



## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 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 and Cllr Manning

**In attendance:** Mrs N Jackson - Clerk

There were six members of the public present.

### **157) Apologies for absence**

Ward Councillor, Phil Filmer – Meeting at Medway Council

*It was resolved to accept these apologies.*

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

Cllr Porter – item 9

Cllr Vye– item 9

Cllr Nightingale – item 9

### **159) Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – for approval**

Page 2 - Cllr Vye asked that the word 'exit' be changed to 'enter', in the section referring to the traffic loop. No other amendments were required. Cllr Porter proposed the minutes be accepted with that one alteration. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Thorley. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

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

### **160) Matters Arising**

Cllr Chalker brought up the planning consideration MC/23/2706 for the benefit of the attending members of the public. There was a significant discussion where it was clarified that the Parish Council were notified of this application in error, and that this type of submission is a procedure that does not allow for consultation. Cllr Chalker felt that CPC should still object to show a strength of feeling. Cllr Thorley asked how councillors and members of the public could lodge their objections if consultation is not occurring. Cllr Chalker said to send objections via email to the planning department, if necessary and also suggested that CPC should lobby members of Medway Council and parliament.

Cllr Chalker proposed that CPC should object to this planning proposal, regardless of consultation rights, and ask the members and planning officers to NOT determine this under Permitted Development rights. Cllr Manning seconded the motion. All councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

*It was resolved that CPC will lodge an objection to the planning procedure before the 28-day deadline.*

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

No report was received by the Ward Councillors.

Several members of the Cuxton Against the Winery campaign group had attended to discuss the planning consideration MC/23/2706 and were pleased to hear the councillors' resolution. They explained their own thoughts spoke in more detail about the inspectors' findings and the public enquiry. They also asked for close communication with the Parish Council and noted the tight timescale.

A member of the public asked why the village hadn't been told about a single member of CPC being invited to a meeting/ presentation by Silverhand Estates. The Chairman offered his assurances that he had not received such an invitation and all other councillors confirmed the same. When questioned, the parishioner explained that she had heard this from Ward Councillor, Matt Fearn, who had sent a message to her phone. The parishioner was asked more about this, and Councillors expressed frustration and shock that Cllr Fearn had made these comments to a parishioner but not to CPC.

#### **162) Finance**

##### **a) Bank Balances**

The clerk provided Councillors with a list of Bank balances held at 30th November 2023.

*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.

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

##### **c) Approval of accounts for payment**

The clerk provided Councillors with one account for payment.

The payment to Qualitrees will be in respect of the continuation of work undertaken in 6-Acre Wood, which has been scheduled. It was proposed to make this payment when it is due, and to accept the balances and payments as correct by Cllr Thorley. This was seconded by Cllr Burley. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to make this payment when it becomes due.*

**163) Feedback from finance committee meeting and recommendations for:**

**a) Budget**

The clerk provided a copy of the budget proposed by the Finance Committee in the Meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2023. It was proposed to adopt this recommendation as the Cuxton Parish Council Budget for the 2024/2025 financial year by Cllr Burley. This was seconded by Cllr Wilson. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to adopt this recommendation as the Cuxton Parish Council Budget for the 2024/2025 financial year.*

**b) Reserve Adjustments**

The clerk provided a copy of the recommendations of the Finance Committee from 20.06.2023. Cllr Chalker suggested renaming the Pavilion redevelopment reserve to Land Acquisition reserve. Cllr Thorley reminded councillors of the findings of the village survey and suggested that if a reserve was needed for land acquisition, then this should be an additional reserve. Cllr Chalker proposed that a new earmarked reserve be created called Land Acquisition and be allocated £10,000 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve. This was seconded by Cllr Nightingale. 10 councillors voted in favour of this, Cllr Wilson abstained.

*It was resolved to create a new earmarked reserve called Land Acquisition and allocate £10,000 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve.*

**i. Elections Reserve**

It was recommended that this reserve remain the same.

This was proposed by Cllr Nightingale and seconded by Cllr Wilson. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved that this reserve remain as it is.*

**ii. Pavilion Re-Development Reserve**

It was recommended that this reserve be renamed Recreation Ground Project Reserve and the sum earmarked reduced to £34,500.

