



Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 29th September 2022 at 7pm at Cuxton Library

Present: Cllr Hutchfield (Chair), Cllr Porter, Cllr Reynolds, Cllr Savage, Cllr Thorley, Cllr Wilson, Cllr Jensen, Cllr Burley and Cllr White

In attendance: Mr C. Jensen, Clerk

There were no members of the public present.

80) A minute's silence in honour of her late majesty, Queen Elizabeth II

The Chairman invited all Councillors and the clerk to stand for a minute's silence to honour her late majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. All stood in a minute's silence.

81) Apologies for absence

None. Cllr Hutchfield welcomed Cllr Jensen to her first Council meeting.

82) Declarations of Interest (DPI, conflict of interest and personal interests) and alterations to the Register

Agenda items 10a) & 11d) - Cllr Porter.

83) Minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2022 – for approval

No amendments required.

It was resolved to accept these minutes as a true record of the meeting.

84) Minutes of the meeting held on 11th August 2022 – for approval

No amendments required.

It was resolved to accept these minutes as a true record of the meeting.

85) Matters Arising

None.

Medway Councillor's report and Public Session

No report received.

86) Finance

a) Bank Balances as at Statement Date 31st August 2022

Cllr Burley confirmed he had audited the May and June 2022 bank accounts in conjunction with the Rialtas Accounting system and all was in order.
It was resolved to accept these balances as correct.

b) Approval of payments made since the last meeting

Cllr Burley advised that individual Parish Council employee's salaries should not be included in the approval of payments schedule. The clerk to amend future schedules. The clerk provided a list of regular monthly and annual payments made by the Council. Cllr Thorley suggested the clerk conduct a review of IT support payments and report back.
It was resolved to accept these payments as correct.

c) Approval of accounts for payment

Cllr Hutchfield advised the invoice from Logic PM related to their time spent on the pavilion project during July and August. The invoice from Andrew Law related to the annual rental charge for the land where the allotments are situated. The increase in the annual rental by £50 for years 2022 and 2023 was the first rise for a number of years. Cllr Hutchfield advised that Chris Fribbins, Clerk/RFO for Halling, would not be invoicing for his work with Cuxton Parish Councils' 2022 year-end accounts. A letter of thanks and gift card to the value of £50, paid from the Chairman's allowance, would be sent to Mr Fribbins. Cllr Porter to confirm contact details.
It was resolved to approve these payments and agree the increased rental payment for the allotments of £500 for 2023 when the invoice for that period was received.

d) Remain or opt-out of SAAA re external auditor appointment arrangements

The clerk confirmed the existing and opt-out details of the external auditor appointment arrangements. Following discussion, compliance with the alternative arrangements were particularly onerous, so the Parish Council decided to remain within the existing scheme for the next five years as this had proved beneficial previously.
It was resolved to remain within the SAAA auditor appointment arrangements for the next five years and no action needed to be taken.

87) Update on Progress on Bank Mandate Changes

a) Barclays three accounts and card

Cllr Burley advised he had access to the Barclays account and the clerk confirmed all mandate changes had been implemented. The clerk advised Barclays had reviewed their product range and the Council's Rate Reward account would be transferred to a Business Premium Account in November

2022. The credit interest rate on the proposed new account was much higher and more advantageous to the Parish Council.

It was resolved to allow Barclays to transfer the existing Rate Reward account to a Premium Account, a higher interest-bearing account.

b) Unity Account

All mandate changes had been completed.

c) Nationwide Account

The clerk advised despite assurances to Cllr Thorley, no email confirmation had been received by the clerk regarding the mandate alterations. Upon contacting Nationwide, confirmation of mandate changes had now been received.

88) Pavilion Re-Development

a) Update on progress of Football Foundation Application

Cllr Hutchfield advised a meeting was held with Logic PM earlier and the amendments to the kitchen area and electrical sockets in the main area were agreed. Cllr Hutchfield to send updated plan to Councillors. A planning application for the extraction plant to be situated on the roof was rejected and a further application had been submitted without the plant and approval was awaited. A revised planning application would subsequently be submitted with the plant included. Cllr Hutchfield advised the Football Foundation required the final plan for the pavilion so the next phase of the grant application could be accessed. This would be provided by Logic PM. Cllr Hutchfield confirmed a three-year budget forecast was required by the Football Foundation and this was to be circulated to Councillors so they could assist.

b) Professional Fees

The clerk provided a list of fees incurred to date and Cllr Hutchfield advised Logic PM would confirm the total figure for the project within three weeks.

c) Kitchen fixtures and fittings

A Microsoft teams meeting, attended by Cllrs Hutchfield, Reynolds, Thorley and the clerk, had taken place with the clerk at Kingsnorth Parish Council. They run a successful community café staffed by volunteers, albeit only opening for limited hours. The Kingsnorth clerk provided details of suppliers for products and appliances and advised that profit generated was used to fund local projects. Cllr Reynolds advised the meeting was highly informative but voiced concerns as to whether there would be enough volunteers in Cuxton willing to help. Opening times for the cafe to be reviewed in more detail at a later date.

d) Village Survey

Cllr Hutchfield confirmed the revised survey if completed, would be trialled, before being printed, at the ACT (Act for Cuxton Together) meeting scheduled for 14th October.

