

# WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON 5TH MAY 2021, 7.30 PM  
VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL

**Present:** Mrs T Dean  
Ms G Barkham  
Mrs L Javens  
Ms S Margetts  
Ms C Medhurst  
Mrs Y Smyth  
Ms M Stacpoole  
Mr N Stapleton  
Mr P Stevens  
Mr D Thompson

**Also Present:** Resident of West Malling

Minute		Action by	Action taken	Response
21/252	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> were received from, Mr Bullard & Borough Councillor O'Toole			
21/253	<b>ELECTIONS &amp; APPOINTMENTS</b>			
253.1	<b>Election of Chairman</b> Mr Stevens proposed that Mrs Dean continue to serve as Chairman; this was seconded by Mrs Smyth and agreed unanimously.  There being no other nominations, Mrs Dean was re-elected and will sign her Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the next Full Council meeting in the presence of the Clerk.			
253.2	<b>Election of vice-Chairman</b> Mrs Smyth proposed that Mr Stevens serve as vice-Chairman; this was seconded by Ms Stacpoole and agreed unanimously.  There being no other nominations Mr Stevens was duly elected.			
253.3	<b>Tree Wardens</b> Members were pleased to confirm the re-appointment of Mr Cosier and Ms Margetts as WMPC's Tree Wardens and wished to thank them for all their efforts.			
21/254	<b>APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES</b>			
254.1	<b>WM Village Hall Management Committee</b> – it was agreed that Mrs Javens would continue in the role as the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Management Committee.			
254.2	<b>Kent Association of Local Councils</b> – it was agreed that attendance at the local T&M meetings would be on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis.			

254.3	<b>Parish Partnership Panel</b> – it was agreed that the agenda would be circulated to all members, but it was noted that Mr Stapleton will be in attendance as a Borough Councillor and would be able to report back to WMPC members.			
254.4	<b>Parking Liaison Group</b> – this group has now been disbanded			
254.5	<b>Blaise Farm Liaison Group</b> – it was agreed that Ms Barkham would attend on behalf of WMPC			
254.6	<b>Document Review Group</b> Mr Stevens and Clerk. Ms Margetts and Ms Stacpoole to assist with environmental policies.			
21/255	<b><u>MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES</u></b>			
	It was agreed that the committee structure remain as it presently stands.			
255.1	<b>Amenities Committee</b> Ms Barkham; Mrs Dean ( <i>ex officio</i> ); Mrs Javens; Ms Margetts; Mrs Smyth; Ms Stacpoole; Mr Peter Stevens.			
255.2	<b>Planning Committee</b> Ms Barkham; Mr Bullard; Mrs Trudy Dean ( <i>ex officio</i> ); Ms Margetts; Ms Medhurst; Mrs Smyth; Ms Stacpoole; Mr Thompson.			
255.3	<b>Highways, Transportation &amp; Streetlighting Committee</b> Ms Gwyneth Barkham; Mr Keith Bullard; Mrs Trudy Dean ( <i>ex officio</i> ); Ms Margetts; Mr Nick Stapleton; Mr David Thompson.			
255.4	<b>Finance &amp; General Purposes</b> Mrs Dean; Mr Stevens; Mr Thompson; Mr Stapleton and Ms Medhurst			
21/256	<b><u>ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN</u></b> It was agreed that committee Chairmen be elected at committee meetings.			
21/257	<b><u>ACCOUNTS</u></b> The end of year 20/21 financial statement was approved – see attached			
	<b><u>FULL COUNCIL</u></b>			
21/258	<b><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b> were received from Mr Bullard & Borough Councillor O'Toole			
21/259	<b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></b> – none other than those routinely declared			
21/260	<b><u>MINUTES</u></b> - following an amendment at 209.2 which should read 'Rev'd Green', the minutes of the meeting held on 12 <sup>th</sup> April were approved and are to be signed at a later date.	TD	✓	
21/261	<b><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></b> from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda - none			
21/262	<b><u>CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</u></b> Mrs Dean reported that construction vehicles have been seen on the Forty Acres site; it was agreed that these vehicles were probably connected to the laying of communications.			
21/263	<b><u>QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</u></b> - none			
21/264	<b><u>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</u></b> - none			

