



## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 at 7pm at Cuxton Library**

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

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

There were two members of the public present.

### **74) Extraordinary Vote for Chairman to chair this meeting – see apologies for absence.**

The clerk advised as both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council were not in attendance at the meeting, he had taken the advice of KALC, and as the senior longest standing member, Cllr Porter, had taken the chair.

Cllr Porter advised Councillors a chairman had to be elected for this evening's meeting and asked for nominations. Cllr Chalker proposed Cllr Porter chair the meeting. Cllr Chamberlain seconded the proposal. No other proposals were received. Cllr Porter accepted the nomination. Cllr Nightingale then declared an interest in this item. Seven Councillors voted for the proposal and two, Cllrs Porter (as the candidate) and Nightingale, (who had declared an interest in this item), abstained. Cllr Porter was duly elected to chair the meeting.

*It was resolved Cllr Porter chair the meeting.*

### **75) Apologies for absence**

Cllr Thorley (Chairman, Cuxton Parish Council) – prior engagement.

Cllr Burley (Vice-Chairman, Cuxton Parish Council) – Illness.

*It was resolved to accept these apologies.*

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

Cllr Vye – Item 8 (ii)

Cllr Nightingale – Items 5(b), 10 & 17

Cllr Chalker advised under Standing Orders, agendas and minutes for all Committee meetings should be provided to all Councillors, irrespective if they were a member of that Committee. The clerk advised he was not aware of this and would amend in future.

### **77) Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – for approval**

Cllr Chamberlain advised of a spelling error on page 7. The residents' name was amended from 'Sellers' to 'Sellars'. There were no other amendments. This amendment was proposed by Cllr Nightingale and was seconded by Cllr Jensen. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal.

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

## **78) Matters Arising**

None.

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

The Ward Councillors were not present, as they were attending a Medway Council meeting and had previously provided their apologies. The clerk updated Councillors with feedback from the recent meeting held with the Ward Councillors. Several items had been discussed and the Ward Councillors confirmed they would provide updates regarding these. Cllr Manning advised the traffic sensor was not working and the clerk was asked to refer back to the Ward Councillors for further investigation to be undertaken.

Cllr Nightingale updated Councillors on the recent Traffic Management Committee meeting which was held on 7<sup>th</sup> September.

*Resident 1* - asked if the Council could check the traffic sensor was switched on. Cllr Porter advised the clerk had already been tasked to request this. The resident asked how items of concern regarding roads could be referred to Medway Highways. Cllr Porter advised the resident to send concerns to the clerk and provided the clerk's email address for this purpose.

*Resident 2* - asked for details regarding the local plan and was advised this would be discussed under agenda item 92b) later in the meeting.

## **79) Finance**

### **a) Bank Balances**

The clerk provided Councillors with a list of Bank balances held as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. The clerk confirmed receipt of the Rural Liaison fund payment £3,636.36, from Medway Council on 31<sup>st</sup> August.

*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 Porter 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 provided Councillors with two accounts for payment.

The payment to Qualitrees was in respect of ash dieback work undertaken in 6-Acre Wood. The payment to Frindsbury PC was in respect of a proportionate charge for a speaker at a local KALC meeting. Councillors asked the clerk to confirm Cuxton Parish Council's agreement to pay towards the speaker's fee before the payment could be considered.

Cllr Porter proposed the payment to Qualitrees be made but the clerk to obtain further clarification regarding the payment for the speaker at the local KALC meeting. Cllr Wilson seconded this proposal. Eight Councillors voted in favour of the proposal and Cllr Chamberlain abstained (as she was not part of the Parish Council when the original agreement for Qualitrees to undertake the ash dieback work, was approved).

*It was resolved the clerk would make payment of the Qualitrees invoice and make further enquiries of Frindsbury Parish Council with regards to the invoice for the costs of the speaker at the local KALC meeting.*

#### **80) Pavilion Re-Development**

The clerk advised Cllr Thorley was to discuss a new date for the meeting of the steering group so ideas for the re-development, from the village survey, could be considered further.

