



HERNHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Hernhill Village Hall on Wednesday 25th October 2023 from 7:30pm to 9:00pm.

Present:

Cllr. B. Heller (Chair), Cllr K. Wakes Cllr P. Smith Cllr. B. Chipperton.
Cllr A. Gould (SBC),

Also Present: Mrs R. Parr (Clerk), and 4 members of the public

109. APOLOGIES

Cllr D. Figgis Cllr. E Bannock Cllr R. Lehmann (SBC & KCC)

110. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr Heller declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of item 115 on the editor of the Hernhill News given it concerns her husband.

111. MINUTES

- A. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 27th September 2023 (92-108) having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

112. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A. PC Gary Morris attended the meeting with a quarterly update. There was little by way of activity other than one domestic crime. A Councillor mentioned an issue of fly tipping at Butler's Hill. Another Councillor raised concerns in relation to press activity in High Street in relation to an ongoing court case. **Action:** PC Gary Morris would investigate accordingly.
- B. A member of the public spoke to the Council with regards to the planning application on the agenda, raising their concerns in relation to the application in response to BREEAM requirements.

113. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- A. General update on open evening - Cllr Wakes provided an update. A successful evening. Around 26 parishioners attended. 1 member of the public offered their services for the project.
- B. Ratification of printing costs of questionnaires under Clerks delegated powers. - Printing costs were £45 for which the Clerk had approved and were subsequently ratified by the council. The questionnaire is now ready for inclusion in the November Hernhill News. Collection boxes would be at all the parish public houses as well as

- by post to the Clerk. **Action:** The Clerk is to print off labels.
- C. Approval for prize hamper and costs - The council discussed and unanimously agreed to providing a budget of £40 towards a prize hamper approaching local producers.
- D. Next meeting details - Next meeting is for the 22nd November at the Red Lion.

114. KCC HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- A. KCC had provided 2 options with regards to the signage at Fostall. The council discussed and voted to choose option 1 as this was cheaper and meant minimal impact to the existing flower trough as well as retaining the existing sign with the Kent Logo and twinning details.
- B. KCC provided final invoice details for the signage. The Clerk prior to the meeting had spoken with KCC Councillor Rich Lehmann who previously put £1500 aside for the design cost, it transpires that only £1,068 was used for the design fee which left £432 towards the signage, which is the amount mentioned below. Cllr Gould has offered a £200 SBC grant. KCC have since managed to reduce costs further from £6929.67 quoted last month to a revised amount of £5998.41. Cllr Lehmann then offered in total a KCC grant of £698.41. Taking into account the grants mentioned above, this means the final invoice from KCC will be £5,300 reducing the cost to the Council to £5,100 once the SBC grant is received. The Clerk explained that the precept in the 2022/2023 FY included £4k set aside for the project and a further £3k set aside in FY 2023/2024. Therefore there was sufficient reserves and monies to cover the expenditure. The Council discussed and unanimously approved the expenditure to KCC. The Council thanked Cllr Gould and Cllr Lehmann for their support. Action: The Clerk is to complete the SBC grant request form and inform KCC of approval to option one and the final invoice amount. The council agreed that any spare monies from the reserves being £1.9k could go forward towards the new HIP.

115. EDITOR REQUIRED FOR THE HERNHILL NEWS

Cllr Heller left the room. The Clerk had only received one response to the advert for a volunteer replacement editor from Mr Heller and Mr Wood, both who are currently involved in the printing of the newsletter. Mr Heller had suggested considering changes to the current format through more local contributions and adjusting the balance of articles accordingly. Mr Heller had also suggested that the advantage in having two people involved meant coverage for each other. The council discussed and unanimously decided to appoint Mr Heller and Mr Wood to the position of joint editors starting with the February edition. The council also agreed for Mr Heller to research and consider appropriate software requirements going forward.

Cllr Heller returned to the room.

116. PLANNING

Planning Applications-

- 1) 23/504441/FULL | Section 73 - Application for variation of condition 29 (constructed to BREEAM 'Very Good' Standard or an equivalent standard) pursuant to 22/501787/FULL - Variation sought: Extension of the building to the south to increase the size of the crematory, Extension to the yard, Alterations to the toilet block to reduce size and to change its location on site,

Introduction of electrical substation and associated access, as well as the introduction of an electrical switch cabinet structure. | Land Adjoining Faversham Showground Staple Street Hernhill Kent ME13 9HY

The Council discussed the application with concerns as to the number of variations being submitted particularly with insufficient information. Also that there are so many outstanding conditions that should have been resolved ahead of operation. The Council voted unanimously to object with the following comment:

“Hernhill Parish Council voted unanimously to object to the application. There is insufficient information associated with the application. In addition, the requirement in relation to BREEAM is at pre-construction and during construction where it is then standard practice to request final confirmation of the BREEAM rating before the building’s first use. The crematorium is now built and operational and a large number of pre-commencement conditions are still required to be discharged including this one. Consequently, it is considered to be in breach of the condition 29 of BREEAM attached to the application 22/501787/FULL. As it is operational, there is no reason why the building cannot be subjected to a final BREEAM rating and as per to Local Plan requirements for a BREEAM good standard or equivalent and that to accept anything less and not enforce condition 29 as it currently stands would send the wrong message to developers.”

