



Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 16th March 2023 at 7pm at Cuxton Library

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

In attendance: Mr C. Jensen, Clerk

There were no members of the public present.

199) Apologies for absence

Cllr Burley - prior engagement.

It was resolved to accept these apologies.

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

Cllr White, agenda item 10b. Cllr Thorley, agenda item 10c.

201) Minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2023 – for approval

No amendments required.

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

202) Matters Arising

Cllr Hutchfield confirmed the beacon was discussed and dealt with at the Land Management meeting held on 9th March and was not included as an agenda item for this meeting.

Medway Councillor's report and Public Session

No report received.

203) Finance

a) Bank Balances as at Statement Date 28th February 2023

The clerk advised Cllr Burley had confirmed by email he had completed his audit of the January and February transactions and no issues were noted.

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. Cllr Hutchfield noted the cost of supplying dog waste bags had increased and suggested this was reviewed at the next budget meeting to confirm the annual spend and consider limiting future orders of the product. *It was resolved to accept these payments as correct.*

c) Approval of accounts for payment

Cllr Hutchfield confirmed the account from Logic PM related to the second instalment of the agreement to assist with the tendering process for the redevelopment. The clerk advised there would be insufficient monies in the Legal and Professional Fees Reserve to make this payment currently. Cllr Hutchfield proposed that £3,000 be transferred from General Reserve to the Legal and Professional Fees Reserve to ensure this payment was made.

This proposal was seconded by Cllr Thorley.

It was resolved to approve this recommendation and the clerk to attend to the transfer of Reserve balances as stated. It was resolved to approve this payment.

The account from Simply Print related to the printing of the village surveys in respect of the pavilion redevelopment.

The clerk confirmed the account from Netwise, in respect of domain hosting and support maintenance, was received in February but was incorrect and needed amendment so could not be provided to Councillors for approval until now.

It was resolved to approve these payments.

d) Consideration and discussion of estimate from Qualitrees regarding remedial work to trees in school drive

The estimate from Qualitrees related to the remedial works to the trees in the school drive and the clerk provided an updated itemised quotation to Councillors. The clerk advised the Academy of Cuxton Schools had approved the quotation and agreed to pay 50% of the cost as they have joint responsibility with the Parish Council for the maintenance of the area. The clerk confirmed that if approved, works would be undertaken week commencing 11th April.

It was resolved to approve this estimate. The clerk to confirm to Qualitrees.

e) Flagpole in village - Update and recommendation from Land Management Committee meeting 9th March 2023 and quotation to be considered

The clerk provided a quotation from the Flag Consultancy to Councillors and confirmed this matter had been previously discussed at the Land Management meeting held on 9th March. Cllr Porter confirmed the recommendation of the Land Management Committee to Council was to approve a 7-metre flagpole with ground collar and a sewn Union flag. However, the landowner, MHS Homes, had now advised they would restrict

the height of the flagpole to 4.6 metres. The clerk had asked MHS Homes if they would reconsider the height restriction but had not received a response. Cllr Porter asked the clerk to confirm the height of the flagpole above ground and following discussion, Councillors decided the preferred option would be for a 7-metre flagpole to be erected. If this was not possible then, in consultation with MHS Homes and the supplier, a 6-metre flagpole would be considered and if that size was not available, a flagpole with the maximum height restriction of 4.6 metres be erected. Cllr Thorley proposed, as further discussion with the landowner and the supplier was needed, responsibility be devolved to the clerk to make further enquiries before entering into any agreement, noting Councillors preferences as stated. Councillors agreed the cost should not exceed £2,200.

It was resolved the clerk make further enquiries and responsibility was devolved to him to enter into an agreement, noting the Councillors preferences and the maximum cost stated.

