



Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 18th January 2024 at 7pm at Cuxton Library

Present: Cllr Chalker (Chair), Cllr Jensen, Cllr Thorley, Cllr Wilson, Cllr Nightingale, Cllr Porter, Cllr Chamberlain, Cllr White, Cllr Vye, Cllr Burley, Cllr Manning.
Ward Councillor, Phil Filmer.

In attendance: Mrs N Jackson - Clerk

There were four members of the public present.

185) Apologies for absence

Ward Councillor, Matt Fearn – verbal apologies given to the chairman.
It was resolved to accept these apologies.

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

Cllr Thorley – item 26
Cllr Porter – item 11
Cllr Chalker – item 8
Cllr Nightingale – item 5b & 11

187) Minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2023 – for approval

Page 1 – Cllr Burley identified that Cllr Wilson had been listed as being present twice, but he had not been listed as present. Page 6 – Item 169, line 4, the word ‘thanked’ was missing between the first and third word. No other amendments were required. Cllr Thorley proposed the minutes be accepted with those alterations. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Chalker. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

It was resolved to accept these minutes, with those alterations, as a true record of the meeting.

188) Matters Arising

None.

Medway Councillor’s report and Public Session

Cllr Phil Filmer gave a verbal report in which he:

- Apologised for not being able to attend meetings previously, citing scheduling clashes with the meetings at Medway Council.
- Noted the winery developments, the lower Thames crossing plans and any other plans that will affect the A228 and pledged to keep abreast of those developments and provide updates.
- Informed councillors that he regularly comes to Cuxton and liaises with the chairman about matters.
- Confirmed that he had recently given a donation to the Academy of Cuxton schools from his ward improvement fund and will action the Christmas tree donation asap.

- Confirmed that the recent refuse issue was a one-off and explained the reasoning behind it.
- Spoke of plans to fix the flooding in Pilgrims Road and those to fix a partial land slippage on Rochester Road.

Several members of the Cuxton Against the Winery campaign group had attended to discuss the planning matters at Tyre field. They questioned Cllr Filmer about the ambiguity of the wording of the decision recently published and were looking for reassurances that this matter would not be considered under permitted development rights, even if certain additional parameters were met. Cllr Filmer explained his understanding but suggested that there may still be some more work to do on this matter. Similar situations nearby and their outcomes were discussed, and Cllr Chalker shared his thoughts about the effect on dark skies of the proposed development. The members of the public asked Cllr Filmer to keep them informed of any and all developments as they happen. Cllr Filmer said that the winery had mentioned about meeting with CPC before Christmas but have so far still not done this. Cllr Filmer agreed to keep an eye on it.

Three members of the public left the meeting.

189) Finance

a) Bank Balances

The clerk provided a copy of the bank balances at 31.12.2023. Cllr Thorley gave a verbal report of the balances as they were at the time of the meeting.

b) Approval of payments made since last meeting

The clerk provided a copy of the payments made by Cllr Thorley since the last meeting.

c) Approval of accounts for payment

None

d) Update on change of mandate progress

The clerk provided specific councillors with further instructions where necessary, and explained the current status of the mandate changes.

e) Clerk given authority to act/ added to bank accounts (TT)

Cllr Thorley explained the need to start the process of adding the clerk to the Community account as soon as possible.

f) Precept Demand signing

The clerk produced a hard copy of the precept demand paperwork issued by Medway Council. The paperwork was completed to show a precept demand of £62,016.00, sixty-two thousand and sixteen pounds, as agreed at the last Main council meeting on 14th December 2023. It was presented to Cllr Chalker to sign as Chairman. It was then signed by Cllr Burley, Cllr Thorley and the clerk.

Cllr Burley proposed to accept each of these finance matters, this was seconded by Cllr Chamberlain and agreed by unanimous vote.

It was resolved that the bank balances and accounts for payment are accepted and that the clerk is added to the bank mandates asap.

It was also resolved that Cuxton Parish Council will notify a 2024/2025 precept demand as follows: Cuxton Parish Council demand the sum of sixty-two thousand and sixteen pounds, £62,016.00, from Medway Council.

Ward Councillor, Phil Filmer, left the meeting.