- B. Planning Decisions -
1) None

117. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY BILL

The Council had received correspondence asking for Hernhill Parish Council’s support for the Climate and Ecology Bill, which is due for its second reading on 24 November and add the Council’s voice to those organisations calling for joined-up action that provides an adequate, commensurate response to the emergency of our natural world, our parks, villages and towns, our landscapes and wildlife. A draft motion had been included. The Council discussed and unanimously agreed to support. **Action:** The Clerk is to sign the letter (Appendix 1) and forward to the local MP.

118. BIODIVERSITY

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish Councils to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making. This was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021 so public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. The Clerk had prepared a draft policy ahead of the meeting for discussion. The Council voted unanimously to approve the document (Appendix 2) with the inclusion of additional bullet point on encouraging the use of bird/bat boxes through working with the Church, Village Hall and allotments. **Action:** The Clerk is to amend and add to the website.

119. PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Clerk had produced ahead of the meeting a draft publication scheme (Appendix 3). This was based on the model publication scheme that has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. The publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. The Council discussed and voted unanimously to approve and adopt. **Action:** The Clerk is to add to the website.

120. INCREASE IN CLERK'S HOURS

The Clerk had raised ahead of the meeting with Councillor as to the need to increase the Clerk's hours from 5 hours per week to 7 hours per week. This was a result of increasing administration and workload requirements for Clerks that had been building up over a number of years. The Clerk had provided reference to an SLCC paper from 2013 suggesting that minimum hours for a Clerks in a parish of this size and responsibility was at least 7 hours per week and a 2021 paper suggested that it may have increased further since. The Clerk had regularly claimed overtime in the 2023/2024 FY of on average an extra 2 hours per week suggesting that 7 hours a week was appropriate and in line with guidance. The Council discussed and unanimously approved to increase the Clerk's hours to 7 hours per week with immediate effect. **Action:** The Clerk is to revise the Clerk's contract and note for the payroll.

121. SUPPLY OF A CLERK'S LAPTOP

The Clerk had ahead of the meeting provided ICO guidance to the Councillors in respect of providing the Clerk with a Council owned laptop as opposed to the Clerk continuing to use their personal laptop. As well as data implications associated with use of a personal laptop, a council laptop would make it easier to hand over should the Clerk move on. The Council discussed and unanimously approved for the Clerk to purchase a laptop and accompanying software to a total of £600.00. It was also agreed that the Clerk could purchase from reserves in the current financial year in order to take advantage of potential forthcoming sale offers rather than wait until the 2024/2025 FY. **Action:** The Clerk is to investigate and purchase accordingly.

122. 2024/2025 BUDGET

The Clerk had prepared for the council a project March FYE position and for initial discussion the proposed 2024/2025 proposed budget. Budget was £15212.00. This included £3k spend for the long-term project for speeding. Including speeding costs are £18,570.08. Please note that for the speeding project £4k costs are held in reserves from the previous years precept (£4,000.00 FY 2022/2023 - £3,000.00 FY 2023/2024). Excluding the speeding project, precept Budget would have been £12,212.00 against spend of £12,070.08, an estimated difference of just £141.92. Estimated position as at 31st March 2024 is for reserves of **£21,143.24** after the cost (£6500) of the speeding project. Within the reserves figure is included the grant funds of £2,110 earmarked for allotment fencing. This reduces available reserves to **£19,033.24**. Note that the reserves also includes the **£7,500** received in FY 2022/2023 from South East Water which was decided to retain to assist towards the Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk reminded

councillors that it is recommended for parish council to hold at least 1 year's precept as reserves in case of need. Note: Reserves are predicted to be slightly lower at April 2024 at **£21,143.24** than April 2023 which were **£21,696.32**.

The Council discussed the proposed budget with the Clerk to make adjustments for spend associated with the NP, the HIP and inclusion of the Clerk's laptop in the current FY. **Action:** The Clerk is to produce a revised budget for approval at the November Full Council meeting.

123. ALLOTMENT HOLDERS MEMBERSHIP TO HERNHILL GARDENING CLUB

Cllr Wakes stated that the Hernhill Gardening Club was keen to encourage new members, especially those that participate in events. As a result, the gardening club via the Parish Council would like to offer the allotment holders free membership of the Gardening Club. Due to GDPR, the offer would be via the Clerk to existing allotment holders. The Council discussed and unanimously approved. **Action:** The Clerk is to contact each allotment holder with the offer.