<b>21/265</b>	<b><u>POLICING MATTERS</u></b>			
	<b>Policing report</b> – April police report had been previously circulated. It was noted that additional incidents had been reported on social media, in particular a large number of shed break-ins.			
<b>21/266</b>	<b><u>LOCAL PLAN</u></b>			
	Mrs Dean reported that Sevenoaks District Council had been unsuccessful in their Local Plan challenge which had centred around duty to co-operate.			
<b>21/267</b>	<b><u>ROTARY HOUSE</u></b>			
<b>267.1</b>	It was agreed that the Council appoint Gullands Solicitors for possible negotiations with KCC. The estimate fee of £2000 was noted.			
<b>267.2</b>	Wording of the briefing instruction was agreed.  Clerk to draft and submit to Gullands.	<b>Clerk</b>	✓	
<b>21/268</b>	<b><u>WEST MALLING GROUP PRACTICE</u></b>			
	Mrs Dean reported that there had been a noticeable increase in the number of complaints from residents who are unable to get through to the surgery or make appointments. It was noted that the surgery is receiving a vastly increased number of calls due to people asking questions about the vaccination.  Residents have also raised concerns about the future of the Hollies which has been highlighted by the recent planning application for the site; this application includes the renovation of The Hollies into dwellings. The planning statement refers to medical services being run from The Hollies for a maximum of 5 years following the closure of the main surgery.  It was agreed that a Freedom of Information request be served on the CCG so as to ascertain on what basis / information the closure of the main surgery and The Hollies was allowed to happen. Ms Medhurst to draft.  It was further agreed that a meeting be arranged with the partners at the surgery and that Tom Tugendhat MP be invited to attend.	<b>CM</b>		
<b>21/269</b>	<b><u>HIGH STREET WELCOME BACK FUND</u></b>			
	T&MBC have requested the views of parish councils as to how the Welcome Back Fund could be spent within their parishes. Following discussion, it was agreed that the following suggestions be forwarded to T&MBC, the Clerk having spoken to the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce about support for road closures / street events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That T&amp;MBC facilitate the provision of public toilets, be it that these may be temporary toilets (supported by the Chamber of Commerce)</li> <li>• Financing for a scheme of road closures for street events which would be shop / business / community events (supported by the Chamber of Commerce)</li> <li>• Bike racks</li> <li>• Additional planter(s) in the High Street</li> </ul> The Clerk also forwarded to T&MBC suggestions put forward by the Chamber of Commerce.			
<b>21/270</b>	<b><u>ALLOTMENT RISK ASSESSMENT</u></b>			
	Recommendation from the Amenities Committee to adopt the draft risk assessment – agreed.			
<b>21/271</b>	<b><u>FINANCIAL MATTERS</u></b>			
<b>271.1</b>	<b>Accounts for payment</b> - totalling £5,503.37 were approved - see attached.			

271.2	<b>Financial Statement</b> – bank reconciliation as of 30 <sup>th</sup> April was received – see attached			
21/272	<b><u>MATTERS FOR REPORT</u></b>			
272.1	<b>Planning Committee</b> – receipt was noted, for information of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 15th April 2021.  [21/248] – the Clerk confirmed that she was awaiting a response from T&MBC regarding a potential planning breach on St Leonards Street.			
272.2	<b>Amenities Committee</b> – receipt was noted, for information of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2021.  There were no questions			
272.3	<b>Malling Action Partnership</b> – no report			
272.4	<b>Rotary House</b> – no report			
272.5	<b>School Governors</b> – no report			
272.6	<b>Malling Society</b> – it was reported that the Malling Society AGM is to be held on 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2021			
272.7	<b>Chamber of Commerce / Christmas Lights Committee</b> – no report			
272.8	<b>Tonbridge &amp; Malling Borough Council</b> – no updates			
272.9	<b>KALC/NALC/ACRK</b> – Receipt was noted of April Chief Executive Bulletin – previously circulated			
12/273	<b><u>MEETING DATES</u></b>  Future meeting dates to be confirmed. It was agreed that there be an F&GP or an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council to discuss preferred options for the future of the Rotary House site.			
21/274	<b><u>REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCILLOR NICK STAPLETON</u></b>  I have written to officers regarding the amount of complaints I've received due to the toilets closing. Unfortunately, they seem pretty resolute in the decision, and I do feel that they are still trying to pass blame to the parish councils. It was also disappointing to see our MP's letter, who also seems to be passing the buck to parish councils.  I've also received a record amount of complaints this month regarding the attitude of the Urbaser crews, with a lot of people having their smaller bins broken and being spoken to in a less than professional manner. This has been reported and I will keep an eye on performance.  Borough meetings will soon resume in person, with committee meetings taking place in the Chamber at the TMBC offices in Kings Hill. Most committees have no more than 20 members, so distancing will take place. Doors and windows will also be left open, and a one way system will be in place. It is hoped that the meetings could still be streamed for the public to view. Officers are still trying to find a suitable location for a Full Council meeting, as 54 councillors would need to be present.  Claire alerted me to issues with the machines in the High St car park - they weren't able to accept cash and shops in the town were noticing trade slowing down. I spoke to the Parking Office at TMBC and hopefully the issue has now been sorted.			
21/275	<b><u>REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR</u></b>  <b>County Councillors Report May 2021.</b>			
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**Waste and Litter.**

