



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

Present: Cllr Porter (Chair to start meeting), Cllr Jensen, Cllr Thorley, Cllr Wilson, Cllr Nightingale (Elected Chair of meeting), Cllr White, Cllr Vye and Ward Cllr Fearn.

In attendance: In the absence of the clerk, Cllr Jensen took the minutes.

There were two members of the public present.

131) Extraordinary Vote for Chairman to chair this meeting – see apologies for absence.

Cllr Porter advised Councillors a chairman had to be elected for this evening's meeting as the Chairman was on holiday and there was currently no Vice-Chairman in situ and asked for nominations. Cllr Wilson proposed Cllr Nightingale chair the meeting. Cllr White seconded the proposal. No other proposals were received. Cllr Porter abstained from voting. Cllr Nightingale accepted the nomination. Five Councillors voted for the proposal. Cllr Nightingale was duly elected to chair the meeting. Cllr Thorley entered the meeting at 7:05pm and apologised for her lateness. Her apology was accepted by Councillors.

It was resolved Cllr Nightingale chair the meeting.

132) Apologies for absence

Cllr Chalker – holiday
Cllr Chamberlain – holiday
Cllr Manning – holiday

It was resolved to accept these apologies.

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

Cllr Porter – item 6
Cllr Thorley – item 23

134) Minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2023 – for approval

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

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

135) Matters Arising

None.

Medway Councillor's report and Public Session

Ward Councillor Fearn reported on the following items as follows:

Double yellow lines consultation – this consultation had been completed and objections had been received for each of the four roads. However, Bush Road had the largest number of objections with four. Double yellow lines would be completed as proposed for all the roads except Bush Road, the proposals for which would be reconsidered.

Library gardens maintenance grant – the sum of £400 would be transferred to Cuxton Parish Council and the library garden volunteers could then apply for a grant from Cuxton Parish Council.

Christmas Tree Lighting – Cllrs Fearn and Filmer had approved Cuxton Parish Council's request for a £400 donation towards the 2023 celebrations.

Household waste site – the usage numbers were good, and the site would continue to function as current.

Kent Wine Vault – it was understood a planning application would be submitted to Medway Council and a presentation provided to them in the future.

Outside tap at the library – this had been approved and would be installed.

Cllr Fearn advised he had responded to seven emails which had been received from residents since the last Parish Council meeting.

Cllrs Wilson and Nightingale asked if a flashing speed sign could be installed on the A228 from the Halling direction towards Cuxton so drivers could be warned of their speed.

Cllr Vye maintained the traffic loop was not working again as he had experienced a situation whereby five cars were waiting to enter the village and the traffic lights had not changed to red.

Resident 1 – Discussed the 5-year plan for trees behind Woodhurst Close and asked if the trees could be cropped as they needed attention. Cllr Nightingale confirmed he would speak with Mr Gray of the CCG (Cuxton Countryside Group) and take further advice. The resident asked if the Church could present a tableau at the Christmas Tree Lighting event. It was confirmed this was agreed at the last Council meeting.

136) Co-option – update on progress to fill vacancy, recommendation to be referred to the confidential agenda if required

Councillors were advised only one application had been received from Mr Martin Burley to fill the vacancy. Following discussion, Councillors advised in future communication would be improved in order Councillors felt supported and were able to speak to each other. As only one application had been received, Cllr Wilson proposed Mr Burley be co-opted as a Councillor to Cuxton Parish Council and Cllr Porter seconded the proposal. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal and Mr Burley was duly co-opted as a Councillor of Cuxton Parish Council. Mr Burley, who was in attendance, duly signed the declaration of office form provided.

The clerk, once in situ, to confirm this appointment to Medway Council and provide a DPI form for Cllr Burley to complete.

137) Election of Parish Council Vice-Chairman

Following discussion, Cllr Nightingale advised having spoken to Cllr Chalker, Chairman, he was prepared to be considered for the role of Vice-Chairman. Cllr Wilson proposed Cllr Nightingale be elected as Vice-Chairman of Cuxton Parish Council and this proposal was seconded by Cllr Jensen. Five Councillors voted in favour of the proposal. Cllr Nightingale did not vote for himself as he did not feel it was appropriate and Cllr Porter, who had already declared an interest in this item, abstained.