190) Feedback from staffing committee meeting and recommendations:

The clerk provided a list of recommendations from the Staffing Committee meeting of 9th January 2024.

- a) **Minimum wage increase** – This will be adhered to from 1st April 2024
- b) **ILCA training of the new clerk** – The Ilca course was recommended, to be started asap
- c) **Pension provision of staff** – The clerk to be enrolled immediately and other staff members will be auto-enrolled as they meet the criteria – the clerk to oversee this.

Cllr Wilson proposed to accept all of the recommendations. Cllr Chalker seconded the motion. All councillors voted in favour.

It was resolved to pay the new minimum wage where appropriate from 1st April, to sign the clerk up to the Ilca training course, enrol the clerk on the workplace pension scheme and to monitor other staff members for their auto-enrolment eligibility to the pension scheme.

191) Planning Response - MC/23/2706 - Land at Upper Bush Road Known as Tyre Field – For information only

No further comments were made.

192) Planning Response - MC/23/2662- Installation of a heat source pump to rear of 19 Nine Acres Road, Cuxton – For information only

Cllr Nightingale presented this item, as Cllr Chalker had declared an interest. It was for information only as the consultation period had ended with no objections received.

193) Planning Consideration - MC/23/2855 - Remodelling existing dwelling with construction of a 2-storey side/rear extension. Ranscombe Farm Cottages.

Cllr Vye noted the aesthetics of the proposals, in particular the loss of the Kent peg tiles, and matching brickwork, associated with traditional Kent properties. Cllr Chalker agreed, also mentioning the potential increase in traffic movements at the Ranscombe farm junction of the A228. Cllr Chamberlain wanted to ensure that if planning permission was given, that it was specific to the applicants not the property. Cllr Chalker proposed that an objection be raised on those grounds and Cllr Vye seconded the motion. All councillors voted in favour.

It was resolved that the clerk will lodge an objection to this application on the planning portal.

194) Consideration of the membership of the Finance Committee

Cllr Chalker resigned his position as a member of the finance committee. Cllr Wilson proposed that Cllr Burley should fill this position and be elected as chairman of the committee. Cllr Thorley seconded this motion and all councillors voted in favour.

It was resolved that Cllr Burley is now a member and the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

195) To receive the playground inspection report (annual) & bike track maintenance report - For information

Cllr Nightingale asked the clerk to ensure that any recommendations were actioned. Cllr Burley proposed that the reports were received. This was seconded by Cllr Jenson and all councillors voted in favour.

It was resolved that the clerk will continue to oversee the works required in the playground.

196) To receive quotations for plumbing / maintenance issues in the pavilion.

The clerk provided a report on plumbing issues within the roundel and three quotations to replace the leaking hot water heater in the pavilion / cap a soil stack within the roundel. Another quote was also presented to remedy an emergency plumbing situation that had occurred within the previous week.

Cllr Manning suggested making an insurance claim for the emergency work. Cllr Vye advised that an insurance claim would only cover secondary damage caused by the incident. Cllr Chalker suggested that the plumbing issues should be fixed first and with quotes sought for any remedial work following the repair, potentially making a claim at that stage.

Councillors agreed and reviewed the quotations with Cllr Nightingale proposing which one to accept. This was seconded by Cllr Thorley and all councillors voted in favour.

Cllr Wilson shared concerns about some of the findings of the plumbing report. Cllr Porter explained that these items have previously been dealt with by the Land Management committee and proposed that these matters were deferred back to that committee for discussion. Cllr Thorley seconded this, and all councillors voted in favour.

It was resolved to accept two quotes, for two plumbing issues, and defer the further plumbing matters to the next Land Management committee meeting.

197) Diary Dates

a) Change for June finance meeting (6th) due to D-Day beacon lighting event.

Cllr Chalker asked that Cllr Burley liaise with the clerk to arrange this.

b) Schedule a date for the Christmas Tree lighting event

This matter was deferred to the Land Management committee.

c) Confirm date / location for Parish Assembly

It was discussed that there are two only suitable venues within the village, that are central and large enough to accommodate the parish assembly. The clerk had made enquiries with the school, the preferred venue as it is not a licensed premises, who confirmed that they already have a booking on the date of the parish meeting. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Nightingale that the social club be booked for the annual parish meeting with the request made that the bar remain closed until after the meeting, as usual. This was seconded by Cllr Burley and all councillors voted in favour.

