

The Minutes of the Meeting of Thurnham Parish Council held on 18th January 2021.
By Zoom at 7:30 PM.

***Councillors present: Duncan
Dunlop
Horne
Shelley
Skinner
Smith
Stark***

Also: Parish Clerk, Mrs Sherrie Babington, KCC Councillor Prendergast, Downs Mail, and a Representative from the Bearsted and Thurnham Society.

The meeting was chaired by Parish Cllr Skinner.

The Chairman welcomed all to the Meeting.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received, and reasons for absence accepted from Cllrs Wise and Baigent, MBC Councillor Nick de Wiggondene-Shepperd and the Police.

2. Declaration of Interest.

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were circulated to all members.

It was proposed by Cllr Stark to accept these as a true record, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and agreed by all present.

The Minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes.

There were no matters arising.

5. Public Comments and Observations.

Mr Buckingham from the Bearsted and Thurnham Society joined the meeting and reported on the work of the Society, and their response to the MBC Local Plan.

6. Clerk's Report.

The Clerks Report was noted by members.

7. External Reports.

a. MBC Ward Councillors Report.

MBC Councillor de Wiggondene-Shepperd gave his apologies to the meeting.

b. KCC Councillors Report.

KCC Councillor Shellina Prendergast gave her report to the meeting.

She reported on the vaccine programme for Kent and Medway, this was being rolled out by the CCG NHS, and the arrangements were updated on their website.

She spoke regarding Covid support programme by KCC and stated that they had now launched symptom free testing, the Maidstone test site was the Kent Showground.

Cllr Skinner spoke regarding the funding in place to assist with pandemic. Cllr Prendergast confirmed that there was additional funding from Central Government for Local Authorities.

She reported on the Brexit transition and stated that KCC had managed this well.

Cllr Smith asked Cllr Prendergast about the Quiet Lanes Scheme, as he was looking into this for the rural lanes in the parish.

Cllr Prendergast stated that due to the current pressures, this would not be a priority with KCC right now. She stated that as the scheme was quite expensive, parishes were encouraged to consider other options, such as growing hedges, road markings and signage as an alternative. She stated that if the Parish Council was to put in a request for the scheme then KCC would consider it.

c. Liaison with external parties

No matters were reported.

8. Joint Parish Group/Local Plan.

Cllr Horne reported that the Planning Inquiry for the St Nicolas Church site in Otham had now concluded, and the appeal had been allowed.

He stated that there were implications and ramifications from the Inspectors decision. The Inspector has accepted the MBC Highways Report in preference of the KCC, and the views of the local people were largely dismissed.

He spoke regarding the disappointment at the outcome of the appeal as St Nicolas Church was the oldest church in Kent and no attention was paid to its heritage.

He stated that MBC Officers were in favour of the development, and accordingly the views of MBC Officers were put forward in favour at the appeal. Unfortunately, it was the same Barrister who had to defend the appeal, and her views were used against her during the appeal hearing.

Cllr Horne reported on a Water Workshop he had attended. He stated that this was encouraging and there appeared to be a welcome change in attitude, which he hoped would be reflected during the Local Plan process.

9. Saint Mary's Church.

Cllr Smith reported that the Church roof was leaking and in need of repair.

He confirmed that the new Vicar had now moved on and the church was now being looked after by Reverend John Corbyn.

He reported that the Church was currently being used to store coffins at present due to Covid.

10. Financial Matters.

a. Financial Statement.

The financial statement was circulated to all members for consideration. This was proposed by Cllr Shelley, seconded by Cllr Smith, and agreed by all present.

b. 2021/2022 Budget and Precept.

The Clerk circulated a draft budget and report for members consideration.

This was discussed by members and members discussed the number of new properties being built within the Parish at the Barty Farm development and the impact that this would have on the parish precept.

Following discussions, it was proposed by Cllr Shelley to increase the precept to for 2021/2022 to £20500, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and agreed by all present.

Action: Precept approved £20500.

Members discussed the need for a notice board at the new development to keep residents updated and informed on parish matters. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the developer to see whether they would be willing to install one at the site.

Action: Clerk to action.

11. Parish Council Committee Reports.

a. Planning Matters.

