

WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 14TH MAY 2018, 7.30PM
AT VILLAGE HALL, NORMAN ROAD, WEST MALLING

Present: Mrs Trudy Dean
Miss G Barkham
Mr Keith Bullard
Mrs Linda Javens
Mr Ben Merchant
Mrs Yvonne Smyth
Mr Nick Stapleton
Mr Peter Stevens

Minute		Action by	Action taken	Response
1.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> were received from Mr Byatt, Ms Stacpoole, Mr Collins and Borough Councillor Sasha Luck			
2.	<u>MINUTES</u> of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 8 th May 2017 were approved and signed.			
3.	<u>MATTERS ARISING</u> from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda - none			
4.	<u>REPORTS</u> It was agreed that the following reports be taken as read:			
4.1	<p>WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL REPORT OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7 May 2018</p> <p><u>Allotments</u> The allotments continue to be well used, and the move to letting only old half-plots to new tenants is improving the quality of the cultivation being undertaken. Some issues remain and a number of tenants gave up their plots at the November renewal but most have now been re-let. A few tenants continue to undertake the minimum required to meet the terms of their leases and it would be much preferred if all tenants met the spirit rather than the letter of the tenancy agreement and the management plan.</p> <p><u>Churchyard</u> The long-term tree management plan nears completion with the final phases of work now being completed. The committee is working with the Parochial Church Council to undertake renovation works to the war memorial ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Armistice later this year. A fundraising campaign has been initiated by Rev Green and grants have been applied for. The work consists of not only remedial work to the stonework of the monument, but restoration of the bronze plaques and repainting of the ironwork.</p> <p><u>Village Hall & Playing Fields</u> The football pitch remains in high demand, although we have been very keen to ensure that it is not damaged through over-use. The Village Hall goes from strength-to-strength, based significantly on the hard work of one or two individuals. Special thanks should be given to the Management Committee for all their hard</p>			

	<p>work. A plan to replace the fencing at the south end bordering the public footpath is progressing with the first phase of works due in the next few months.</p> <p><u>Land West of Age Concern</u> The new lime tree is now in place and it is pleasing to note that this is showing signs of growth. The area generally has been tidied up.</p> <p><u>Ball Park</u> A comprehensive safety audit and talks with other local stakeholders (the school, Rotary House, the Cricket Club, Kent Police and others) has sadly stalled. It is hoped to see much better progress in the next twelve months.</p> <p>Peter Stevens</p>				
<p>4.2</p>	<p>APM Highways Report</p> <p>The Highways committee went through some changes over the last year with the stepping down of Stephen Harriot as the Chairman. Steve managed to make some real progress in a number of areas and should be most thanked for the effort he put into bringing the streetlighting back to a good standard. I have broken down the key areas that we have focused on over the last year:</p> <p>Streetlighting Following on from the great works which Steve put in with regards to Streetlighting, we were able to complete all but a small part of the Phase 3 of the refurbishment works. This was largely held up by the delay in materials from the contractors, however we are now in a really positive position for the future. We were also able to complete an independent Structural survey of all of our streetlights which has highlighted potential areas for us to focus on in the future and allow us to lay out a budget for the next 3 years of repairs. Which is something that we haven't been able to do for a number of years.</p> <p>Speedwatch There was a strong desire within the community to establish a Speedwatch group within West Malling. We were able secure funding to buy some Speedwatch equipment, which unfortunately took a number of months to arrive. Whilst waiting for the equipment to arrive we arranged a joint hands-on training session between West Malling and East Malling which Alan Watson, Community Speedwatch manager for Kent Police led. We were able to get several people trained and recently held our first Speedwatch session on Town hill. We received some real positive support from the local community and are planning a recruitment drive and are planning future sessions in the next few months.</p> <p>Consultations and Committee issues We received the proposed car parking charges from T&MBC and responded on behalf of the Parish council opposing the increases in the charges, unfortunately these were approved despite our opposition. We have been dealing with ongoing issues with Private hire driver conduct and cars parking in the bus stop, these issues are ongoing, and we will continue to monitor them and deal with them as best we can. We received and responded to the South Eastern Rail Franchise consultation and TMBC Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2018 - 2023 Consultation.</p> <p>Conclusion The Highways committee has had a really positive year despite the departure of Steve, managing to bring the maintenance of streetlighting under control, starting the Speedwatch group and we have brought in a number of new councillors into the committee who bring their own insights and skill sets to the group.</p>				

