

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF EAST MALLING AND LARKFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 8TH JULY 2020 AT CHURCH FARM HALL AT 7.30P.M.**

PRESENT: Cllrs. D. Thornewell (Chairman), Mrs. M. Moore (Vice-Chairman), T. Bishop, Mrs. L. Cook, R. Haffenden, J. Luque, Mrs. J. Manser, R. Mitchell, R. Moore, R. Roud, Mrs. M. Tatton and Mrs. C. Woodger

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs. Mrs. L. Hogben, S. Millson, Mrs. A. Oakley and Mrs. Trudy Dean

Although Cllr. Mrs. Dean had given apologies, she had sent a report which was circulated to Members. A copy of this should be sent to those Members who have tendered apologies and Cllr. Leale.

APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF MINUTES AND APPENDIX OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH MARCH AND EXTRAORDINARY MEETING ON 23RD MARCH 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings held on Wednesday, 4th March and 23rd March be **APPROVED AND SIGNED** by the Chairman.

APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE ON 11TH MARCH AND PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ON 23RD MARCH 2020

Amenities

Cllr. Bishop presented these Minutes and reported that the electrical works had now been carried out in the Parish Office, Church Farm Hall and the Granary Hall and Workshop.

The Chairman commented that we have now been informed that we will require Listed Building consent for the refurbishment work to East Malling War Memorial.

Planning and Development

Cllr. Thornewell presented these Minutes which he felt were self-explanatory.

Cllr. Mrs. Woodger commented that she did tender her apologies for this Meeting but it is not recorded. This will be added at the next Meeting of the Committee.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

(i) Ratification of Planning Comments Submitted

The Chairman drew Members attention to the List of Planning Comments submitted during lockdown and thanked them for their rapid response with comments. The action taken was **RATIFIED**.

The Chairman commented that revised plans have now been received for the proposed 2 dwellings on land adjacent to 166 The Rocks Road.

The comments on the proposals at East Malling Research Station were positive as it is felt this type of development on this site should be encouraged.

The only comment that has not been submitted yet is a dropped kerb in Shaftesbury Close, East Malling.

The action taken during lockdown was **RATIFIED**.

(ii) **List of Decision Notices Received since Lockdown**

Members attention was drawn to the List of Decision Notices issued by the Borough Council, attached to their Agenda.

(iii) **Aylesford Newsprint**

The Chairman reported that Borough Councillors were invited to a Zoom meeting with Panattoni, the applicants proposing to develop the former Aylesford Newsprint as a distribution centre.

The land between the railway line and the river is not part of the application as the Administrators for Aylesford Newsprint have kept this area. Also, the footpath by the railway belongs to Railtrack. Nor does it include the Mill Pond and Stream.

(iv) **Examination in Public of Draft Local Plan – November**

The Chairman reported that the dates for the start of the Examination in Public for the Draft Local Plan have been notified as in October and November. We have already instructed Solicitors and they have done the initial documentation and £1,000 has been paid to West Malling Parish Council towards the costs, as already agreed. A Zoom meeting has taken place with Emma Dring, Barrister and Kevin Goodwin who was also used for the Bellway Appeal.

The initial cost for Kevin Goodwin, planning expert, to come down soon to visit the area of the proposed Green Belt extension, investigation of planning issues and report is £3840 + VAT. This information would then be used to file the statement of the two Parish Councils case which has to be done prior to the Inquiry dates which are likely to be the November ones. It was **AGREED** we should pay half these costs on the basis West Malling pays the other half.

The Chairman **PROPOSED** that a Crowd Funding Scheme be set up to assist with funding. Any funds raised will be paid directly to the Solicitors. It was **AGREED** such a Crowd Funding Scheme be set up.

Cllr. Mrs. Woodger made comment on the proposal for schools at both the Broadwater Farm site and the Whitepost Field site.

The Chairman commented that the Forty Acres proposal is up for approval at the virtual Area 3 Committee Meeting tomorrow evening, 9th July 2020. Letters have been sent in objecting from this Parish Council, East Malling Conservation Group, Leybourne Parish Council, Kings Hill Parish Council and West Malling Parish Council plus there a large number of individual objections.

RATIFICATION OF PAYMENTS

The list of payments of accounts made during the lockdown, circulated with the Agenda, was **RATIFIED**.

APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/2020 AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2019/20

The Clerk had **CIRCULATED** copies of the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 and the Accounting Statements 2019/20 and it was **AGREED** that these be **APPROVED AND SIGNED** by the Chairman and Clerk.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman's Report had been circulated, as follows:-

1. It seems a long time since i last did one of the these for a meeting but thought i should report generally on what has been happening since that last council meeting at the end of March.
2. This meeting will be one of the four which the Kent Association of Parish Councils say we must hold before the end of the current council year on 31st March 2020. Obviously though when we return to an ordinary pattern of meetings remains to be seen.
3. Since the lockdown, the office has been closed and Val and Syretta have been working from home. Martin has continued working doing the usual maintenance jobs, cutting the grass and so on. As has Daniel regularly inspecting the halls, painting at East Malling, removing the plaster in the committee room and other jobs as required. The village halls were shut as required by the regulations and 3 village hall staff furloughed with successfully claiming the payments from the Government.
4. I should add though the halls have been used by the Blood Transfusion Service on three occasions as allowed by the rules.
5. We also had a caravan and van for several days in the car park at East Malling and then the same one moved to Larkfield. We were relieved this happened and we did not have to incur any legal or clean-up costs. Martin had to clear rubbish at both places after they left them.
6. We also have been relieved under Govt regulations of the business rates on both the main halls although we have always paid less on East Malling as it is registered charity of which the parish council is the sole Trustee.
7. In addition, we have received a payment of £10,000 for the East Malling Playing Field , also a charity and which obviously has to be spent on it. It will cover the cost of the wall repair when we can get that done as previously agreed and the monies we had budgeted fired as may be necessary.

8. Payments have also been made of £30,000 for the halls also under the Governments schemes as obviously we have not had any hire fee income over these last few months.
9. Just prior to lock down we did receive an electrical report on all our premises and with the agreement of Tim and Margaret the work at The Church Farm site has all been completed. This includes that at the office while it is closed, the two halls, and workshop.
10. We have now heard from both Weight Watchers and Slimming World they wish to return to Church Farm in July and this fits in with the work above being done while the halls were empty.
11. We have now circulated all the block booking hirers to find out their intentions though i anticipate it may be sometime before some can or want to return despite the reduction of the social distancing to one metre plus.
12. Another outstanding issue was the replacement of the yellow lines and marked bays in the entrance to the East Malling High Street Car Park. A date was fixed for this and i am pleased to say the residents concerned moved their cars with the sun shining and a dry day the day before and on the day. So that work has been done and paid for.
13. On the planning front we have continued to respond to all the applications received as detailed in the agenda. Most have been relatively minor and i thank all members of the planning committee for their weekly input. It is clear TMBC will not return to paper copies and this has demonstrated we can cope with changes to our procedures.
14. There are still some undecided applications and i would mention the Old Coal Yard, New Hythe; Ditton Edge; and the Kia garage site. These all seem to involve input from KCC as highway authority. The Forty Acres application was delayed by the cancelled Area 3 Meeting when lockdown happened. It may be reported to the July virtual meeting. Officers propose it should be passed and their report can be seen on the web under TM/19/0181.
15. The Examination in Public due to have its first session in May was cancelled and it is possible these may now take place in October/November. The solicitors we instructed, Baxter's, for the Bellway Appeal have again been instructed by us and West Malling. Emma Dring has been reserved as our barrister.
16. It is understood that Heath Wood within Kings Hill may be coming forward in the Autumn with a planning application and the site at the end of Teston Road with access from Kings Hill. The developer assures me access is all secured from Kings Hill.
17. During this last period with more people out and about reports of footpath issues have increased over fallen trees; the Fishing Club closing a path at Lunsford Lane which we got re-opened via KCC; and general maintenance issues. Highway issues have also been coming up and Syretta report maintenance issues to KCC.
18. I hope i have set out everything!

The Chairman added that the children's' play areas at both East Malling and Larkfield were re-opened on Monday and necessary signage posted on site regarding sanitisation and social distancing.

Peter Shayler Amusements have requested use of Larkfield Recreation Ground at the beginning of September and have provided all the information in respect of Risk Assessment and arrangements they have had to make. It was **AGREED** their request be **GRANTED**.

The Accountant, Derek Kemp, who carries out the closedown of the accounts has indicated that we will need to increase the Precept for 2021/2022.

The Clerk commented that at the start of the lockdown she made enquiries of Zurich, the Parish Council Insurers regarding claiming under the Business Interruption cover for loss of income from hirers of the Village Halls. A response was received that we were not covered for the COVID-19 Virus. Having looked at the Zurich website this week, that there is the possibility that this has now changed and she intends submitting a claim for the loss of income. Cllr. Bishop said that the Leisure Trust are insured with Zurich and there is test case going through at the moment and they intend to claim also.

Cllr. Bishop commented on the remedial works at Larkfield Leisure Centre, the Borough Council have been helpful to the Leisure Trust, they have at present lent them £300,000 and at the Council Meeting they will possibly be receiving a further £1 million from the Borough Council.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that the Local Government Boundary Commission have decided to review the Borough Wards as some of the wards are not in line with the guidelines.

Cllr. Luque said that people are using Chaucer Way as a rat-run.

Cllr. Moore said that Speedwatch will not be resumed until next year.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 2nd September 2020

CLOSURE

The Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 9.00p.m.

Chairman
2nd September 2020