124. MATTERS ARISING

- A. Neighbourhood Watch - None.
- B. Oakwell Drainage - Still ongoing, more surveys are expected before a final decision by Southern Water
- C. Crematorium SBC Planning complaint – The Council noted that additional submissions by the applicant in respect of condition 14 was still awaited. Condition 15 is reliant on the discharge of Condition 14. Condition 16 – The developer is only required to act if contamination is found during construction. Condition 17 – The drainage work is unauthorised, and the question of enforcement action is now fully dependent on the outcome of the resubmission of Condition 14. Condition 29 - We have now received a s73 application for variation of this condition . our ref: 23/504441/FULL and you will be informed when it has been validated and the documents will be made available on the planning website. In addition, due to the use of a horse drawn hearse, a further potential breach of condition 13 of the planning permission 20/503666/FULL appears to have occurred as this is forbidden unless by prior written agreement:

'The development hereby permitted shall not be used by animal-drawn carriages or similar conveyances, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority (who shall consult Highways England and Kent County Highways).'

SBC Enforcement had responded that they will not be opening a planning enforcement investigation. SBC have not previously received any reports of this condition being breached and this appears to be an isolated incident. SBC have contacted the Crematorium to remind them of the condition and the need to follow all conditions but as an isolated incident it is not expedient to open a Planning Enforcement case file. If there is evidence of further breaches, then the decision to not open a case at this time will be reviewed.

125. COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

- A. Cllr Gould commented that the tip consultation may occur prior to Christmas.
- B. Cllr Gould in partnership with Cllr Lehman would like to explore the possibility of making Dawes Road a 'Quiet Lane'. Quiet Lanes must be rural in character, carry less than 1,000 vehicles per day and the 85th percentile traffic speed should be less than 35mph. Narrow, single-track roads are the most suitable to be designated as Quiet Lanes. This is something for consideration in the new HIP if there is community support. Such a designation could allow the speed limit on the road to drop from 60 mph to 30 mph to encourage the use of the road by pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders using quiet lanes. **Action:** The Councillors responsible for the consideration of the new HIP are to include as well as inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

126. FINANCE

- A. The October Bank reconciliation was not presented due to the late arrival of the bank statements. Action: It was agreed that once received the Clerk would circulate and seek approval under S1010 delegated authority.
- B. October's 2023 cheques for payment were approved and signed.

Chq-1734 Countrywide Grounds Maintenance (Mowing October)	£152.66
Chq-Advice Only S/O R Parr (Salary & Expenses)	£322.25
Chq-1735 Hughes & Son (September Church Cutting)	£130.00
Chq-1736 R Parr (8 hours overtime net of tax)	£107.40
Chq-1737 HMRC (R Parr - Tax)	£4.20
Chq-1738 Village Hall (September Hall Hire)	£17.00
Chq-1739 SBC (Election Expenses)	£124.60
Chq-1740 Rebecca Parr (Expenses Abbey Print NP Questionnaire)	£45.00
Chq-1741 Royal British Legion (Donation)	£50.00
Chq-1742 R Parr (Stamps)	£20.00
Chq-1743 KALC (Dynamic Councillor course fees (Cllr Wakes & Waters))	£144.00
	£1,117.11

- C. Online Banking Update - The Clerk advised that the account had been opened and that the accompanying online banking details were awaited.

127. CORRESPONDENCE

A. Kemsdale Raod Juction

The Clerk had received correspondence from a concerned parishioner concerning verge/driveway impact by the junction. The Clerk with KCC had ascertained this was a private verge and the responsibility of the owner. KCC had also provide guidance with the homeowner as to what action could be taken to improve the situation.

- B. A New Day - The Clerk had received correspondence concerning an incident at the A New Day festival in the summer that the individual concerned mentioned that were involved with the council. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to identify the individual concerned and the description does not match any of the c councillors. The Council noted the issue and agreed to inform the festival organisers if anything

came to light.

128. ADMINISTRATION

The Clerk requested clarification of attendance regarding KALC Neighbourhood Planning training to be held online in November. Cllrs Wakes and Waters were to attend.

129. CHAIRMAN & CLERK'S SUNDRY REPORTS

Cllr Heller will represent the Council at the Remembrance Service. **Action:** The Clerk will provide the wreath as soon as it has been received to Cllr Heller along with the list of names on the War Memorial.

130. ITEMS TO BE PLACED ON NOVEMBER'S FULL MEETING AGENDA

- A. Neighbourhood Plan
- B. HIP
- C. Final Budget Approval

There being no further business, the Chair declared the Meeting closed.

CHAIR