It was resolved Cllr Nightingale be elected as Vice-Chairman of Cuxton Parish Council.

138) Finance

a) Bank Balances

No balances had been provided to Councillors as the bank statements had been delivered to the Parish Council office and no clerk was currently in situ to deal with correspondence received.

b) Approval of payments made since last meeting

Councillors had been provided with details of payments made since the last meeting. No queries were raised. Cllr White proposed the payments made be accepted as stated and this proposal was seconded by Cllr Nightingale. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

It was resolved to accept these payments as correct.

c) Approval of accounts for payment

Cllr Thorley provided Councillors with recently received invoices from Business Stream, water provider for the pavilion office and the allotments. The amounts requested were £67.64 for the pavilion and £780.70 for the allotments. Cllr Porter proposed both accounts be paid, and this proposal was seconded by Cllr Wilson. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

Cllr Thorley advised as she was a bank signatory and no clerk was in situ, she would make payments of the amounts stated.

139) Pavilion Re-Development

a. Ongoing consideration of survey suggestions regarding redevelopment

It was resolved this matter be deferred to a future meeting when all Councillors would be available for discussion.

140) Lower Thames Crossing – update and new Councillor contact required

Following discussion, newly elected Cllr Burley volunteered to be the Parish Council's contact. Cllr Nightingale advised he would confirm this to the Lower

Thames Crossing representative and would ask the new clerk, once in situ, to reset up Cllr Burley's email address.

141) Winter preparation – Salt bins etc, Road Sweeper supplies

Following discussion, Ward Cllr Fearn advised the replenishment of the salt bins came under the auspices of Medway Council's Frontline Services and there was no need for the Parish Council to purchase and store its' own supply. Cllr Nightingale suggested a salt bin was provided either in the school drive or the caged area of the pavilion. Cllr Wilson asked whether the Parish Council could purchase a leaf blower for use by the street cleaners. Councillors agreed this should be discussed at the next full Council meeting.

142) Courts Re-Development

It was resolved this matter be deferred to a future meeting when all Councillors would be available for discussion.

143) Discussion regarding quotations received for the provision of a cableway in the Recreation Ground

It was resolved this matter be deferred to a future meeting when all Councillors would be available for discussion.

144) Christmas Tree Lighting Event – update regarding School choir, charity to be supported, response from Co-op re donation and mulled wine purchase

Cllr Nightingale advised Cuxton School could not provide a choir for the event, due to the change of date. Following discussion, Cllr Porter was asked to contact Mrs Kay Hutchfield to ask whether she could arrange a small adult choir, as last year and request if Mrs Karen Newby, the pianist from last year, was available to assist at the event. If she was not, then Mr Piers Gray would be asked if he could provide backing music for the carols to be sung. A budget of no more than £300 was agreed to cover the pianist & rehearsal costs.

Following further discussion, Cllr Wilson proposed the Air Ambulance charity should be supported this year and this was unanimously agreed by all Councillors. Cllr Wilson to contact the charity to obtain collection tins.

It was advised the mulled wine was bought from the Chairman's allowance and a budget of £130 was approved for this event by all Councillors. Cllr Thorley advised she would contact the Co-op with regards to the donation of mince pies and apple juice as the previous clerk had already sent a letter asking for their help as in previous years. The new clerk, once in situ, was asked to contact the stallholders to confirm they still intended to attend the event.

145) Steps behind Woodhurst Close – update

Following discussion, it was resolved to ask the new clerk, when in situ, to obtain three quotations for the replacement/repair of the steps and provide these to Councillors for discussion.

146) Update from Traffic Management Committee meeting, 3rd November 2023

Cllr Nightingale circulated a report he had produced from the recent meeting, attended by fourteen residents, which confirmed the following items were discussed: a walking bus from the White Hart car park for schoolchildren; the possibility of opening the recreation ground for school parking; would the traffic enforcement officer accept photographs of cars blocking pavements; the bollards at the bottom of James Road which would protect access for residents by preventing pavement parking; additional deterrents for HGV lorries entering the village and signage for pedestrians in road at the end of Bush Road towards Cobham, where there were no pavements. Cllr Nightingale advised he would deal with these items and ask the new clerk to help where needed. Cllr Nightingale advised the next meeting was scheduled for Friday 2nd February at 4pm.

