



Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 8th December 2022 at 7pm at Cuxton Library

Present: Cllr Porter (Chair), Cllr Hutchfield, Cllr Savage, Cllr Thorley, Cllr Wilson, Cllr Jensen, Cllr Burley, Cllr White, Cllr Vye and Ward Councillor Fearn

In attendance: Mr C. Jensen, Clerk

There were no members of the public present.

137) Apologies for absence

Cllr Reynolds – prior engagement. Cllr Porter welcomed Cllr Vye to his first Council meeting.

It was resolved to accept these apologies.

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

None.

139) Minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2022 – for approval

No amendments required.

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

140) Matters Arising

Cllr Thorley apologised she had not sent the weblink regarding Rule 6 status to the clerk but she would address this. Cllr Thorley advised she had not contacted a Christmas Tree farm regarding the provision of a Christmas Tree as Cllr Hutchfield had dealt with the matter.

The clerk advised a brown bin had been provided by Medway Council for the volunteers to use and was currently housed behind the library. The internal auditor had been booked for 19th May 2023 and following discussions, Chris Fribbins, Halling & Allhallows Parish clerk advised he would assist with the end of year accounting closedown, potentially saving £400+. The strimmer and goggles, to assist with weed clearing, had been delivered as had the sand, for the purpose of the regeneration of grass growth in worn areas of the Recreation ground. Feedback had been sent to 'The Wheel of Cuxton' requesting a timeline be provided in advance of next year's event together with a discussion concerning the bonfire.

The clerk advised the basket swing needed to be installed and the basketball hoop needed to be dismantled and asked Cllr Hutchfield if she would consult with the CSRA to arrange volunteers to help undertake this work.

A visit regarding the 'Bike Track' had finally taken place on 7th December and their comments were awaited.

Medway Councillor's report and Public Session

It was resolved to suspend the meeting for Medway Councillor's Report and for the Public Session. Matters raised may be placed on the agenda for the next or a future meeting.

Ward Cllr Fearn gave a verbal report as follows:

Drains work Bush Road near Upper Bush – Cllr Fearn advised these were scheduled on a works programme for the week commencing 19th December. Cllr Fearn has referred the washing down of oils and mud from Silverhand estate in Upper Bush to the Environment Agency via Medway Council and was hopeful a visit would be arranged.

Traffic loop on A228 – Cllr Fearn had previously confirmed the loop was to be replaced on 17th November but due to staff sickness it was not undertaken. He advised the works should be conducted during one night in the week commencing 19th December so should not impact residents.

Improvements to bus route in the village – Cllr Fearn believed the improvements, to amend the kerb height to prevent cars parking at the bus stops, were non-controversial and he had spoken to two residents regarding the proposals.

Wall issue, property in Charles Drive – Following his intervention, Cllr Fearn had spoken to the contractor and the resident and believed the matter had now been resolved and works could be progressed.

Cllr Wilson asked Cllr Fearn regarding the overhanging tree at the bottom of Charles Drive, which she had previously reported to Medway Council, as it reduced the visibility for drivers. Cllr Fearn advised he had requested vegetation be removed in that area and asked Cllr Wilson to send him photographs so he could investigate further. Cllr Wilson advised she would forward photographs to the clerk for onward transmission to Cllr Fearn.

Cllr Fearn left the Parish Council meeting at 19:15 to attend a Medway Council meeting.

141) Finance

a) Bank Balances as at Statement Date 30th November 2022

The clerk advised Councillors, due to recent Royal Mail industrial action, three bank statements for November had not been received and Cllr Burley confirmed he had been unable to audit these transactions.

It was resolved to accept these balances as correct.

b) Approval of payments made since the last meeting

The clerk provided Councillors with details of payments made since the last meeting. No issues were raised.

It was resolved to accept these payments as correct.

c) Approval of accounts for payment

The account from Hooper & Sons related to the digging of the holes for the topographical survey to determine the exact position of the oil pipeline. The account from Logic related to further preparation of the costings and report, now received, for the redevelopment of the pavilion.

It was resolved to approve these payments.

d) Update on BT contract

The clerk confirmed the existing BT contract was due to expire on 6th January 2023 when the monthly charge would increase to at least £43.95 excluding VAT. The clerk provided details of an alternative two-year package with TalkTalk costing £21.95 per month excluding VAT, a significant monthly saving, even allowing for the initial charge of £9.95 for the router.

All Councillors resolved the clerk initiate a new two-year contract with TalkTalk to commence on 7th January 2023, under the terms as stated.

e) Update on Unity Bank replacement

The clerk advised it transpired very few financial institutions offered a standalone deposit account not linked to a current account. The clerk provided Councillors with details of the Teacher's Building Society 'Charity and Community Saver' interest bearing account which had no bank charges and was operated online.

All Councillors resolved the clerk, on behalf of the Parish Council, open a 'Charity and Community Saver' with Teacher's Building Society. Once the account was established the closure of the Council's existing Unity Bank account be commenced as it incurred bank charges.

142) Budget

a) Presentation of draft Budget proposal for 2023/24 – for approval

Cllr Thorley read her report and advised she would provide a copy to be placed with the records. All Councillors noted the contents of the report. Cllr Thorley proposed the Finance committee's Budget recommendation to Council. Cllr Wilson seconded this proposal.

It was resolved to accept this recommendation with all Councillors in favour of the proposal.

b) Presentation of draft Precept proposal for 2023/24 – for approval

Cllr Thorley proposed the Finance committee's recommendation to Council that the precept remain unaltered from 2022/23. Cllr Wilson seconded this proposal. Cllr Porter thanked the members of the Finance Committee for their challenging work.

It was resolved to accept this recommendation with all Councillors in favour of the proposal.

