

CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL held in Capel Village Hall at 7.30pm on Monday 26 February 2024

Present: Cllrs Patterson, (Chair), Mackonochie, Saunders, Sawyer and Young
In attendance: Louise Goldsmith, Clerk, and 3 members of the public.

Minute No	Agenda No
	1. Administration – Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. The Clerk has not received any requests from anyone intending to record or film the meeting.
1162	2. APOLOGIES: An apology for absence was received from Cllrs. Fenton, Malpas and Rich and the reasons for absences were accepted.
1163	3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None received.
1164	4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: There were none.
1165	5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 29 January 2024 and of the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 22 February 2024 be signed as a true and accurate record.
1166	6. CLERKS REPORT/PAST MATTERS: The Clerk has checked both defibrillators and has updated their status on The Circuit. Elections Briefings have started for the upcoming local elections and the Clerk will be attending a briefing tomorrow evening.
1167	7. OPEN SESSION: A member of the public complained about cars parked on the corner of Falmouth Place and blocking sight lines. A member of the public mentioned that motorists are also parking cars inconsiderately on the corner of Sychem Lane and Sychem Place. A member of the public suggested two changes to the road layout of Whetsted Road from its junction with Five Oak Green Road and the start of Forge Cottages. The first suggestion is to install a "No Entry" sign from the start of the village green when coming over the railway bridge so that all traffic has to turn left towards the shop. It was suggested that this would make it easier for buses turning round the green and could also be safer for vehicles making the right turn onto Badsell Road when heading towards Tonbridge. The second suggestion is to make the junction more of a left hand turn, to hopefully slow down motorists, which could be achieved by creating a kerb and extra pavement area at the entrance to Whetsed Road from A member of the public raised the issue of the effects of the proposed new housing in Paddock Wood and a possible by-pass at Colts Hill.
1168	8. EXTERNAL REPORT a) Borough Councillors Report: The Consultation on the revisions to the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan closes tonight. We wait to hear next steps from the Inspector. It is expected that there will be public hearings some time in the summer though this has to be confirmed. Nominations for the Borough Council elections open on the 11 March and close on the 5 April 2024. Capel Parish is now part of the enlarged Pembury and Capel Ward which will elect three councillors on the 2 May 2024. The new council will be smaller having 39 councillors instead of 48. Expect election literature and canvassing candidates going door to door over the next few weeks! The next Borough Council Meetings will be on Wednesday 28 February 2024 (budget setting meeting) and Wednesday 3 April 2024 both at 6:30pm – open to the public in person or online. b) County Councillor: There was no report.

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10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Finance & Resources Committee

- i) A report on the accounts as at the 31 January 2024 was noted.
- ii) A bank reconciliation as at the 31 January 2024 was noted.
- iii) Capel Village Hall new lease: Cllrs. Patterson, Mackonochie, Sawyer, Saunders and the Clerk met with the Trustees of the Capel Community Association on the 15 February 2024 to discuss the new lease. The Trustees also shared details of four possible options for the future of the village hall. A copy of the presentation has been circulated to all Members. The Clerk reported that the Trustees will be sending comments on the proposed draft lease prepared by the Parish Council solicitor.
- iv) Member Grants: It was noted that the Clerk has submitted an application for a Member Grant from County Councillor Sarah Hamilton for up to £2000.00 to assist with the shortfall in the budget allocation for the replacement external doors to the public toilets. KCC has confirmed that the grant application is progressing and is in the process of being signed off. It was noted that in between meetings a refund of £1,337.00 was paid to KCC representing a refund of unspent funds from a previous Member Grant, 20-TW-49.
- v) Payments:
Resolved: To adopt the list of payments overleaf and for Cllrs. Patterson and Cllr. Mackonochie to authorise the payments set up online by the Clerk. Cllr. Saunders checked the invoices against the payment list in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

b) Staff, Office & Administration Committee:

- i) Standing Orders: It was agreed to not make any changes to the Standing Orders and to adopt the current version.
- ii) Policies: Members noted the schedule of policies showing the review date for each policy.

c) Planning Committee:

The minutes of the meeting held on the 29 January 2024 were received and noted.

d) Flooding Panel:

Cllr. Mackonochie advised that the copious amount of rain recently had presented some challenges. Pumping lorries attended the area outside the Forge area to check on a road gulley drain but also discovered a collapsed drain towards Falmouth Place and a collapsed sewer.

