

WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON 8 MARCH 2016, 7.30PM
AT VILLAGE HALL, NORMAN ROAD, WEST MALLING

Present: Mrs T Dean (Chairman)
Mr J Galloway
Ms H Marlor
Mr R Selkirk
Mr P Stevens

Minute		Action by	Action taken	Response
1.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> were received from Mr Bullard, Mr Harriott, Mrs Javens, Mrs Lane and Mrs Smyth.			
2.	<u>MINUTES</u> of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 May 2015 were approved and signed. Mr Galloway commented that he considered it regrettable that no T&MBC officer had been able to attend.			
3.	<u>INTRODUCTION</u> Mrs Dean reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County & Borough Councils all "strapped for cash" ! T&MBC currently receives £9,000 from T&MBC under the Section 136 allocation and this was due to be phased out. This funding covered: Playing Field, Churchyard; Streetlighting 			
4.	<u>CAR PARKING CHARGES</u> Mrs Dean reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WMPC had been working with T&MBC re residents' parking; this dialogue had started 8-10 years ago and was scheduled for review after a year but this had not taken place T&MBC works with the Parking Steering Group (latterly called the Parking Liaison Meeting) WMPC had NEVER been asked to look at alternatives to parking charges – NOT raised at November meeting WMPC had been notified only on 8 January concerning the proposed introduction of charges Mrs Dean reminded the meeting that a period of three clear working days was required in order to arrange an extraordinary meeting Mr Selkirk raised an online petition and was able to report to T&MBC that in excess of 2,000 signatures had been achieved to date Mrs Dean explained that she personally was unable to answer all questions as some of these would have to be answered by T&MBC Of T&MBC members the majority approved the introduction of parking charges 			
	<u>Timetable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T&MBC Cabinet meeting on 22 March 2016 would take the final decision WMPC members considered that the decision had been rushed WMPC had not been afforded the time to assess the proposal and possibly suggest an alternative WMPC had requested a six-month delay but this had not been allowed 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members felt that nobody knew what the demand for car parking was Charging would not increase the provision of spaces Procedurally there was a rush to an ill-conceived decision T&MBC had said that motorists were deliberately inputting incorrect registration numbers T&MBC had claimed that the appeal tribunal was not supporting T&MBC – in one instance it had been a genuine mistake but in other cases T&MBC had been criticised for bringing the case 				
	<p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T&MBC's three-week consultation consisted of a site notice in the car park and a notice in the press 24 objections had been received by the deadline of 28 February 2016 It was noted that users consistently came from WM (25%); Kings Hill, Leybourne, Larkfield, East Malling (50%); elsewhere (25%) Mrs Dean had asked T&MBC to contact surrounding parishes for their views but T&MBC had declined Mrs Dean commented that T&MBC complied with the letter of the law but not the spirit ! Some respondents to the online petition (set up by Mr Selkirk) had commented "we will go elsewhere to shop" Drivers will be expected to cruise round looking for a spare space T&MBC ought to be made aware that WM is "special" with its wealth of mediaeval, Listed properties many with no onsite parking. 				
	<p>Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WMPC had offered £15,000 funding towards enforcement but this had been turned down by T&MBC Enforcement had improved since it had been based at Kings Hill WMPC had appointed a research worker to carry out a survey by calling on WM businesses This would gather data in order to gauge whether or not another car park was needed This would have to be provided on a commercial basis In response to a question about the cost of ticket machines Mrs Dean reported that the existing machines would be removed Maidstone Borough Council had just started charging in Mote Park – there had been a very comprehensive survey by MBC in a process which took 12 months 				
	<p>Comments from residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs Becky Clifford reported that WM Church experienced problems with parking for e.g. weddings, funerals but not necessarily on Sundays A prospective parent commented that charges might deter prospective parents 				
	<p>Way Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs Dean reported that she was taking legal advice about the procedures which T&MBC had followed Mrs Dean reported that Greg Clark MP (the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) had stated that he hoped that Borough Councils would take into account the impact on footfall of the introduction of any parking charges. 				
5.	<p><u>LOCAL PLAN</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Selkirk referred to the Call for Sites All Borough Councils were required to have a development plan effective up to 2031 Anyone can submit a planning application to T&MBC in respect of anyone's land (not just their own) T&MBC was in the process of going through to assess the sites by Autumn 2016 Need to look at drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan Need to have residents' views Once the first draft comes out, want to engage in debate with the community Mrs Dean suggested that residents write to T&MBC with any local knowledge If it's in the Local Plan then it has 80% chance of achieving planning permission 				