4.3	<p>West Malling Parish Council Planning Committee - Chairman's Report May 2018</p> <p>I chaired my first meeting of the WMPC Planning Committee in October 2017, taking over from Richard Selkirk. I'd like to thank Richard for his dedication, enthusiasm and sheer persistence in the role. I'd also like to thank Steve Harriott, who has now stood down from the PC and was a valuable member of the Planning Committee, bringing much-needed experience and expertise, particularly in housing matters.</p> <p>The current Committee (Keith Bullard, Yvonne Smyth, Ben Merchant and more recently Min Stacpoole) has done an excellent job, scrutinising in excess of over 100 planning applications in the last twelve months. In our work we have been well supported by our Parish Clerk, Claire Christmas.</p> <p>The Committee has dealt with a number of potentially contentious proposals, including the redevelopment of the Reshape House site and a "retirement village" off London Road, as well as those relating to the many licensed premises in the town. We try to strike a balance between protecting the built and natural environment of West Malling and ensuring that residents and businesses can pursue their interests.</p> <p>Much of the centre of West Malling is designated as a Conservation Area and we have a large number of Listed buildings. The Committee is concerned that Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council no longer has a dedicated Conservation Officer and relies on "buying-in" this service from another local authority.</p> <p>We will be monitoring the frequency and quality of advice given to TMBC planning officers to ensure sensitive applications receive the careful scrutiny needed if we are to protect our heritage.</p> <p>Our two Tree Wardens, Sara Margetts and Peter Cosier, have done an excellent job reviewing applications relating to trees, hedges and other natural features.</p> <p>The Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan process continues to occupy the Committee and indeed the Parish Council. We made a major submission as part of the "Regulation 18" consultation and we are in regular dialogue with TMBC as the process continues and the background shifts with changing national policy.</p> <p>We have attempted to build a good relationship with TMBC planners, who are, after all, often the decision makers under delegated authority. I would like to thank Ian Bailey and the planning officers at Kings Hill for their cooperation, particularly when we seek more information or clarifications. I'd also like to thank Remy Laporte at KCC Highways who has been especially responsive.</p> <p>WMPC has registered a Neighbourhood Plan area and we are exploring the feasibility of and different approaches to making a Neighbourhood Plan before committing resources.</p> <p>Members of the Committee have helped to compile responses to several national and county consultations over the past year, including on housing numbers (<i>Planning for the right homes in the right places</i>, DCLG).</p> <p>The Committee had two guest Speakers during the year, on the important issues of housing and neighbourhood planning: Tessa O'Sullivan, Rural Housing Enabler from Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) and Community Planner Jim Boot.</p> <p>Richard Byatt 2nd May 2018</p>				
4.4	<p>Macey's Meadow Report – Annual Parish Meeting 2018</p> <p>"Macey's Meadow is part of the Kent Community Orchards Project, which receives funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Project is due to finish later this year but it is intended to continue to build on the foundations set down over the past four years.</p>				

	<p>The main two events during the last year were the Applefest in September and the recent Blossom Picnic in April. The Applefest has become established as a very popular family event. Apples can be picked from the Orchard for juicing but there is also the option for visitors to bring along their own supply of apples. Both events were blessed with good weather, the blossom arriving just in time for the April picnic.</p> <p>Reptile mats have been distributed around the site and there was an organised reptile walk in July to check on whether any reptiles had been attracted. Unfortunately, nothing was spotted on that evening but subsequently, monitoring has revealed quite a number of slow worms - no snakes to date!</p> <p>Fifteen bird boxes have been erected around the Meadow and also several Little Owl Boxes. A student from Kent University is undertaking a project on Little Owls and the Meadow is one of the locations chosen because Little Owls have been spotted there.</p> <p>A new bee-keeper has recently set up some hives in the Meadow and he gave a very interesting presentation on bee-keeping at the Blossom Picnic.</p> <p>Macey`s Meadow is maintained by a small and dedicated group of volunteers who meet up every other Saturday morning. Extra help would be welcomed and indeed, will be needed, if the area is to be kept in good order and safeguarded for the future. Tasks vary over the year but include hedge planting and cutting, apple and cobnut tree pruning, grass mowing and fence repairs.</p> <p>A third container has recently been installed on the site and this will house hay-baling equipment for use in the two large fields. It is planned to gather crops of hay from these fields but it is likely to take time to achieve the quality desired. Controlling the growth of nettles is a particular problem.</p> <p>An attractive logo has been chosen for the Meadow following a competition and it is proposed to explore ways in which it can best be used to promote the area more widely. There are challenging times ahead."</p> <p>Malcolm Doyle, Chairman, Macey`s Meadow Advisory Committee</p>			
<p>4.5</p>	<p><u>MALLING ACTION PARTNERSHIP</u></p> <p>There was no report</p>			
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</u></p> <p>Mrs Dean thanked members for their hard work throughout the year.</p>			
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS</u> – None</p>			
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 7.45</p> <p>Signed.....</p> <p>Date.....</p>			