



## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 15th June 2023 at 7pm at Cuxton Library**

**Present:** Cllr Thorley (Chair), Cllr Chamberlain, Cllr Jensen, Cllr Porter, Cllr Wilson, Cllr Burley, Cllr Chalker, Cllr Manning, Cllr Vye and Cllr White.

**In attendance:** Mr C. Jensen, Clerk

There were three members of the public present.

### **24) Apologies for absence**

Ward Councillors Fearn and Filmer – Medway Council meetings.  
*It was resolved to accept these apologies.*

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

Cllr Porter – Item 3. Cllr Thorley and Cllr Manning noted as personal friends to one candidate in respect of the councillor vacancy and both confirmed they would not vote on the matter – Item 3.  
Cllr Jensen – Item 24a.

### **26) To discuss and consider applications received from residents for the Parish Councillor vacancy**

Cllr Porter left the meeting having declared an interest in this item.  
Cllr Chamberlain requested this item be moved to the confidential section at the end of the meeting but Cllr Thorley confirmed it would be discussed as per the agenda. Cllr Chalker felt the specification for the vacancy was too onerous, however the clerk confirmed the wording had been used by other Parish Council's to advertise councillor vacancies and in this case, it had yielded two applications.  
Councillors asked questions of both applicants and they and the other member of the public then left the meeting. A discussion ensued amongst councillors regarding the candidates and a vote was taken. Cllrs Thorley and Manning, as previously confirmed, did not vote on the matter.  
Candidate 1, Mrs Pinkstone, received two votes. Cllr Chalker requested it was minuted he voted for this candidate.  
Candidate 2, Mr Nightingale, received five votes.  
Cllr Thorley confirmed Mr Nightingale was the successful candidate and would be co-opted to the Parish Council. The clerk was asked to confirm to each candidate, by email, the Parish Council's thanks for their time and effort in submitting applications and also to convey the Parish Council's decision.

Both candidates, the parishioner and Cllr Porter returned to the meeting.

**27) Appointment of Representatives on outside bodies and working groups**

**a) Rural Liaison**

The clerk confirmed the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June, 6pm at Gun Wharf and a representative was required to attend. Cllr Thorley asked for a volunteer and Cllr Chalker agreed to be the Parish Council's representative.

**28) Matters Arising**

Cllr Chamberlain questioned Cllr Jensen's role as vice-chairman of the Finance Committee in view of her relationship with the clerk as it could be considered a conflict of interest. Cllr Thorley confirmed she would contact KALC for clarification.

Cllr Chalker advised, as per standing orders, that committee chairman should be decided at the first meeting of each committee and not at the Annual General meeting.

**Medway Councillor's report and Public Session**

No report had been received from the Ward Councillors. A Medway Council meeting was scheduled for this evening and both Ward Councillors had sent apologies. The clerk had since confirmed to all councillors that Cllr Fearn had provided a report at 18:15pm, just prior to the start of this meeting but this had not been seen by the clerk until after this evening's meeting had finished. This report had now been circulated to all councillors. The report confirmed an engineer had been detailed, by the end of June, to check the traffic loop at the A228/Bush Road junction was working correctly and to make any recommendations regarding the timing mechanism. Cllr Fearn advised a new planning application for change of use had been received for property, Keeper's Barn in Upper Bush.

No response had yet been received in respect of the KVV planning appeal and the petition for the resurfacing of James Road would be discussed at Medway Council's Committee meeting this evening.

Resident 1. Raised concerns about the length and weight restriction of lorries which used Bush Road. Cllr Thorley advised she would contact Medway Council to seek advice and clarification.

Resident 2. Voiced concerns regarding the amount of traffic and parking issues in Bush Road. Cllr Thorley advised these issues would be considered by the Traffic Management Group when it next met.

**29) Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May – for approval**

No amendments required. Cllr Porter proposed the minutes be accepted without amendment. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Burley. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

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

**30) To consider the External Auditor's report for 2021-2022**

The clerk had provided a copy of the External Auditors report to all councillors. The clerk advised the announcement date and commencement date used for the exercise of public rights in 2021-22 were the same but the announcement date should have been the day before the commencement date. The clerk acknowledged he would ensure three different dates would be shown on the notification of the exercise of public rights papers for 2022-2023. Councillors thanked the clerk for the details and accepted his explanation.

Cllr Manning proposed the External Auditor's report for 2021-22 be accepted. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Wilson. Eight votes were received in favour of the proposal and two against (as Councillors Chamberlain and Chalker were not part of the Parish Council in the period covered by the report), with no abstentions.

*It was resolved to approve the External Auditors report for 2021-22.*

**31) To receive and review the Internal Auditors report for 2022-2023**

The clerk had provided a copy of the Internal Auditors report to all councillors. The clerk advised the precept figure, in word format, had formed part of the minutes from the Finance committee meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> November but was only shown in numerical form in the minutes of the subsequent full council meeting.

Cllr Thorley proposed the Internal Auditors report for 2022-2023 be accepted. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Jensen. Eight votes were received in favour of the proposal and two against (as Councillors Chamberlain and Chalker were not part of the Parish Council in the period covered by the report), with no abstentions.