Travelling around yesterday, it is only too clear that the lack of a lid for the green boxes, or enough space for cardboard is playing a big part in litter being blown out into the streets whilst awaiting collection. I have suggested boxes should have lids, and cardboard needs to be placed in the recycling bins as before, where for many people there is ample space. TMBC Officers have agreed to investigate both suggestions.

**Local Plan**

We continue to wait for a decision from the Secretary of State on whether he will intervene and overrule the Inspectors who have instructed that the Borough Council must withdraw its Local Plan and begin again. We expect the decision to be held up until after the elections on Thursday. If he refuses to intervene, that decision, as well as Sevenoaks defeat in their Court Challenge on their Local Plan, means the chances of winning any appeal on Forty Acres is very low indeed.

**The New Local Plan.**

Ironically the new Planning guidance encourages residents to list the green spaces in their communities which are valued for recreation by local people. CPRE and the Open Spaces Society are also running campaigns to list these spaces which have been so important for our health and spirits during the Covid lockdowns.

Two other issues we will need to look at in the next Plan are the density of housing proposed. (TMBC proposed a very low density in its rejected Plan), and how much can be done to balance the type of shops in our High Street.

**'Welcome Back' Fund**

The Government has provided TMBC with over £117,000 to 'help boost the look and feel of High Streets' to reverse the effects of Covid closures. Fresh thinking is encouraged such as widening pavements, adapting cycle lanes, promoting a safe local environment for visitors, and appointing professional advisors in communication and digital skills.

The Borough Council has asked for ideas on spending this money...

**Public Toilets**

Arriva buses, the Farmers Market, and a number of residents have written to TMBC protesting about their closure of the West Malling Public Toilets. I am now receiving reports of people urinating in nearby alleys and properties. If you see this PLEASE REPORT IT TO T&MBC (01732 844522 and ask for Environmental Health) as they are responsible for cleaning up the area concerned and sanitising it.

So far none of the shops and businesses have felt able to help by making their toilets available to the public. They say that the Covid hygiene restrictions are limiting the space inside their premises, and they are concerned for the security of staff belongings, and the additional cleaning involved.

It is in my view very regrettable that Tom Tugendhat has chosen not to publish the response we provided to his request for an explanation of our decision, nor has he provided a link to it. He has included an item in his newsletter which suggests that West Malling Parish Council has "savings" of £100,000 which could have been used to keep our toilets open, without first checking the position with the Parish Council. This sum is of course made up of safeguarded amounts for particular projects, and for projects we were unable to pursue this year because of Covid.

Using the same measure, Tonbridge and Malling accounts for March 2021 show they have £62 million total reserves within which 322 million are described as 'usable' ie uncommitted. That's 200 times more than West Malling Parish Council reserves which are at the Local Authority recommended level.

I also felt that it is regrettable that Parish Councillors who are mainly not aligned politically, should be criticised in a political publication to which they have a limited ability to reply. .

I have written to Tom and made these points.