#### **81) Lower Thames Crossing Enquiry – update and discussion**

Cllr Porter advised Cllr Burley had attended the recent meeting with the Lower Thames Crossing representatives but as he was not in attendance at this meeting, no further information was available. Cllr Chalker stated at the recent Rural Liaison meeting, he was advised the deadline for comments to the proposal had been extended to 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024. He also confirmed the proposed housing development on the Hoo Peninsular had not been added into the calculation for a likely increase of traffic on the A228.

#### **82) Report from Land Management Committee meeting 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023 (JP)**

##### **(i) Courts Re-development**

Cllr Chalker advised under Standing Orders, Committee's, where they include non-elected Council member, do not have authority to spend money and must recommend such requests to full Council if agreed. Cllr Chalker suggested the Terms of Reference were re-considered and amended where necessary.

Cllr Porter recommended as the Chairman of the Parish Council and the chair of the Finance Committee were not in attendance, this item be deferred to the next meeting.

##### **(ii) Discussion regarding Allotment plot fees for 2023/2024**

Cllr Porter advised, following discussion at the recent Land Management Committee meeting, the recommendation to full Council was not to increase the allotment fees for 2023/2024. Cllr Chamberlain proposed the allotment

plot fees remain at £5.50 per rod with a £1.00 water charge per rod for 2023/2024. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Wilson. Eight Councillors voted for the proposal and Cllr Vye abstained, as he had already declared an interest in this item.

*The clerk to advise plot holders of this agreement when the invoices were issued in October 2023.*

**(iii) Firework celebrations – bonfire (clearance and fencing)**

Cllr Porter advised 'Wheel of Cuxton' representatives attended the recent Land Management meeting and the costs of the removal of the nails from the pallets and the fencing of the area was discussed. Cllr Chalker suggested the clerk request further details of the Parish Council's insurers as to liability for any injury caused if the nails were not cleared. Cllr Chalker proposed the area be fenced off without clearance subject to confirmation of insurance cover and the area be cleared on a four-yearly basis to stop a mound of earth building up. The matter to be referred back to Council if insurers do not agree cover. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Chamberlain. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

*It was resolved the clerk refer this matter to the Parish Council's insurers and should they advise cover is not available, the situation to be referred back to the next full Council meeting for further discussion.*

**(iv) Christmas Tree Lighting Event – music and carols**

Following discussion, Cllr Chamberlain suggested the school choir could sing at the event. Cllr Nightingale asked the clerk to contact the headteacher to ask if they could assist. Cllr Wilson suggested keyboard accompaniment should be arranged, although background music and lighting would be provided by Piers Gray as in previous years. This matter to be discussed further once a response from the school had been received.

**83) CCTV – discussion regarding replacement of current system and update regarding receipt of quotations**

The clerk advised he had received two quotations to date but as another company had failed to return calls and emails, he had to ask a further company to visit, which had delayed the process. The third quotation was awaited, and all quotations would be presented to Council at the next meeting scheduled for October.

**84) Bike Track - update regarding Veolia Grant application (MB/JJ)**

Cllr Jensen confirmed she would meet with Cllr Burley to discuss the application process once he had recovered from his illness.

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

The issues with the traffic loop had already been discussed under Public Session.

**86) KALC training for new Councillors**

Cllr Nightingale confirmed he would circulate a brief report to Councillors on the recent training course he had attended.

**87) Speed limit on Sundridge Hill, to report back to Medway Council**

Cllr Nightingale proposed speed limits should be checked on the A228, with the possible use of flashing signs. Cllr Wilson advised speed limits had been raised at previous Police liaison meetings she had attended, and she confirmed she would discuss this matter at the October liaison meeting and report back. Cllr Chalker gave advance notice of gasworks, which could cause disruption on the A228 in the 2024 school summer holidays.

**88) Discussion regarding reimbursement received from Rural Liaison group**

The clerk confirmed the sum of £3,636.36 had been received. Cllr Chamberlain advised the monies were not ring fenced. This matter to be further discussed at the next full Council meeting.

**89) Discussion regarding the provision and cost of an additional litter bin junction of Bush Road/Charles Drive**

The clerk advised this matter had been raised by residents in 2022 and he had been in discussion with Medway Council since then. Following a recent bin audit, Medway Council confirmed they could not provide an additional bin. This matter to be further discussed at the next full Council meeting.