147) Feedback from Kent Police fraud talk

Cllr Porter advised the talk had been attended by fifteen residents, four Councillors and the previous clerk. The event lasted for two hours and was highly informative and many questions were asked of the officer.

148) Feedback from bonfire and firework event

Following discussion, it was agreed the fireworks were quieter this year which was a positive change. It was noted the bonfire site had been fenced off by the Wheel of Cuxton as agreed until the removal of the nails could be undertaken. It was decided to invite representatives of the Wheel of Cuxton to the next Land Management Committee meeting, due in 2024, to discuss next years event and have closer ties with the Parish Council.

149) Councillor Training – Climate Literacy (MN)

Cllr Nightingale expressed an interest in attending a training course on Climate Literacy at a cost of £93.00 and confirmed he had spoken to Cllr Chalker, Chairman, regarding this, who had agreed in principle with his attendance and requested formal approval at this meeting, (this was asked in advance as the Chairman would not be present at the meeting.) Cllr White proposed the course be booked by Cllr Nightingale at the cost of £93.00 and Cllr Jensen seconded this proposal. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

150) Report of Meetings Attended on Behalf of Council

a. KALC

No meeting had taken place since the last full Council meeting.

b. Rural Liaison

No meeting had taken place since the last full Council meeting.

c. Cuxton Academy of Schools

No meeting had taken place since the last full Council meeting.

d. Police Liaison

No meeting had taken place since the last full Council meeting.

151) Correspondence

Cllr Nightingale advised an email had been received requesting a bench be installed in the Recreation ground, at their expense, in memory of a young resident who had previously spent much time in the park. Following discussion, as previous requests had resulted in benches being placed around the village in the countryside, it was decided to defer the request to the next Council meeting when all Councillors could be involved. Cllr Nightingale advised an invitation had been received from Silverhand Estate to their event at the Golden Lion public house on Friday 24th November from 3.30pm.

152) Discussion regarding allowance for Chairman and Parish Councillors (MN)

Jane Ringham, Head of Elections and Member Services, Medway Council, had sent correspondence asking for comments regarding the payment of allowances from the Precept, for Parish Councillors for work completed in the course of their duties. Following discussion, Councillors decided to respond advising they unanimously supported a Chairmans' allowance but not an allowance for Councillors. Cllr Nightingale to confirm the views of the Parish Council to Medway Council.

153) CLOSED SESSION: (PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETING) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND 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 Wilson proposed the motion. Cllr Porter seconded the proposal. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

The resident left the meeting.

154) Personnel matter – Update to confirm the appointment of a new Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Cllr Wilson had circulated with the Councillors papers, a letter to be sent to the new clerk. Following discussion, it was unanimously agreed to issue the letter but amend it to reflect references had been received. Cllr Nightingale proposed Cllr Wilson, as head of the Council's Staffing Committee, appoint Mrs Natalie Jackson as the new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for Cuxton Parish Council. Cllr White seconded the proposal. Six Councillors voted in favour of the proposal and Cllr Thorley, who had already declared an interest in this item, abstained.

It was resolved Mrs Natalie Jackson be appointed as the new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer of Cuxton Parish Council. Cllr Wilson to complete all the paperwork relating to this appointment.

155) Information Exchange

Cllrs Wilson, Jensen and Thorley advised they would be unable to attend the upcoming Finance Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday 30th November, which meant it would not be quorate. In the circumstances, it was proposed the date be amended to the following Thursday 7th December and this was unanimously agreed by all Councillors. Cllr Nightingale would contact the library to rearrange the meeting due to no Clerk being in situ.

156) Members Future Agenda Items

Purchase of a leaf blower for road sweepers
Provision of a cableway in the Recreation ground
Provision of a memorial bench in the Recreation ground
Pavilion - Ongoing consideration of survey suggestions regarding redevelopment
Formal welcome of new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Steps behind Woodhurst Close – update
Wheel of Cuxton – invitation to future meeting
Courts re-development

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:59 pm

Next meeting 14th December 2023, 7pm at Cuxton Library

Signed Matt Nightingale

(Acting)Chairman

On the 14th day of December 2023