89) Grant Applications/requests for Funding

a) FCC Community Action Fund for replacing bike track surface

Cllr Hutchfield provided details of the fund and suggested in view of the ongoing Football Foundation funding application for the pavilion, consideration for an application for this source of funding be given in early 2023.

b) Review Council's Grant Making Policy and Application form

Cllr Hutchfield requested if amendments needed to be made to the Policy. All Cllrs present confirmed no amendments were required.
It was resolved to accept the policy and application form without amendment and Cllr Hutchfield signed and dated the document.

c) Agree Timeline for Grant Applications for 2022-23

Cllr Hutchfield advised grants were presented at the Annual Parish Meeting held with residents each April. Cllr Hutchfield advised details of the grant application would be published in the next newsletter with a final reminder placed in the February 2023 newsletter.

90) Recreation Ground

a) Update on CCTV

The clerk provided a quotation from Logic Alarms for the cleaning of the cameras using a powered platform. Following discussion, this cost was deemed prohibitive and an alternative solution of a long pole with brush attached was also considered. Cllr Hutchfield suggested a local window cleaning company could be contacted to assist. The clerk advised he had contacted Logic to determine if stills of the recent vandalism could be downloaded and a response was awaited.

b) Vandalism of basket swing and insurance claim

The clerk provided confirmation that the insurers, Zurich, had agreed the claim and one estimate was awaited before the three required were submitted for consideration.

c) Repair of surface under swings quotations for discussion and approval

Cllr Thorley advised the companies were listed on Companies House. Councillors discussed the quotations provided. Cllr Reynolds proposed acceptance of the M&M quotation as they had conducted works previously to a high standard, Cllr Wilson seconded this proposal.

It was resolved to accept the quotation from M&M contractors. Clerk to advise and arrange for repair works to be undertaken.

d) Bike track update

The clerk advised having spoken to British Cycling he had contacted one of their consultants Robert Ogden of Abacus CM to discuss repairs to the bike track. Mr Ogden asked Clark & Kent, an established company in the process of installing a pump track in Snodland, to contact the clerk. Their representative was due to visit the bike track in October any recommendations would be considered in conjunction with a recent quotation received from another company. A quotation received in 2021 cannot be considered further as the company confirmed they no longer have the capability to repair the track.

91) Chat bench for Cuxton? - Consider providing a 'Chat' bench for the village

Cllr Hutchfield advised a resident had suggested a 'Chat' bench be considered for the village. Following discussion, Cllr Thorley suggested siting the bench in the library garden but Cllr Porter advised Ward Councillor Fearn had already agreed to fund a bench for the library garden. The clerk to contact MHS Homes to determine whether they would have any objection to siting the bench on their land at the bottom of James Road. Cllr Wilson to discuss the funding of the bench with the Police at the next Police Liaison Committee meeting.

92) Firework Display - Discuss any update from 'Wheel of Cuxton' re 2022 celebrations

Cllr Hutchfield advised the WOC had confirmed a quieter display would be provided this year with a smaller bonfire. The clerk to contact WOC to request they provide the requisite paperwork before the next full Council meeting on 20th October, otherwise they would be invited to attend that meeting. The clerk provided a quotation which had been received to clear the nails and debris from the bonfire. Cllr Savage proposed the quotation from Bayliss contractors be accepted. Cllr Wilson seconded the proposal.
It was resolved to accept the quotation from Bayliss contractors. Clerk to advise Bayliss contractors of the Councillors decision.

93) Christmas Tree and carols event

a) Christmas Tree quotations for discussion and approval

The clerk provided three quotations to Councillors that had been received. Following discussion, Cllr Wilson proposed to accept the quotation from EJ Clough as the cost to supply and erect the tree was the same as both other quotations which only included the supply of the tree. Cllr Thorley seconded the proposal. Clerk to request Cllr Fearn donate towards the cost.