**Potholes...the good news and the bad news.**

The good news is that engineering firm JCB are trialling a new £160,000 "Pothole Pro" machine which they claim cuts, and cleans a pothole in 8 minutes ready for a tar fill at a cost of £30 per square metre which they say is less than half the normal cost. Sounds a useful bit of kit, though, of course, they need to prove the pothole STAYS filled Check out the JCB site for video.

	<p><b>Malling Society AGM May 19<sup>th</sup>.</b>                  The Malling Society AGM is being held via zoom on 19<sup>th</sup> May from 7pm to 7.45pm. if you would like to join in click this link  <a href="https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74513872038?pwd=eIBQeDE0c0VjZFU2dZeFAyZ052QT09">https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74513872038?pwd=eIBQeDE0c0VjZFU2dZeFAyZ052QT09</a></p> <p><b>Catch Up Tuition Scheme fails to reach needy Pupils.</b>                  The National Tutoring Programme was meant to help restore learning lost during the periods of absence from school due to Covid. £350 million was made available for individual and group tutoring. But the National Association of Headteachers say that of 250,000 pupils enrolled on the scheme, but only 110,000 pupils, fewer than half have received any tuition. Coverage is also said to vary greatly across the country. I'll be checking up on the position in our local schools.</p> <p><b>Empty Places in Kent Grammar Schools for Next Year.</b>                  For the first time in many years there are vacancies in some Kent's Grammar Schools for next September. Maidstone Grammar which turned away 60 qualified pupils last year, have 14 vacancies this year. Normally there are many more applications than places.</p> <p>The figures for Pupil Premium children from poorer families, show that only 8.2% were judged selective this year compared to 25% last year. . The new County Council will need to get to grips with what has caused this.</p>			
21/276	<b>CORRESPONDENCE</b> - CPRE Countryside Voices, Spring 2021			
	<p>There being no other business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.21</p> <p><b>Signed</b>.....</p> <p><b>Dated</b>.....</p>			

<b>WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL</b>							
<b>Financial Statement as at 31 March 2021 (End of Year)</b>							
<b>Reconciliation</b>							
Balance b/f from 2019/2020						£	93,046.92
<u>plus</u>							
total receipts 1.04.20-31.03.21						£	145,712.89
<u>less</u>							
total payments 1.04.20 - 31.03.21						£	123,260.50
						<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 115,499.31</b>
Deposit account						£	72,048.47
Current account					£46,054.77		
less unrepresented cheques					£2,603.93		
						£	43,450.84
						<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 115,499.31</b>
<b>Unrepresented Cheques</b>				<b>Date Issued</b>			
2268	Metcalfe Briggs	£1,319.40	01.03.21				
2269	Parkers Fencing	£168.00	01.03.21				
	DD Nest	£135.19					
2277	Four Seasons	£214.18	15.03.21				
2279	Elm Header A/C	£650.16	15.03.21				
2280	T&MBC	<u>£117.00</u>	15.03.21				
		£2,603.93					

## West Malling Parish Council

<b>West Malling Parish Council</b>								
<b><u>Accounts for Payment 5th May 2021</u></b>							<b>cheques to be drawn</b>	
GKW Wrought Iron Ltd (cheque 2284) (deposit for supply & fit of allotment path fencing)							1587.50	£ 1,905.00
							VAT	317.50
C&A Landscapes Ltd (cheque 2285) (mow & strim of Churchyard 9/3/21 - 3 man team)							430.00	£ 516.00
							VAT	86.00
Mr M. Pawley (cheque 2286) (reimbursement for chain saw and safety equipment / clothing)								£290.19
M Stacpoole (cheque 2287) (reimbursement for monies paid into WMPC account in error)								£ 100.00
<b>May Salaries</b>								
Mrs Claire Christmas - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Clerk - net salary for April £1565.96 + reimbursement for fax £1.20)								<b>£1,567.16</b>
Mrs Sarah Howard authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Ass Clerk - net salary for May £369.50 + reimbursement £30.13 for goal hooks)								<b>£399.63</b>
HMRC - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Deductions from salaries - May)								<b>£587.49</b>
Nest - authorisation to pay pension contributions by Direct Debit for May								
Employer's contributions							£	<b>59.10</b>
Employee's contributions							£	<b>78.80</b>
							TOTAL	<b>£ 5,503.37</b>