e) Memorial Cottages & Housing Working Group:

Nothing to report.

f) Recreation Ground and Allotments Working Group:

- i) The minutes of the meeting held on the 21 February 2024 were noted.
- ii) Members received the results of the online survey for an outdoor gym. The Clerk reported that 90% of respondents think installing outdoor gym equipment on the recreation ground would be a good idea and 74% said they would use it on a regular basis. 84% of respondents think installing an outdoor tennis table would be a good idea. A number of respondents gave additional favourable comments in support of the proposal.
- iii) To approve the recommendation from the working group for a preferred quote and two other quotes to be submitted with the grant funding application.
Resolved: To approve the recommendation from the Recreation Ground and Allotments Working Group that Wicksteed is the preferred contractor and to submit Caloo and HAGS as alternative quotes, if required by the grant funder.
- iv) To agree to submit a grant funding application for an outdoor gym.
Resolved: To authorise the Clerk to submit a grant application to the FCC Communities Foundation, before the deadline for applications of the 28 February 2024, for a grant of £24,978.01 for outdoor gym equipment for the recreation ground. To approve the signing of a letter from the Parish Council confirming a contribution of 10.75%, (£2,685.14), of the total cost of the proposed outdoor gym equipment.

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- v) To approve a recommendation from the working group of a contractor to carry out the bi-annual tree survey of all trees on Parish Council land.

Members considered four quotes obtained and tabled by the Clerk for the bi-annual tree survey of all the trees maintained and owned by the Parish Council.

Resolved: To approve the recommendation from the Recreation Ground and Allotments Working Group to accept a quote from Living Forest of £345.00, (excluding VAT) for the bi-annual tree survey.

g) **Neighbourhood Plan Working Party:**

It was noted that the Parish Council's response to the Clarification Note was finalised at the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 22 February 2024 and had been submitted to TWBC. Cllr. Patterson advised that hopefully the Examiner will now issue a report and a referendum is expected to take place late Spring/early Summer.

1170

11. PARISH MATTERS

a) **Local Plan Examination Update:**

i) Public Consultation on TWBC response to the Inspector's Initial Findings Letter on the Examination of the New Local Plan:

It was noted that the Parish Council's response to the consultation on TWBC's response to the Inspector's Initial Findings letters was finalised at the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 22 February 2024 and has been submitted to TWBC.

ii) To discuss and note the next steps

Cllr. Patterson advised that it is expected that further Hearings will take place in the summer.

b) **Climate Change Initiatives:**

Connected Kerb, the contractor working for KCC to install the EVCP points in the village hall car park has advised that the charging equipment should be fitted this week. The equipment will then be commissioned and hopefully operational by the end of the first week in March 2024. The Clerk was asked to mention that the electric box is very close to the verge and seems to have been scraped by an HGV.

c) **Mobile Coverage:**

MP Greg Clark has been advised by Ofcom that although mobile coverage across the Country is generally good and improving, some rural areas still have lower levels of coverage. The Government has sought to address this by entering into an agreement with the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to establish the Shared Rural Network. Under this agreement, the MNOs are committed to providing good quality coverage to 88% of the UK landmass by July 2024, and 90% of the UK landmass by January 2027. Ofcom is responsible for assessing whether the MNOs have met their coverage commitments, but do not play a role in determining where operators deploy network infrastructure (i.e. new masts), as these decisions are for the operators to make on a commercial basis. MP Greg Clark has advised that it seems that Ofcom is therefore unable to assist in improving the mobile network in Capel. It was noted that MP Greg Clark has kindly agreed to write to the operators individually to see if they can be persuaded to consider installing a new mast in the parish.

d) **Annual Parish Meeting:**

Members discussed the format of the Annual Parish Meeting due to be held on Monday 15 April 2024 at 7pm in the village hall. It was agreed to ask the CCA Trustees to attend the meeting and to deliver their presentation on the future proposals for the village hall. To continue the theme of 'The Future of Capel' it was agreed to also have presentations on the Highways Improvement Plan and plans for the Recreation Ground to give residents another opportunity to comment and suggest ideas/improvements for both.

e) **Kent Police:** It was noted that the next virtual meeting with Kent Police to discuss local issues will take place at 5.30pm on Thursday 14 March 2024.