Application Received

20/505782/REM	Rgva Crismill Lane Bearsted Maidstone Kent ME14 4NT Approval of Reserved Matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale for Plot 4 only, pursuant to outline application 20/500293/OUT (Outline application for the demolition of existing office building and creation of 3no. self build plots).
20/505743/FULL	Kalmia Thurnham Lane Thurnham Maidstone Kent ME14 Erection of a conservatory.
20/505677/FULL	Shell Detling Detling Hill Detling Maidstone Kent ME14 Removal of underground tanks with insertion of new underground tanks, replacement and repositioning of canopy and fuel pumps, creation of 5no. car parking spaces and associated works.

MBC Planning Decisions

20/505052/FULL

The Oast House Barty Farm Roundwell Bearsted Maidstone Kent ME14 4HN

Demolition of single storey rear extension and erection of first floor extension to re-instate south-east roundel and roof. Conversion of 2no. residential dwellings into 4no. residential dwellings with insertion of solar panels, creation of additional parking spaces with electrical charging points, cycle/bin store and associated fencing.

Application Permitted

20/505169/FULL

High Chymes Ware Street Weaving Maidstone Kent ME14 5LA

Erection of a front porch and single storey rear extension.

Application Permitted

20/505189/FULL

Brickfield Cottages Coldblow Lane Thurnham Kent ME14 3LR

Erection of a car barn with log store and a separate storage building.

Application Permitted

20/502014/SUB

Longton Manor Stockbury Valley Stockbury ME9 7QN

Submission of details pursuant to conditions 3 (external lighting); 6 (section (i) parts [a-g]); and 7 (contamination) of application 19/501868/FULL.

Application Withdrawn

20/504381/FULL

Cobham Cottage Water Lane Thurnham Maidstone Kent ME14 3LU

Demolition of existing dwelling, retention of existing front elevation, and erection of a new dwelling.

Application Permitted

b. Highway Matters.

Cllr Stark reported that the Woodland Trust had submitted a planning application for a car park within the Woodland Trust land, as there was an issue with parking on the verges on the Ashford Road. This was discussed by members and the benefits of this were noted.

The Clerk spoke regarding the parish council's suggestion to have double yellow lines installed at the junction of Hockers Lane and Ware Street, she stated that this needed to be included in the Parish Councils Highway Improvement Plan and submitted to KCC. This was agreed.

Action: Clerk to complete HIP and submit to KCC.

This was discussed and it was agreed that this matter should be raised with KCC Councillor Sheila Prendergast to see whether this could be progressed.

Action: Clerk to liaise with KCC Councillor Prendergast.

Cllr Smith spoke regarding the Quiet Lanes Scheme and suggested that the PC ascertain the views of its residents regarding this. He proposed to place an article in the Parish Councils pages of the Downs Mail and the PC website regarding this and the proposals of the PC. This was approved.

Action: Cllr Smith to action.

Cllr Dunlop raised concerns regarding the increased litter along the country lanes and asked if there was anything that could be done about this.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that an item would be included in the Downs Mail pages to encourage residents to keep the area outside of their properties clear of litter.

Cllr Skinner reported that he had been contacted by a resident of Chapel Lane, stating that concerns had been raised about the flooding of the land on Chapel Lane, adjacent to the Bell Bridge, and it had been reported that Network Rail was running a pipe drain off their land into a private drain.

This was discussed by Members, and it was agreed that the Clerk should report this to KCC and write to Network Rail.

Action: Clerk to action.

c. Parking on Ware Street.

No matters were raised.

12. Heritage and Community Awards.

Heritage Award – Members discussed the annual Heritage Award and agreed a recipient for the year. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the chosen recipient to inform them of the PC decision and make arrangements for this to be presented as soon as face to face meeting resumed.

Action: Clerk to progress.

Community Award – Members discussed the proposal put forward by Cllr Duncan to present a Community Award to a resident/residents, who had done something outstanding in the parish in recognition for their work.

This was discussed, and it was agreed that the Parish Council would present a Community Award to a nominated resident, for one year to ascertain the response.

Cllr Duncan stated that she would draft the wording and criteria for this, and it was agreed that an article would be placed in the PC pages of the Downs Mail to invite nominations for the Award.

Action: Cllr Duncan to progress.

13. Future Agenda Items.

No matters were raised.

14. Date of next Meeting.

15th February 2021.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed to the press and public at 9.00pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....