It was resolved agree a date for the Christmas event at the Land Management Committee and to book the social club for the annual parish meeting.

198) To discuss the CCTV installation update and usage

a) Review Surveillance Camera Code of Practice (TT)

This document was received and discussed by all councillors.

b) Receive draft CCTV policy

The clerk prepared a CCTV policy based on the code of practice. This was received and discussed. Cllr Thorley mentioned about Councillor training on the

new system, and it was agreed that Cllrs Wilson, Manning & Thorley will be the councillors trained in the use of the system, alongside the clerk.

c) Authority to add CCTV system to Insurance Policy

This was agreed.

d) Authority to purchase CCTV signage

This was agreed. Cllr Manning asked which signs would be used and the clerk agreed to bring details to a future meeting.

It was resolved to accept the CCTV code of Conduct, adopt the new CCTV policy and add it to the website, update the insurance policy to include the new equipment and bring details of signage to a Land Management committee meeting.

199) Review of Code of Conduct (SW)

Cllr Wilson presented the CPC code of Conduct and explained that she wanted to remind all councillors of their obligations with regard to behaviour towards each other, parishioners and staff, following a recent complaint.

A discussion followed about kindness, respect and self-regulation, with Cllrs Burley & Manning asking what happens if a member behaves in an unacceptable way. Cllr Chalker explained that any failure to disclose an interest would be dealt with by the Monitoring officer at Medway Council and Cllr Porter confirmed that unacceptable member behaviour would also be dealt with by the monitoring officer.

Cllr Thorley recalled the NALC Civility and Respect pledge that was suggested previously and how it had seemed valuable but had been oversubscribed at the time. Cllr Wilson proposed that this pledge is investigated further and brought back to a meeting in the future. This was seconded by Cllr Thorley and agreed by unanimous vote.

It was resolved to investigate the NALC Civility and Respect Pledge and bring this back to a later meeting.

200) Recommendations from Climate Training (MN)

a) The consideration to create a role for climate and sustainability or create a climate action group.

Cllr Nightingale explained the next steps of his recent Climate Training and proposed himself as Cuxton Parish Council's Climate & Sustainability Officer. This was seconded by Cllr Chamberlain and agreed by unanimous vote.

b) The consideration of the purchase of two e-bikes for a village bike trial as per the CLT report

Cllr Nightingale presented this. Cllr Chalker recommended caution due to complications with 3rd party insurance. Cllr Wilson had concerns about theft and Cllr Thorley agreed that it needed to be looked into further. Cllr Chalker proposed to defer this to a later meeting, which was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed by unanimous vote.

c) Explore the installation of renewable energy in the Recreation Ground.

Cllr Thorley explained that CPC had previously received free advice on this subject and asked the clerk to pass this on to Cllr Nightingale.

d) Create a tree planting plan for Parish land to increase tree coverage.

Cllr Nightingale suggested creating a tree planting plan and bringing this matter back to the Land management committee he also confirmed the forthcoming planting of 400 saplings in Six Acre Wood.

e) Consider scheduling a speaker for the Parish assembly.

Cllr Nightingale suggested inviting Cllr Simon Curry to speak at the annual general meeting.

It was resolved that Cllr Nightingale will be Cuxton Parish Council's Climate & Sustainability Officer and will investigate e-bike provision and a tree planting plan, which he will bring back to later meetings.

It was also resolved that the clerk will ask Simon Curry to speak at the annual Parish Meeting and provide Cllr Nightingale with information about sustainable energy from previous consultations.

201) Recreation Ground Project (TT)

a) Ongoing consideration of survey suggestions regarding redevelopment

Cllr Thorley explained that the steering group, who were previously involved in the pavilion redevelopment, were still willing to be active and investigate other ways to add value to the village. She confirmed that a meeting of that group had been scheduled for Tuesday 23rd January and offered an open invitation. She confirmed that all suggestions from that meeting will come back to council for approval.

b) Improvements to the Pavilion

Cllr Thorley noted the recent plumbing issues and mentioned her concern that the pavilion has not received any upgrades or inspections for several years, other than those required by law. Cllr Vye suggested that an emergency manual should be created to explain shut off valves / stopcocks etc.