143) Pavilion Re-Development

a) Project Cost, Timeline and update on funding for project

The clerk provided updated costs paid to date in respect of the project to all Councillors and had previously circulated the final costing report for the re-development, following the meeting with the project managers attended by Cllrs Hutchfield, Reynolds, Thorley and the clerk. A discussion ensued regarding the costing and timeline of the project. Cllr Hutchfield proposed Council consider applying for an extension to the planning application. The clerk was tasked to confirm the costs involved for this process. Cllr Hutchfield advised Exolum wanted Council's agreement that no building works would be undertaken in the area of the 'overhang', (the hatched areas on the plan provided). Following discussion, it was confirmed Council had never wanted to build in those areas, so agreement was given.
All Councillors confirmed their agreement.

b) Discussion of fixed fee future costs proposal from project managers

The clerk provided Councillors with the updated costs proposal for the remainder of the re-development process, received from the project managers. Following discussion, all Councillors confirmed their agreement to accept the fixed fee for future costs.
It was resolved to accept this agreement and the clerk to advise the project managers.

c) Management of Pavilion and CIO update

Cllr Hutchfield advised the CIO mentor had confirmed the documentation completed to date was acceptable and further meetings had been arranged with Funding for All to discuss options for funding the project. As regards potential trustees, Cllr Hutchfield advised at least seven residents had expressed an interest in becoming a trustee. Cllr Thorley advised the prospective trustees need to convene a meeting to engage in the process before agreeing to proceed to have their names added to the CIO.

Cllr Hutchfield left the meeting at 20:12 as she had a prior commitment.

144) Recreation Ground

a) Algae removal in playground and update on equipment

The clerk advised algae in the playground had been noted as a moderate risk on the recent playground inspection report and despite his best efforts it was still a problem. The clerk provided two quotations for Councillors to consider regarding the removal of algae. A further quotation had been

requested but had not been received. Cllr Thorley asked the clerk to obtain verification of previous works undertaken and report back to Council.

145) Planning

a) Winery Planning Inquiry

Cllr Hutchfield had earlier updated Councillors the 'Statement of Case' had been completed and was to be submitted by midnight on 8th December.

146) Christmas Tree and Carols event

a) Feedback from event

Cllrs Thorley, Wilson, White and Jensen advised the event was well supported and was enjoyed by all. The clerk asked Cllr Wilson to liaise with the 'Heart of Kent Hospice' to check when the monies collected should be banked.

b) Purchase of 'Live' Christmas Tree

It was confirmed Cllr Hutchfield had purchased a further tree to be planted in the library gardens in due course.

147) Programme of meetings for 2023

The clerk provided a list of proposed meetings for 2023. Cllr Porter queried the dates for the meetings in May and the clerk advised these had been altered to accommodate the Parish Council election scheduled for 4th May. *It was resolved to accept all dates as proposed.*

148) Bootcamp invoice - discussion

The clerk advised when checking other matters, he had noticed the annual invoice had not been issued when it became due for payment in September. Following discussion, the clerk was asked to issue the invoice together with an apology for the oversight.

149) Reports of meetings attended on behalf of Council

a) KALC

Cllr Jensen confirmed she and the clerk had attended the KALC AGM and read her report. She advised the Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, provided an update regarding PCSO deployment and advised the Police would be focusing more on victims in the future. Cllr Jensen advised it was suggested KALC create stronger ties with Medway Council so the views of all Parish Councils would be considered not just those in the Kent area.

b) Rural Liaison

It was confirmed Cllr Hutchfield had not attended the meeting due to a prior engagement.

c) Cuxton Academy of Schools

The clerk advised although a meeting had not taken place, he had been in regular contact with the deputy headmaster.

d) Police Liaison

Cllr Wilson advised she and the clerk had attended the recent PCSO surgery in the library. The clerk advised following discussion, the current PCSO for the area, Kailey Norton, confirmed she had to re-apply for her position. Cllr Wilson advised the PCSO and Community Safety Officer were invited to the Christmas Tree lighting event where residents had the opportunity of meeting them.

Cllr Wilson advised she and the clerk attended the monthly Police surgery organised with Medway Council and updated Councillors with the new Policing proposals.

150) Correspondence

The clerk asked Cllr White if he was aware of an issue regarding the proposed booking of the Scout Hall on a Sunday in January, as he had been recently copied into correspondence requesting the Parish Council's assistance. Cllr White advised his understanding was the matter had been resolved to the satisfaction of the resident who had made the booking.

The open meeting was closed while confidential staffing matters were discussed.

151) Confidential Section closed to the public

a) Street Cleaning – Feedback from discussions held

The clerk advised recent meetings had been held with both street cleaners separately, the Chairman and the clerk. The clerk provided Councillors with details of the hours and rates of pay for the street cleaners and following discussion Council decided this matter should be referred to the Staffing Committee which would meet on 12th January 2023. Any recommendations would then be passed to full Council for consideration.

b) Contract Extension – Street Cleaner

Following discussion, Cllr Thorley proposed to extend the temporary contract of the street cleaner until 31st January 2023 and refer the discussion of providing a permanent contract to the Staffing Committee which would meet

on 12th January 2023. Cllr Wilson seconded the proposal. Cllr Thorley requested the clerk contact ACAS to confirm if a one-month extension was lawful.

It was resolved to accept the temporary contract of the street cleaner be extended until 31st January 2023. The clerk to advise the street cleaner and contact ACAS.

152) 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.

153) Members Future Agenda Items

Staffing Committee recommendations re Street Cleaners.

Provision of Flagpole within village.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:17 pm

Next meeting 19th January 2023, 7pm at Cuxton Library

Signed *Kay Hutchfield* **Chairman**

On the 19th day of *January* **2023**