-5 play area. Cllr. Saunders and the Clerk met with the contractor today and hoarding has been erected in readiness for the welfare facilities which are expected to be delivered tomorrow. The contractor seems keen to engage with the community and will be hand delivering letters this week to properties in the vicinity giving details of the project and useful contact numbers for the team.
- c) **Warm Spaces Register:**
The Cricket Club has opened the pavilion on three occasions as part of the Warm Spaces Scheme but attendance has mainly been users of the recreation ground. It has therefore been decided to not hold any more sessions.
- d) **To receive an update on the Electric Vehicle Charging Point Scheme:**
KCC has advised that they are waiting on further information from their contractor before sending out the legal agreement.
- e) **Capel Community Association:**
The Clerk and several Councillors attended the AGM held on the 29 December 2022. An Extraordinary Meeting has been arranged for the 6 February 2023 at 7.30pm in the village hall as all the Trustees would like to step down. It is hoped that people will come forward and be nominated as Trustees or join the Committee to ensure the future operation of the village hall.
- f) **Annual Parish Meeting:**
Cllr. Patterson advised Members that Carlos Hone, Head of Planning at TWBC and Kevin Hope, Interim Strategic Sites & Delivery Team Leader have agreed to attend the Annual Parish Meeting due to be held on the 3 April 2023 and provide an update to residents on the progress of the Local Plan.
- g) **King Charles III Coronation:**
Members noted that guidance recently issued on the Coronation states that the official Ceremony will take place on Saturday 6 May 2023. The Coronation 'Big Lunch' is programmed for Sunday 7 May when street parties and get togethers are expected to take place. The 'Big Help Out' will be held on Monday 8 May and has been assigned as day to celebrate the positive impact volunteering has on communities across the nation. Cllr. Patterson advised that the cricket club has a home fixture on Sunday 7 May and that a 'Big Lunch' event could be held on the recreation ground. Parishioners will be able to bring a picnic and the bar at the pavilion will be open. The Clerk has also booked the village hall in the event of adverse weather. It was agreed to start promoting the event on social media and the website.

993

12. HIGHWAYS

- a) **Highways Improvement Plan:**
Cllrs. Patterson, Fenton and Saunders and the Clerk held a virtual meeting with the Community Engagement Officer on Thursday 18 January 2023 and discussed the results of the ATC surveys carried out last year and the next steps. A number of highway improvements were discussed for Five Oak Green Road and Alders Road. The Community Engagement Officer has since updated the Highways Improvement Plan and will discuss the proposed schemes with the planning teams to establish what improvements can be implemented and the likely cost.

994

13. REPRESENTATION AT MEETINGS

- i) **KALC Meeting:** There has been no meeting.
- ii) **Parish Chairmen's Group Meeting:** There has been no meeting.
- iii) **Joint Transportation Board:** Cllr. Mackonochie advised that at the JTB held this evening concern was expressed about the reduced bus service following the decision of KCC to not subsidise certain routes. The JTB is going to sponsor a working group to try and understand what the different user groups want from the Highway Improvement Plan process.
- iv) CCA: See agenda item 11 (e).
- v) Other external meetings: Nothing to report.

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

995

14. CORRESPONDENCE/CONSULTATIONS:

- a) Electoral Review of TWBC. It was noted that there will be a delay in publishing the recommendations.
- b) KCC Consultation on Community Services – noted.

996

15. ANY CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS: None to consider.

997

16. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

Full Council Meeting: Monday 27 February 2023 at 7.30pm.

With no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed:

Dated:

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

Payment List – January 2023

Ref:	Payee	Description	Gross
BACs Payments for approval on 30 January 2023			
BACS 01-01	Louise Goldsmith	Mileage, business expenses	204.20
BACS 01-02	HMRC	PAYE & NIC January	427.36
BACS 01-03	F&C Cleaning	Cleaning public toilets - Inv:1615	352.80
BACS 01-04	Heliocentrix	Invoice 19259	71.88
BACS 01-05	JRB Enterprise	Dog waste bags invoice: 24953	159.90
BACS 01-06	Capel Groundcare	Invoice SI2223266 Fencing/rubbish removal	557.40
BACS 01-07	CCA	Hall Hire	88.00
BACS 01-08	Business Stream	Waste Services 2765249/20	74.83
BACS 01-09	Louise Goldsmith	Reimbursement between meetings for deposit for letting	173.08
BACS 01-10	Bishop Flint	Settlement of unmetered electricity supply - payment made between meetings	234.56
		TOTAL	2,344.01

Date	Payee	Description	Gross
Direct Debits and Standing Orders made in January 2023			
01/01/2023	EDF	Electricity - cricket pavilion	1.00
01/01/2023	EDF	Electricity - public toilets	31.00
01/01/2023	EE	Clerks Mobile Phone	35.41
01/01/2023	TalkTalk	Telephone & Broadband	54.54
12/01/2023	Sage	Payroll software	8.40
09/01/2023	B&CE Holdings Ltd	Pension	168.10
25/01/2023	Louise Goldsmith	Payroll December	1,754.23
25/01/2023	Capel Groundcare	Grounds maintenance contract December	2,191.60
		TOTAL	4,244.28