Cllr Chalker proposed Cllrs Thorley & Vye look into it and bring the matter to a Land Management Committee meeting in the future. This was seconded by Cllr Thorley and agreed by unanimous vote.

It was resolved that suggestions for these two items will be brought to future meetings.

202) Courts Re-Development (JJ)

Cllr Jenson explained that she had attended a meeting with parties involved, had seen that a huge amount of work had already been completed on this project, and that there was lots of interest from villagers and local organisations. She explained that with a grant in place, it would make CPC's investment around £25,000. A grant application was due at the end of February, and she is hoping to have more details in time for the Land Management Committee meeting.

203) To receive information about this year's KALC Awards

Cllr Thorley explained that this was a nomination for a volunteer who has contributed greatly to the village and listed previous recipients. The nominee will receive a certificate presented at the annual parish meeting.

Several names were suggested, and councillors initially discussed voting via email, however a name was suggested later in the meeting, that all councillors agreed upon.

It was resolved that the clerk will submit the paperwork for this year's KALC Awards.

204) Authority to book fire extinguisher servicing

Cllr Nightingale proposed that approval was given for the clerk to book the fire extinguisher servicing. This was seconded by Cllr Chalker and agreed by unanimous vote.

It was resolved that the clerk will book the servicing of the fire extinguishers.

205) To receive an update regarding the steps behind Woodhurst close

The clerk confirmed that there was nothing to report as she was waiting for quotes to come in / suppliers to get back to her.

206) To receive an update about further developments at the Vineyard. (JP)

Cllr Porter explained that her points had all been raised / discussed in the public session earlier.

207) Report of Meetings Attended on Behalf of Council

a) KALC

No meetings held to report on

b) Rural Liaison

No meetings held to report on

c) Cuxton Academy of Schools

The clerk shared a report of her meeting with the headteacher on 04.01.2024, wherein she discussed the issues raised in the Traffic Management group meeting.

d) Police Liaison

Cllr Wilson explained that she had attended an online surgery on 09.01.2024 during which she chased the shared space signage for Bush Road, had a report from Ian Gilmore about the recent waste issues and heard about the ward PCSO's.

208) Correspondence

The clerk provided copies of correspondence received. Councillors noted a workshop being held at Ranscombe during Half term and asked that the organiser does not encourage participants to park in residential roads in Cuxton. Clerk to communicate this.

Communication from the school about padlock repairs was also raised, and it was proposed to discuss the matter with a local expert. Following this conversation, should expenditure be required before the next main council meeting, it was proposed by Cllr Chalker that this could be authorised by the chair and vice-chair in this instance. Cllr Wilson seconded this, and all councillors voted in favour.

Standing orders were waived by unanimous vote at 9.10pm

209) 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 was proposed by Cllr Chalker, seconded by Cllr Nightingale and agreed by unanimous vote.

The remaining resident left the meeting.

210) Personnel matter

Cllr Thorley left the meeting as she had declared an interest in this item.

The clerk offered to leave the meeting, but councillors said that this wasn't necessary.

A discussion occurred regarding the Staffing Committee's recommendation to adopt the new NALC standard contract, and which adaptations to make for use at Cuxton

Parish Council. Cllr Chamberlain raised a question regarding training as condition of employment and also about mentoring for the clerk. It was confirmed that the Ilca training will assist in both these fields.

Overall, three specific adaptations were discussed and proposed by Cllr Wilson. Cllr Burley seconded this proposal and all councillors voted in favour.

It was resolved to make the agreed adaptations to the NALC standard contract and issue it to the clerk.

Cllr Thorley rejoined the meeting.

211) Information Exchange

None.

212) Members Future Agenda Items

- Meeting with Port Medway Marina reps – Feb 2024
- Registering community interest asset - Nov 2024
- Discussion regarding the provision of a cableway in the Recreation Ground
- NALC Civility and Respect Pledge

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.32pm

Next meeting 15th February 2024, 7pm at Cuxton Library

Signed: *Ged Chalker* Chairman

On the 21st day of March 2024