*It was resolved to approve the Internal Auditors report for 2022-23.*

**32) To review the effectiveness of the system of Internal Control.  
Councillors are asked to consider the Statement of Internal Control in support of the Annual Governance Statement**

The clerk had provided a copy of the Statement of Internal Control document to all councillors. The clerk advised the document appeared to be unique to Cuxton Parish Council as from investigation other Parish Council's did not use such a document.

Cllr Wilson proposed the Statement of Internal Control document be accepted. Cllr Porter seconded the proposal. Eight votes were received in favour of the proposal and two against (as Councillors Chamberlain and Chalker were not part of the Parish Council in the period covered by the report), with no abstentions.

*It was resolved to approve the Statement of Internal Control document for 2022-23. The clerk and Chairman signed the document.*

**33) Discussion regarding the options provided by the external auditors should errors be noted when the AGAR documentation is received and audited and approval by Councillors of the option adopted**

The clerk had provided a copy of the options received by the External Auditors to all councillors. Following discussion, Cllr Thorley proposed the Parish Council approve choice b, 'a qualification of our opinion at AGAR section 3', should any errors be noted by the external auditors. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Manning. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

*The clerk to advise the external auditors of the councillors' decision, as above, when submitting the AGAR documentation.*

**34) To approve the Annual Governance statement for 2022-2023, Section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2023**

The clerk had provided a copy of the Annual Governance statement, Section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2023, to all councillors. Following discussion, Cllr Burley proposed the document be accepted and signed by the clerk and chairman. This proposal was seconded by Cllr White. Eight votes were received in favour of the proposal and two against (as Councillors Chamberlain and Chalker were not part of the Parish Council in the period covered by the report), with no abstentions.

*It was resolved to accept the Annual Governance statement, Section 1 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2023. The clerk and Chairman signed the document.*

**35) To approve the Accounting Statements for 2022-2023, Section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2023 and the supporting Bank Reconciliations as at 31 March 2023 and the explanation of the significant variations from last year (2021-2022) to this year (2022-2023)**

The clerk had provided a copy of the Accounting Statements, Section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2023, to all councillors and the supporting Bank Reconciliations as at 31 March 2023 with the explanation of the significant variations from last year (2021-2022) to this year (2022-2023). Following discussion, Cllr Wilson proposed all the documentation be accepted and signed by the chairman, as the clerk had already signed Section 2 of the document. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Jensen. Eight votes were received in favour of the proposal and one against and one abstention (as Councillors Chalker, against and Councillor Chamberlain, abstained, were not part of the Parish Council in the period covered by the report).

*It was resolved to accept the Accounting Statements, Section 2 of the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2023 and the supporting Bank Reconciliations as at 31 March 2023 and the explanation of the significant variations from last year (2021-2022) to this year (2022-2023). The Chairman signed the document.*

**36) Finance**

**a) Bank balances**

Cllr Chalker again asked the clerk to provide him with the Parish Council's budget for 2021/22 and the clerk advised the document had been sent to the

Cllrs Parish Council email address on 25<sup>th</sup> May. Cllr Chalker confirmed he had not managed to access his Parish Council email account. The clerk to investigate and reissue further passwords to Cllrs Chalker and Chamberlain, who also had access issues.

Cllr Chalker re-stated he felt the balances held were too high.

*It was resolved to accept these balances as correct.*

**b) Approval of payments made since last meeting**

The clerk provided councillors with details of payments made since the last meeting. Cllr Thorley proposed the payments made be accepted as stated. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Wilson. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

*It was resolved to accept these payments as correct.*

**c) Approval of accounts for payment**

The clerk confirmed the payment to Lionel Robbins was the Internal Auditors fee. Cllr Manning proposed this account tendered be paid. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Porter. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

The clerk confirmed the payment to Qualitrees related to the recent tree maintenance undertaken in the school drive, of which the Academy of Cuxton Schools and the Parish Council agreed to pay an equal proportion as the maintenance of the junior school drive was their joint responsibility.

Cllr Burley proposed this account tendered be paid at the amount of £678.

This proposal was seconded by Cllr Manning. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

*It was resolved to approve these payments to be attended to by the clerk.*

**37) Pavilion Re-Development**

**a) Ongoing consideration of survey suggestions regarding redevelopment**

Cllr Thorley advised a steering group had been formed previously to assist with the pavilion re-development and had reconvened to look at the comments made in the survey responses. Cllr Thorley provided a precis of the suggestions, from the responses which had been received to councillors, one of which was to clear out one half of roundel and explore the idea of providing a kiosk selling tea/coffee and cakes. Cllr Chalker suggested the mobile refreshment unit which had been successfully used in Halling could be considered in Cuxton.

Cllr Thorley suggested another option was to review the underused amenities within the village and work in conjunction with the providers to try to facilitate new groups suggested in the survey. Cllr Thorley advised all ideas would be considered.

**38) Big Lunch – update**

Cllr Thorley advised the Big Lunch was taking place on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June. The organising committee had attended many planning meetings and

Medway Council had requested more paperwork be completed this year, than previously, before signing off the event.