This was proposed by Cllr Thorley and seconded by Cllr Wilson. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved that this reserve be renamed Recreation Ground Project Reserve and the sum earmarked reduced to £34,500.*

**iii. Woodland Reserve**

Due to the increased incidence of Ash die-back and repairs to pathways and steps being considered, it was recommended to increase the reserve balance by £10,000 from the former Pavilion Re-Development Reserve. This was proposed by Cllr Porter and seconded by Cllr Chalker. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved that this reserve be increased by £10,000 from the Pavilion redevelopment reserve.*

**iv. Rural Liaison**

It was recommended to wind this EMR up as it is no longer in use. This was proposed by Cllr Chalker and seconded by Cllr Burley. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.  
*It was resolved that this reserve be wound up as it is no longer in use.*

v. Play Equipment Replacement

It was recommended to re-name the reserve to Play Equipment Replacement and Maintenance Reserve and increase the reserve balance by £5,000 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve. This was proposed by Cllr Jensen and seconded by Cllr Wilson. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to re-name the reserve to Play Equipment Replacement and Maintenance Reserve and increase the reserve balance by £5,000 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve.*

vi. Legal and Professional Fees Reserve

It was recommended that this reserve would remain the same, as there is no anticipation of further legal and professional fee expenditure. This was proposed by Cllr Nightingale and seconded by Cllr Porter. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved that this reserve remain as it is.*

vii. Bike Track Renovation

It was recommended to increase the reserve balance by £5,500 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve. This was proposed by Cllr Chalker and seconded by Cllr Thorley. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to increase the reserve balance by £5,500 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve.*

viii. Courts

It was recommended increase the reserve balance by £25,000 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve. This was proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Jensen. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to increase the reserve balance by £25,000 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve.*

ix. CCTV

It was recommended that a new reserve be established under the name CCTV Replacement Reserve and increase this reserve by £20,000 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve. After discussion it was decided to allocate £10,000 instead. This was proposed by Cllr Burley and seconded by Cllr Thorley. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to create a new CCTV Replacement Reserve and allocate £10,000 from the Pavilion Re-Development Reserve.*

**c) Precept**

The recommendation from the finance committee was not to increase the precept demand for 2024/25. Councillors all agreed that considering the planned expenditure for 2024/2025, and the funds held in earmarked reserves, that this was the correct decision for parishioners. Cllrs Thorley and Chalker both wanted to make it clear that whilst the parish council part of residents' council tax would not increase, the costs of other aspects may well do, but that CPC cannot affect that.

It was proposed to accept the recommendations from the Finance Committee by Cllr Chalker. This was seconded by Cllr Thorley. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to make a parish precept demand for 2024/25 as follows:*

*"Cuxton Parish Council demand the sum of sixty-two thousand and sixteen pounds, £62,016.00, from Medway Council", provided that Medway's precept assessment is the same or similar as previous years.*

At this point Cllr Chalker stood down as Chairman of the Finance Committee.

**164) Approval sought to appoint / book our Internal Auditor.**

The clerk asked for approval to book the internal Auditor, who has previously been Lionel Robbins. Cllr Chalker proposed that we do this as soon as possible, and Cllr Thorley seconded the motion. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to book and schedule Lionel Robbins, our internal auditor.*

**165) Planning Response - MC/23/2389 - Construction of two dwelling/houses with associated landscaping and parking - Demolition of existing dwelling - Springfield, Sundridge Hill Cuxton – For Information**

The Clerk confirmed that this was a resubmission of an application received a few years ago, so an objection had been redrafted and submitted on the Medway Planning portal, a copy of which had been provided to all councillors.

**166) Planning Application - MC/23/2618 - Proposal: Change of use from barbers (Class E) to office for use as a taxi company (Sui Generis) Location: 39B Bush Road, Cuxton, Rochester, Medway, ME2 1LP - For Information**

The Clerk confirmed that objections had been received from at least two members of the planning committee, so an objection response had been drafted and submitted on the Medway Planning portal, a copy of which had been provided to all councillors.

**167) Review of Planning Committee Terms of Reference (JV)**

A discussion about existing custom and practice arrangements for notifying councillors of planning applications was held. It was felt that there should be more transparency here and agreed that more than one councillor must comment on all matters. All planning applications should be discussed at full council meetings unless the end dates fall outside the scope of full council meetings, when a Planning Committee meeting can be called instead.

Cllr Thorley also proposed that the clerk email all planning applications to all councillors for now. This was seconded by Cllr Chalker. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to send all planning applications to all councillors, include details in full council meetings and to convene planning committee meetings for applications that require discussion, but that do not fall within the time frames of full council meeting*

Cllr Chalker stated that he wanted to review all Terms of Reference in the next few months, to make proposals for revisions at the annual Meeting. Cllr Nightingale said that he had had the same thought and had started work on this. Cllr Nightingale proposed that he form a working group to tackle these terms updates (Land Management, Planning, Finance and Staffing committees). After a discussion it was also proposed that each set of terms would be tackled in a separate meeting involving Cllr Nightingale. Cllr Thorley, Cllr Chalker, Cllr Vye and the chairman of the featured Committee. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Chalker. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to hold 4 working group meetings, to make recommendations for each committee's terms of reference, before the annual meeting in May 2024*