It was resolved to accept the quotation from EJ Clough. Clerk to advise EJ Clough of the Councillors decision and arrange date for delivery.

b) Cost of platform lift

The clerk advised charges for the platform lift would be incurred where it had been supplied free of charge previously. Cllr Hutchfield was concerned those residents who had helped in the past would use alternative means to add lights to the tree. Cllr Thorley suggested she would contact SGN, as they had been working in the village recently, to ascertain if they could assist.

c) Live Christmas tree replacement

A resident had offered a choice of two Christmas trees to the Parish Council, currently situated in their garden, to replace the tree in the library garden which appeared to have died. Cllr Hutchfield had taken photographs of the tree in situ and was attempting to obtain further advice from the supplier. Clerk to also contact Cuxton Gardens to request their expert opinion. Cllr Hutchfield had responded to the resident and further details were awaited.

d) Christmas Tree Lighting event - arrangements for carols, music and crafts

The clerk advised three residents had expressed an interest in obtaining a stall at the event and a further two persons had now confirmed their interest. The library had advised they had no issues and the clerk to advise the residents that agreement was approved. Following discussion, it was decided the clerk would ask Piers Gray if he would supply lighting and sound for the event. Councillors agreed to instigate a choir to lead the singing and co-opt a small number of other residents to assist. Practice sessions to be arranged with a pianist accompanying the singing.

94) A228 lights issue and village speed signage - update on current situation following discussions with Medway Council

The clerk advised that the majority of the speed signage, an issue raised by Cllr Wilson in July, had been replaced in the village. Three small speed signs on Sundridge Hill still needed replacement but Medway Council had advised these were in hand.

The clerk confirmed the A228 lights issue related to those on the A228 at the end of Bush Road. Four out of the six lights had been fixed and Medway Council had been asked to repair the remaining lights. The light in Tar Tank Lane was now working. MHS Homes had been asked to repair the light not working in the alleyway between James Road and Stanford Way.

95) Basket for Beacon - to consider the options available

Cllr Thorley had contacted the company that had manufactured the basket and confirmed they could provide an inner mesh basket to contain the embers. Cllr Thorley proposed that Black Forge Signs provide an inner mesh basket. Cllr Savage seconded the proposal.

It was resolved to accept the quotation from Black Forge Signs. Clerk to advise Black Forge Signs of the Councillors decision and arrange date for delivery.

96) School Gate Closure request - to consider request from the Academy of Cuxton Schools regarding school gate closure

As the Parish Council had shared responsibility for the Junior School drive, Cllr Hutchfield advised an email request had been received from acting Headteacher, Dominic Bilton, to shut the gates at the bottom of the drive during afternoon pick-up time. Councillors agreed to this request.

97) Reports of meetings attended on behalf of Council

a) KALC

No meeting had taken place.

b) Rural Liaison

Cllr Hutchfield attended the short meeting before the extraordinary meeting regarding the proposed development on the Hoo Peninsular for which written documentation would be provided to the Parish Council. Cllr Hutchfield advised an appeal had been received regarding the Kent Vault Winery Application. A public enquiry would take place to which a Parish Council representative would be invited.

c) Cuxton Academy of Schools

No meeting had taken place. The next meeting was scheduled for 20th October.

d) Police Liaison

Cllr Wilson advised the next meeting was scheduled for 5th October. The Clerk advised a new PCSO, Kailey Norton, had been appointed and he would contact her to discuss whether a Police surgery could be re-established in Cuxton.

98) To review actions relating to the recent Operation London Bridge and to plan and budget for the resulting coronation

Cllr Hutchfield expressed her thanks for the Council's efforts, in her absence, with Operation London Bridge. Cllr Hutchfield suggested a steering group be formed to plan for the coronation of King Charles III and Cllrs Porter, Thorley, White and the clerk volunteered to form the group and report to Council when any plans had been announced.

99) Correspondence

a) Advice on support for Ukrainian Appeal

The clerk advised further advice had been provided and following discussion the Parish Council could not support the collection of goods on Parish Council land. In the circumstances, Cllr Hutchfield suggested their newsletter be placed in the Council noticeboards for a period of two weeks. Clerk to advise their representative and request a copy of the newsletter.

b) Other

The clerk provided further correspondence which had been responded to since the last meeting.

The open meeting was closed and the clerk and Cllr Jensen left the room while confidential staffing matters were discussed.

100) Confidential Section closed to the public

a) End of Clerk's probationary period

It was resolved that the clerk had successfully completed his probation period and his employment as clerk and RFO be made permanent.

b) Clerk's salary and working hours

It was resolved that as the clerk's salary was aligned to band 22 on the NALC scale his salary should be increased by 25p/hour backdated to July 4th.

The clerk declined to increase his hours from 35-37 hours/week.

c) Sickness cover for road sweeper

Mr Drake now has a date for his surgery and Mr Startup will cover this sick leave with the support of Medway Norse to empty the village bins

The meeting was then re-opened and the clerk and Cllr Jensen returned to the meeting.

101) Information Exchange

No motions may be proposed, nor decisions taken under this item but may be placed on the agenda for the next or future meetings.

102) Members Future Agenda Items

Christmas carols – music choir
SGN - lift platform for Christmas tree lights

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:40 pm

Next meeting 20th October 2022, 7pm at Cuxton Library

Signed ***Kay Hutchfield*** **Chairman**

On the ***20th*** **day of** ***October*** **2022**