**39) Painting of playground and teenage village – update and consideration of payment for materials and paint required**

The clerk advised he had for many months, at the request of the Parish Council, been in contact with Probation to move the project forward. Following a recent site visit, Probation had confirmed works could commence at the end of June, one day per week, over a 4-week period. The clerk advised materials for the project would cost approximately £1,200. Following discussion, councillors decided to defer the project and asked the clerk to obtain three quotations for the works. Once quotations were received, the matter would be brought back to be discussed by council.

**40) Container – update on planning Permission requirement**

The clerk advised Medway Council planning department had recently responded to the Parish Council's questions regarding permission for the containers in the recreation ground. The clerk provided councillors with email confirmation which advised if the containers were used for the storage of equipment and were below the maximum size dimensions, planning permission was not required. As the Parish Council complied with the conditions, Cllr Thorley asked the clerk to purchase the wood for the shelving supports within one of the containers, as previously agreed by councillors.

**41) Bike Track – update regarding procedure and timescale for Veolia Grant application**

Cllr Burley confirmed the closing dates for Veolia grant applications and advised he was not able to complete the application process without assistance. Cllr Jensen volunteered to assist Cllr Burley in order to submit the grant application before the closing date of 5<sup>th</sup> October.

**42) S.106 monies and discussion regarding roundabout feasibility study at A228 junction with Bush Road and update on traffic loop reinstatement**

Cllr Thorley advised Cllr Fearn had not provided an update regarding the traffic loop reinstatement. This had now been superseded by the details noted in the Medway Councillors report.

**43) Update regarding railing issue at bottom of church steps**

The clerk advised a response was awaited from Medway Greenspaces (Mr Gray, CCG, had contacted them following the Land Management Committee meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> May) and also the Ward Councillors. The clerk was asked to obtain an update from the Ward Councillors. Following further discussion, it was decided to refer the repair/replacement of the steps in Six-Acre Wood, at the lower end behind Woodhurst Close, to the next Land Management Committee meeting for further discussion.

**44) Reports of Meetings Attended on Behalf of Council**

**a) KALC**

The clerk advised the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June and Cllr Chalker confirmed he would attend the meeting.

**b) Rural Liaison**

The clerk confirmed the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June and Cllr Chalker confirmed he would attend the meeting.

**c) Cuxton Academy of Schools**

The clerk confirmed he met with the headteacher earlier and was advised Medway Council's enforcement officer appeared to have remedied some of the parking issues at school pick-up time but as the school had not received a report of any action which had been taken, they would contact Medway Council for an update regarding the situation.

The school confirmed all users of the after-school clubs now had keys to lock the bottom gate on the school drive and had been instructed to lock the gates when leaving the premises.

The school confirmed the Parish Council could use the school car parks for the purposes of the 'Big Lunch'.

**d) Police Liaison**

No meeting had taken place.

**45) Lower Thames Crossing enquiry – update**

Cllr Thorley asked the clerk to forward to all councillors the updated SoCG's, (Statements of Common Ground) that had been received from the Lower Thames Crossing group and for councillors to forward their comments to the clerk to submit as part of the application process.

**46) Correspondence**

The clerk provided councillors, for information purposes, copies of correspondence received concerning: front garden boundary fencing; the apparent replacement of a property and concerns that offcuts from the tree felling in Six-Acre Wood could cause damage to boundary fencing. The clerk provided councillors with copies of the responses sent.

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**CLOSED SESSION:**

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, that due to the confidential nature of the next item, the press and public will be asked to leave the meeting.

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**47) Confidential section closed to the public**

The residents, Cllr Jensen and the clerk left the meeting. Cllr Thorley took the minutes for the confidential items, in the absence of the clerk.

**a) To discuss the clerks' request to have one day set aside per week in order to study for his qualifications**

A discussion was held and it was resolved to agree to the clerk's request to set aside one day per week in order to study for his qualifications. This was agreed on a flexible basis to fit in with workloads.

This was proposed by Cllr Burley and seconded by Cllr Wilson. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

**b) To approve payment of additional hours for street cleaner to clear rubbish from Big Lunch site between 3pm-7pm on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June**

Following discussion, it was resolved to agree this additional payment. This was proposed by Cllr Chamberlain and seconded by Cllr Porter. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

Cllr Jensen and the clerk returned to the meeting.

**48) Information Exchange**

Cllr Chalker made councillors aware of a change of use planning application, MC/23/1257, which had recently been submitted to Medway Council. The clerk advised he had sent the details of the application by email to Cllr Chalker but noted the email access issues which he would attend to. Cllr Chalker, as chair of the planning committee, was asked by Cllr Thorley to provide updates to councillors regarding this application.

**49) Members Future Agenda Items**

Traffic loop reinstatement, A228  
Railing update, 6 Acre-Wood  
Lower Thames Crossing - update  
Pavilion update  
'Big Lunch' feedback  
Painting of playground and teenage village

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:31 pm**

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

**Signed**                      ***Tracy Thorley***

**Chairman**

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