**168) Approval of proposed Programme of meetings for 2024**

After a discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Chalker to accept these dates, with the minor correction of the 'Big Lunch' day from Saturday to Sunday. This was seconded by Cllr Thorley. All Councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to accept these dates, with the minor correction of the 'Big Lunch' day from Saturday to Sunday.*

**169) Request from resident for a copy of CPC response to local plan**

Cllr Chalker shared hard copies of his response to Medway's Local Plan. He stated that he had submitted this independently to Medway Council, as a submission on behalf of the parish council, and had received a receipt. Councillors thanked Cllr Chalker for his submission, reiterating that all future Parish Council responses should involve at least two councillors. The clerk to share this response with the resident.

**170) Feedback from Christmas Tree event**

A short discussion was held, with councillors expressing that the event was well-attended and seem well-received.

**171) Project specification for the steps behind Woodhurst close (GC)**

The clerk shared a document with several options. After a discussion it was agreed to request 3 quotes for a flight of 11 steps and one additional corner step, in both slab and brick and non-slip metal plates for cost comparison. Cllr Burley proposed this, it was seconded by Cllr Wilson and all councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved for the clerk to seek three quotes for the work based on that specification.*

At this point Cllr Chalker informed the councillors that if they were to continue the meeting, they would have to suspend standing orders from this point on as the meeting duration had passed 2 hours. Cllrs agreed.

**172) Lower Thames Crossing – update (MB)**

Cllr Burley explained that the statement of common ground document between CPC and the Lower Thames Crossing had been completed in time for the next deadline, with a movement from CPC on 2 points, demonstrating fair negotiations. The consultation process is now over but due to the negotiation, CPC will be consulted in any further consultations. The clerk will be informed of any next steps in due course.

**173) Outgoing clerk thank you gesture progress (TT)**

Cllr Chalker had opened the meeting with the presentation of a gift and collective thank you to the outgoing Clerk for all of his hard work over the last 18 months.

**174) Formal introduction of new clerk**

The new clerk, Natalie Jackson, was welcomed by all councillors.

**175) Consideration of Rialtus Training Course for new clerk**

Cllr Nightingale proposed that the new clerk have this course approved and Cllr Wilson seconded this. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to book this training for the clerk.*

**176) Pavilion Re-Development**

It was proposed by Cllr Thorley that she would reconvene the working group to make proposals based on the outcomes of the resident survey. This was seconded by Cllr Jensen. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved that Cllr Thorley would reconvene the Pavilion working group.*

**177) Courts Re-Development**

It was proposed by Cllr Jenson that she would get in touch with Cuxton 91 football team to discuss possible surfaces. This was seconded by Cllr Chalker. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved that Cllr Jenson would make some enquiries about surfacing.*

**178) Purchase of a leaf blower (SW)**

It was proposed by Cllr Chalker to defer this matter back to Land Management. This was seconded by Cllr Vye. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to defer this matter back to the Land Management Committee.*

**179) Request from resident for a memorial bench (MN)**

After a discussion where councillors expressed several concerns including setting a precedent, vandalism, insurance and maintenance it was agreed that this could not be accommodated within the recreation ground, but that this matter would be deferred to the next Land Management meeting for discussion of alternative proposals. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to defer this matter back to the Land Management Committee.*

**180) Six Acre Woods: 5-year plan – now available on our website**

**181) 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 – Cllr Nightingale proposed that the clerk should assume the previous clerk's responsibilities as liaison for The Academy of Cuxton Schools. This was seconded by Cllr Chalker.
- d. Police Liaison – Cllr Wilson confirmed that she had attended a virtual meeting that week and raised concerns about motorbikes in the reserve as well as chasing up the matters of 'Shared space' signage for Lower Bush end of Bush Road.
- e. Climate Literacy Training – Written report shared by Cllr Nightingale

**182) Correspondence**

None

**183) Information Exchange**

Cllr Nightingale asked the clerk to send a card to Roxanna to wish her a happy retirement and thank her for all her help over the years.

**184) Members Future Agenda Items**

- Recommendations from Climate Training (MN)
- Improvements to the pavilion (TT)
- Provision of a cableway in the Recreation Ground – (JP)
- Meeting with Port Medway Marina reps – Feb 2024
- Registering community interest asset - Nov 2024

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.32pm**

Next meeting 18th January 2024, 7pm at Cuxton Library

**Signed**

**Ged Chalker**

**Chairman**

**On the 15<sup>th</sup>**

**day of**

**February**

**2024**