**90) To consider the Parish Council's liaison with Ranscombe Farm Reserve and the West Kent Downs Countryside Trust (GC)**

Cllr Chalker suggested Cuxton Parish Council contact Medway Council to enter into discussion regarding the land. Cllr Porter suggested the Parish Council invite Plantlife to the next Council meeting for a pre-meeting starting at 6.30pm so they could share what activities Ranscombe Farm were involved with and to foster closer liaison with the Parish Council. Following that meeting, an invitation would be sent to West Kent Downs Countryside Trust for the same purpose. Cllr Porter requested the clerk contact Plantlife initially to schedule a suitably convenient date so they could attend for a pre-meeting.

**91) Update on Planning applications (GC)**

Cllr Chalker advised the Parish Council had commented on small projects alerting Medway Council to the Party Wall etc Act 1996. He advised under application MC/23/1941, in line with the thoughts of Medway Council

planning officers in their pre-planning discussion, the Parish Council had commented this development was akin to cramming.

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

a. KALC

Cllr Chalker had attended the recent meeting and confirmed parishes on the peninsular and their parish development plans had been discussed.

b. Rural Liaison

Cllr Chalker reported the Local plan had been discussed by Medway's Planning officer at the recent meeting. The clerk advised details of how to access the consultation had been received from Medway Council and would be added to the village noticeboards.

c. Cuxton Academy of Schools

The clerk advised he met with the headteacher on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September and discussed Medway Council's parking enforcement officer and other matters pertaining to the recent Traffic Management Committee meeting. The clerk had asked if the Parish Council could borrow the leaf blower for the use by the street cleaners and a risk assessment was to be provided.

d. Police Liaison

Cllr Wilson advised she had not attended the recent meeting.

**93) Correspondence**

The clerk advised the Parish Council had been copied into correspondence sent to Medway Council and the local MP regarding the recent burst water main issues, but no other correspondence was outstanding.

**94) CLOSED SESSION (PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETING) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC)**

**To resolve that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and the Public are to be excluded from the Meeting.**

**A vote will be taken.**

Cllr Chalker proposed the motion. Cllr Porter seconded the proposal. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

The remaining resident left the meeting.

## **95) Personnel Matters**

Cllr Wilson advised following discussion at the recent Staffing Committee meeting, it was proposed to increase the street cleaner's (PS) hours to 20 per week from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023, with the additional three hours to be utilised to clear the weeds and road gutters in the village. Cllr Nightingale asked if the clerk could request the cost from Medway Council of the Scarab machine to clean all road gutters in the village on a monthly basis. Cllr Porter asked the clerk to liaise with Medway and report back. Following discussion, Cllr Nightingale proposed the street cleaner's (PS) hours be increased by three per week, total 20 per week from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023. The additional hours to be used to clear the weeds and gutters in the village. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Jensen. All Councillors voted in favour of this proposal. *The clerk was tasked with amending the street cleaner (PS) contract to reflect the change in hours as above, from 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The clerk advised he would contact ACAS to seek their assistance with regards to amending the contract.*

Cllr Porter advised the current clerks' last working day would be 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The clerk advised he would handover all equipment and provide his manual diary with notes for the use of the new clerk. The clerk had provided Councillors with the documentation which had been discussed at the recent Staffing Committee meeting. Cllr Wilson gave a brief outline of the documentation. Cllr Chalker advised the advertisement should also be placed on the clerks' professional website and he would provide details. Cllr Chalker proposed the advertisement be amended from 'part-time 35 hours per week' to '35 hours per week' and for the salary range to be amended to '£25,000 to £35,000 depending on qualifications and experience'. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Nightingale. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

*The clerk was tasked with amending the advertisement as stated above before submitting to the Indeed recruitment website.*

## **96) Information Exchange**

None.

## **97) Members Future Agenda Items**

Provision of litter bin at junction of Charles Drive and Bush Road  
Lower Thames Crossing  
CCTV - quotations  
Courts Re-Development  
Update from insurers regarding bonfire clearance and liability  
Christmas Tree Lighting event – update regarding School Choir  
Discussion regarding Rural Liaison Grant monies refund received  
Update regarding local KALC speaker invoice  
Discussion regarding the provision of a bin at junction of Bush Road/Charles Drive

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:50 pm**

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

**Signed    *Ged Chalker*                      Chairman**

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