

The Minutes of the Meeting of Thurnham Parish Council held on 18th November 2024.
Held at the Tudor Park Hotel, at 7:30pm.

Councillors present: *Duncan*
 Shelley
 Smith
 Stark
 Waters
 Wise

Also: Sherrie Babington, Parish Clerk, MBC Cllr and Thompson and Members of the Public.

The meeting was Chaired by Cllr Smith.

1. Apologies.

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Skinner, Dunlop, MBC Cllrs Naghi, Jones and KCC Cllr Prendergast.

2. Parish Councillor Vacancy.

To consider any applications for Co-option.

No applications to consider.

3. Declaration of Interest.

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.

No interests were declared.

To consider any Dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

No dispensations were considered.

4. 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, subject to an agreed amendment, these were seconded by Cllr Dunlop and agreed by all present.

The Minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes.

There were no matters arising.

6. Public Participation.

To discuss any questions received by members of the public.

No matters were raised.

7. Clerks Report.

To receive the Clerks Report.

Community Warden Service

You may be aware of the recent changes to the KCC Community Warden services. Unfortunately, they have reduced the number of Wardens significantly and this has resulted in some areas/parishes losing their Community Wardens. We are one of them.

We value the service that our Warden provides our community and surrounding areas and are keen to maintain this service. KCC have provided the attached document as a way for parishes to keep their Wardens. However, we do not feel that we could solely support the £45,000 wage for a full time Warden just covering Bearsted.

So, I am writing to several local Parishes to see if there is any interest in joining forces to pay for and keep the services of our Warden.

Please can you let me know if this is something you would be interested in.
Clerk to Bearsted Parish Council

It was agreed that this would be placed on the next agenda for formal discussion.

8. External Reports:

a. To receive the MBC Ward Councillor's Report.

Ward Councillor Stephen Thompson attended the meeting and referred to his written report circulated in October.

He provided an update on the land at Water Lane (north of the M20), confirming that the site previously used for dumping had now been cleared of tyres.

He reported that the MBC Enforcement Officer had been attending other Parish Council meetings and suggested that Thurnham Parish Council invite her to attend a future meeting.

b. To receive the KCC Councillor's Report.

Apologies were received from KCC Cllr Prendergast.

c. To receive the Police Report.

No police attended the meeting and no report was submitted.

d. To receive Parish Councillors Reports.

Cllr Stark reported on the progress of the King George V Memorial Hall.

9. St Marys Church.

To receive a report on St Marys Church.

10. Financial Matters:

a. Financial Statement.

To receive and approve the financial statement and payments.

The financial statement was circulated to all members and was proposed by Cllr Shelley, seconded by Cllr Stark, and agreed by all present.

The balance of the Parish Council bank account was discussed, and it was agreed that the account should be reviewed with regard to interest rates. It was also resolved that an additional account should be opened to enable the Parish Council to distribute its assets across two accounts for financial protection.

Action: Clerk to progress.

Parish Council Publicity

Members discussed options for informing residents about Parish Council activities.

A newsletter was discussed as a potential means of communication, and it was agreed that this should be considered further.

Action: Clerk to place this item on the next agenda for discussion.

b. 2025/2026 Budget and Precept.

The draft budget will be circulated as soon as MBC have released their Band D figures in late December. The Precept figure will need to be approved by the end of January 2025.

11. Planning Matters:

a. Planning Application Received

24/504278/FULL - 2 Caring Lane Bearsted Kent ME14 4NJ

Erection of two storey rear extension. Loft conversion to habitable space with rear dormer and raised gables with rooflights to front. Pitched roof to existing garage.

Cllr Stark declared an interest in this application and withdrew from discussions.

Cllr Wise stated that he had raised objections regarding this application.

Cllr Smith, standing in for Cllr Stark on the Planning Committee agreed that a site visit was required. He stated that he would undertake a site visit and report back to the Parish Clerk.

24/504676/OUT – Land at Woodcut Farm Ashford Road Hollingbourne

Section 73 Application (to remove the office safeguarding restriction) through the variation of condition 9 of application 21/506790/OUT to allow the 7,500m² of floorspace to include Use Class E(g)(i) (Offices) and/or Use Classes E(g)(iii) (Light industrial) and/or B8 (Storage and Distribution) floorspace on Plot C; and the variation of condition 10 to change the floorspace restrictions to

allow for a maximum of 45,295m² of Use Class E(g)(iii) (Light industrial) and/or B8 (Storage and Distribution).

Members reviewed this application and raised concerns regarding the removal of office space protections. They noted that this represented a loss of valuable employment space, and the original condition to safeguard such space was essential.

Members acknowledged that the deadline for comments on this application is 18th December 2024. It was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Hollingbourne Parish Council to gather their views, and the Parish Council's formal response would be finalised at the next meeting on 9th December 2024.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Hollingbourne PC.

Cllr. Thompson arrived at the meeting at 8:20 pm.

b. MBC Planning Decisions

24/503689/TPOA

Hawthorns Crismill Lane Bearsted Maidstone Kent ME14 4NT

Tree Preservation Order application (16 of 2007) - One Hazelnut tree - reduce height by approx. 2m to 9m and spread will be approx. 5m. Remove overhanging branch, remove dead branches.

Application Permitted

c. Other Planning Matters.

Gypsy and Traveller Consultation

Cllr Smith spoke regarding the Gypsy and Traveller consultation, highlighting a site located at Bridge Farm, Thurnham.

Councillor Thompson clarified that this consultation was part of the Development Plan process, with the current deadline for responses set as 12th December 2024. He stated that this was the first stage of the consultation and assured members that there would be further opportunities for the Parish Council to comment on this during subsequent stages of the consultation process.

12. Highway & PROW Matters.

a. To consider general highway and PROW matters.

Members noted the response from KCC regarding the PROW Diversion.

Public Bridleways KH99, KH89 and KH98 at Stockbury and Thurnham

Following our meeting and consideration of comments raised during and since the consultation, I believe the impact on the public enjoyment and convenience is significant, even if the obstructions (the airsoft etc) are not considered when looking at the diversion legal tests (this is what the national government advises KCC should do). Objections raised around the impact on enjoyment and convenience of having the route closer to the main road remain relevant and valid.

As such, I shall be recommending the County Council do not pursue the diversions as proposed, the applicant is being informed of this.

I have offered the landowner the opportunity to pursue the small diversion around a gate on the track leading to the wedding venue (see snapshot below). However, KCC will not be funding this, the applicant must agree to meet the costs of this for us to consider taking this forward. This section of the proposal appears to meet the legal tests and is without concern. Should they proceed with this, you shall be consulted.

b. HIP (Highways Improvement Plan).

To receive an update on the Highways Improvement Plan.

13. Future Agenda Items.

To consider any future items.

- Parish Council Publicity.

14. Date next Meeting

Monday 9th December 2024

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed to the press and public at 9.10pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....