204) Pavilion Re-Development

a) Update with regards to current position concerning redevelopment and pavilion survey and public consultation

The clerk advised Exolum, oil pipeline company, had now confirmed the details of a larger area where building works would not be permitted in the Recreation ground. This covered an area of the car park. The project managers, Logic, wanted to place this restriction in the Standard Works consent form to avoid the additional legal costs which Exolum wanted to levy. Cllr Thorley suggested a decision regarding this restriction should be deferred until the results of the pavilion survey had been reviewed and asked the clerk to advise Logic not to undertake further works. Cllr Hutchfield advised a volunteer, experienced in health and safety and risk assessment, had offered to undertake a risk assessment on the Recreation car park, the 2 school drives and the section of Bush Road between the 2 school entrances to assess what changes might be made to improve pedestrian and vehicle safety.

b) Next steering group meeting 27th March 2023

Cllr Thorley suggested the results of the village survey be minuted in future Parish Council meetings. All Councillors were in agreement that openness and transparency must be paramount in this process. Cllr Hutchfield suggested Councillors might need to be summoned to discuss the survey results at an ECM, the clerk to advise and publish agenda if required.

205) Chat Bench – update and feedback from residents

The clerk confirmed, following discussions, that MHS residents did not agree the Chat Bench be sited in the vicinity of their properties. Cllr Hutchfield suggested alternative sites should be discussed at a future Council meeting.

206) Big Lunch – update and discussion regarding recipient organisation from donations taken at the gate

Cllr Porter advised preparations were at an advanced stage. Cllr Porter asked Councillors for suggestions as to which recipient organisation should receive the donations collected at the gate. Cllr Hutchfield suggested Councillors should discuss further at the next Council meeting. Cllr Thorley advised toilet facilities had not yet been arranged as the suppliers contacted had no availability and asked Councillors to advise her if they had knowledge of any reputable companies that could be approached.

207) Grant Applications received - consideration of requests for funding

a) Pilgrims Way Neighbour Group

Following extensive discussions, whilst Councillors acknowledged the efforts of the group were to be applauded, they thought the application was from a Residents Association and was the beginnings of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Councillors also suggested a grant could not be provided for a Coronation party as food at street parties was traditionally provided by those attending. Councillors declined the application as it did not fall within the parameters of the scheme. The clerk to signpost the applicants to the Ourwatch website where grant applications, to support Neighbourhood Watch groups, would be considered.

b) 30th Strood (Cuxton & Halling) Scout Group

Following extensive discussions, Councillors approved the grant application of £750 towards the purchase of three pop-up gazebos to be utilised as mess tents for group activities. The clerk to advise and invite the applicants to attend the annual Parish meeting.

c) Cuxton 91FC

Following extensive discussions, Councillors approved the grant application of £750 towards the cost of installing new posts and netting at the end of the Cuxton Community Ground. The clerk to advise and invite the applicants to attend the annual Parish meeting.

208) Annual Parish Meeting

a) Invitations – Confirmation of notification and voluntary groups invited

Cllr Hutchfield confirmed to the clerk the following groups should be invited: Cuxton Countryside Group; Friends of Cuxton Library Gardens; Cuxton 91FC; 30th Strood (Cuxton and Halling) Scout Group; The Wheel of Cuxton; Cuxton Open Gardens; The Volunteer Playground Inspectors and the newsletter distributors.

b) Annual report – Contributions from Committee Chairman

Cllr Hutchfield asked the committee chairpersons to provide her with their annual reports and the clerk was tasked to contact Cllr Burley to request he submitted his report in respect of the Planning committee.

c) Presentations and preparation

Cllr Thorley and Cllr Porter volunteered to purchase food for the event. The clerk confirmed the Social club hall had been booked as the venue.

209) Planning

a) Winery Planning Inquiry – update and public participation

Cllr Hutchfield provided an update to Councillors including the revised traffic report from the appellant, which had only been recently received. The inquiry was scheduled to take place over ten days, starting on 23rd March. Medway Council had now advised the inquiry would not be 'livestreamed' due to a lack of technical equipment. Cllr Hutchfield advised further areas of concern would be raised with the inspector prior to the commencement of the inquiry.

210) Parish Council Website

Cllr White had previously spoken to the clerk regarding items which could not be downloaded from the website. The clerk advised the issue had now been resolved and all documents could be accessed including the newsletters.