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12. HIGHWAYS

a) **Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)**

Proposal to fund the installation of the SID Scheme on Five Oak Green Road

It was noted that the poles for the SID have been installed. The Community Engagement Officer has advised that KCC is waiting for the brackets for the device but hope to receive these and install the equipment very soon. Cllr. Saunders suggested that the SID is installed on the post in Larkfield first where it is likely to have a bigger impact. It was agreed to add the highways improvements to Whetsted Road, suggested

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by a member of the public, to the HIP and for these to be discussed at the next meeting with KCC. The Clerk was asked to arrange the annual walkabout with the Community Engagement Officer for a date after the Annual Parish Meeting so that any suggestions made at the meeting can be incorporated and discussed.

b) HGV signage at the Sherenden Road junction with Five Oak Green Road

The Community Engagement Officer has advised the Clerk that KCC received a report from a member of the public back in January that the advisory 'unsuitable for HGV signage' on Sherenden Road, near to the junction with Five Oak Green Road, had been damaged. KCC has now determined that advisory signage is redundant due to the legally enforceable height restriction sign also installed at this location. KCC will therefore not be replacing the sign but will be installing a new height restriction sign closer to the junction to improve visibility. KCC will also be moving the existing terminal signs closer to the junction mouth and installing advance signage on Five Oak Green Road of the height restriction along Sherenden Road.

c) 30mph speed toolkit

The Clerk reported that the Community Engagement Officer has agreed to provide a 30mph speed toolkit free of charge. The kit includes a banner, wheelie bin stickers and posters advising motorists that the area has a 30mph speed limit. It was agreed to distribute the wheelie bin stickers and erect the banner when the SID scheme is up and running.

d) Request for hedgehog warning signs on Five Oak Green Road

The Clerk reported that two residents had agreed to install a warning sign on their private property. It was agreed that the Clerk should purchase two official hedgehog warning signs to be possibly installed on the SID poles and obtain some laminated copies for residents to display.

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13. REPRESENTATION AT MEETINGS

a) **KALC Meeting:** There has been no meeting. The next meeting is due to take place on the 5 March 2024.

b) **Parish Chairmen's Group Meeting:** There has been no meeting. The next meeting is due to take place on the 12 March 2024.

c) **Joint Transportation Board:** There has been no meeting.

d) **Other External Meetings:**

Cllr. Mackonochie recently attended a Town Centre Working Group meeting and advised that TWBC is currently preparing a Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan. A public consultation commenced on the 23 February and ends on the 15 April 2024 seeking the views of residents on the proposals. This consultation is the first stage in the process of preparing the Plan, called the 'Draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan – Vision 2040'. Hard copies of the consultation documents are available in a number of locations including the Parish Office.

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14. CORRESPONDENCE/CONSULTATIONS:

Public Consultation on the Draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan - Vision 2040 (Regulation 18 (Part 1) Consultation).

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15. ANY CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS: None.

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16. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

Full Council Meeting: Monday 25 March 2024 at 7.30pm.

With no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 8.32pm

Signed:

Dated:

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Payments: February 2024

Ref:	Payee	Description	Gross
BACs Payments for approval on 26 February 2024			
BACS 02-01	Louise Goldsmith	Expenses	236.60
BACS 02-02	HMRC	PAYE & NIC	507.96
BACS 02-03	F&C Cleaning	Cleaning public toilets	424.80
BACS 02-04	Heliocentrix Ltd	Monthly Microsoft 365 subscription	78.34
BACS 02-05	You Value Home Improvements	Supply and installation 2 front doors to cottages	3,156.00
BACS 02-06	British Red Cross	First Aid Course	198.00
BACS 02-07	Capel Groundcare	Works to football pitch	180.00
BACS 02-08	Netwise	Website hosting	420.00
BACS 02-09	KCC	Refund Members Grant	1337.00
TOTAL			6,538.70

Date	Payee	Description	Gross
Direct Debits and Standing Orders			
06/02/2024	EDF	Electricity - cricket pavilion	290.68
01/02/2024	EDF	Electricity - cricket pavilion	74.00
01/02/2024	EDF	Electricity - public toilets	78.00
05/02/2024	TalkTalk	Telephone & Broadband	46.87
28/02/2024	EE	Mobile Phone	18.00
15/02/2024	Sage	Payroll software	9.60
26/02/2024	B&CE Holdings	Pension - Clerk	188.29
25/02/2024	Louise Goldsmith	Payroll	1,948.21
25/02/2024	Capel Groundcare	Grounds maintenance contract	2,216.09
TOTAL			4,869.74

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