211) Cuxton Parish Council Facebook – New site to be considered

The clerk advised the current Cuxton Parish Council Facebook page could not be accessed despite several attempts to gain access. Cllr Thorley suggested another Facebook page be established and the clerk was tasked to accomplish this.

212) Reports of meetings attended on behalf of Council

a) KALC

Cllr Hutchfield advised neither Councillors nor the clerk could attend the recent KALC meeting.

b) Rural Liaison

At the recently attended meeting, Cllr Hutchfield advised an informative presentation from the Medway Drainage Board was given to delegates. Cllr Hutchfield was to email the representative requesting clarification as to the ownership of the flooded field and issues with the sluice gate.

Cllr Hutchfield confirmed the annual Rural Liaison grant will no longer be awarded to rural parishes. However, there are some remaining funds which

will be divided equally amongst the rural Parish Councils. An application will need to be submitted following receipt of an email request from Rural Liaison.

c) Cuxton Academy of Schools

The clerk confirmed he had met with the headteacher on 28th February where issues discussed included the remedial works to the trees in the school drive and the distribution of keys to the groups that use the school after hours so the gates can be locked after use. The clerk advised the school had confirmed the Parish Council could use the lower car park for the band performers at the Big Lunch on Sunday 18th June.

d) Police Liaison

Cllr Wilson confirmed the Police Surgery took place on Friday 10th March but the PCSO was not available as she had been called away. Laura Ashwell, Community Safety Officer Medway Council, attended and spoke to the two residents who raised issues. Cllr Wilson stated that although Laura was very sympathetic and personable, residents who came wanted to speak directly to the PCSO. Cllr Wilson to raise this issue at the monthly members surgery, with Police participation, organised by Medway Council.

213) Lower Thames Crossing – update regarding registration as an interested party and potential Community impact of the scheme

Cllr Hutchfield stated that although the scheme had now been delayed the impact would affect Cuxton, if the scheme was adopted. Cllr Hutchfield to provide the clerk with the contact details of Andrew Bull, Strategic Infrastructure Planner, Medway Council, as he had been helpful with previous enquiries regarding the LTC.

214) Parish Council Elections

The Parish Council elections, if held, are scheduled to take place on 4th May.

215) Correspondence

The clerk provided details of two items of correspondence. The first was a complaint received concerning the forceful way a survey was posted through a residents' door to which the clerk had apologised.

The second related to the siting of the temporary traffic lights by the workforce laying cables in Bush Road and the issues it had caused accessing the village. The clerk advised Medway Council had investigated the matter and the temporary lights had been moved.

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

216) Confidential Section closed to the public

a) To discuss overtime and mileage costs relating to the Clerk/RFO, in particular (but not specifically) to the preparation, collection and delivery of the recent pavilion survey to all Cuxton households

Cllr Thorley expressed her concern that the clerk been working additional hours without payment or taking time back in lieu. It was also noted that he is not claiming travel expenses for the use of his car for Council business to which he is entitled.

Cllr Hutchfield stated that she had already spoken to the clerk about these issues and the clerk did not wish to increase his hours or take any time in lieu at the moment.

b) Consideration of implementation of 2022/23 pay scales for clerk

In line with the clerk's contract and in light of his high standard of work, it was agreed that he should move to Band 23 on the NALC pay scale.

217) Information Exchange

Cllr Thorley advised trial bikes had accessed Ranscombe Farm via the woods in Poplicans Road. Cllr Porter confirmed she had reported this previously on several occasions to Ranscombe Farm and no further action was required.

Cllr Hutchfield confirmed she had been advised by the Green Party of a litter pick that had been arranged on Saturday 25th March. Cllr Hutchfield to request further details and circulate to Councillors.

218) Members Future Agenda Items

Big Lunch organisation donation.
Review of Reserve Balances.
Review of Grant Making Policy.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:14 pm

Next meeting 20th April 2023, 7pm at Cuxton Library

Signed *Julie Porter* **Chairman**

On the *20th* **day of** *April* **2023**