6.	<p><u>REPORTS</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the following reports be taken as read:</p>				
6.1	<p>WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL REPORT OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 8 MARCH 2016</p> <p><u>Allotments</u> The first phase of the long-term maintenance plan was completed during the year, finishing the rabbit-proof fencing and replacing some of the gates. A new management plan for the life of this council has now been agreed, and this will result in more regular reviews of plots to ensure that tenants continue to meet the terms of their lease. It has also enabled the council to review the procedures for letting plots as they become vacant, and it has been agreed that plots will now be offered in half, rather than full plots. Most plots are now being adequately cultivated and there are fewer problems with plots than in recent years, but the committee felt that increasing pressures on everyone's time meant that maintaining a full plot was becoming more difficult for many. A number of tenants gave up their plots at the November renewal but most have now been re-let. An increase in allotment rents took effect in late 2015.</p> <p><u>Churchyard</u> The long-term tree management plan continues with further work in hand. The committee and the Parochial Church Council are also working together to draw up a comprehensive management document to set out their respective responsibilities and to enable future work to be planned and budgeted. The committee is also investigating work to the war memorial in the run-up to the 100th anniversary of the 1918 Armistice.</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 work. The committee has secured funding to enable significant remedial work to be undertaken to the hedges and trees in 2016. Sadly, the Village Hall and Playing Fields have suffered from anti-social behaviour incidents during the year. Although the exact circumstances remain unclear, the committee sadly has to report significant damage having been caused to the tennis court fencing which cost £4,000 to remedy. Repairs to the goal posts was also required as a result of the events, costing £300.</p> <p><u>Land West of Age Concern</u> The council received planning consent to undertake remedial work to the hedges during the year, and it has been identified that work may be required to the tree. The committee is currently in the process of obtaining expert advice and costings.</p> <p><u>Ball Park</u> Sadly, the cricket meadow and ball park have been the focus for many of the anti-social behaviour incidents during the year. Significant damage has been suffered in the ball park, destroying the Borough Council's litter bin, and damaging the two picnic tables. At this stage, the council is not replacing the damaged items until a more comprehensive safety audit has been carried out. The council is in talks with other local stakeholders (the school, Rotary House, the Cricket Club, Kent Police and others) to identify a satisfactory long-term solution. Although we regret not being able to provide good-quality facilities for residents, we hope that finding a long-term solution to recent problems will be more cost-effective than a short-term fix. The anti-social behaviour incidents has also led to increased costs for the council in terms of more regular litter clearance.</p> <p>Peter Stevens 20 February 2016</p>				

<p>6.2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ANNUAL REPORT of WMPC HIGHWAYS; TRANSPORT & LIGHTING COMMITTEE 2015-16</u></p> <p>T&MBC JOINT PARKING STEERING GROUP 11-Nov-16</p> <p>Meeting 11th November covered: Residential Parking Area 8 Formal Consultation Process to be out from approximately 20 January 2016 over a 4 week period. Also Short Stay Tesco's & Ryarsh Business Car parks were briefly discussed!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>T&MBC Announcement On Car Park Charges 12 Jan</i></p> <p>WMPC requested a further meeting on 29-Jan-16 of Joint Steering Group after 12th Jan Announcement by T&MBC of Charges in Visitor Car Park and 300% Rise in Charges for Business Car park</p> <p>WMPC requested a delay in Timeframe proposed by T&MBC that plans be put in place 01-Apr-16 subsequent to full Borough Council Agreement on 22-Mar-16. This plan is still being followed despite fact 4000 Signature Petition against plans was presented on 16-Feb-16 to T&MBC. WMPC has called a Public Meeting to discuss situation for 08-Mar-16 as many issues remain outstanding E.G.:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Actual costs for running Parking Services ➤ Alternatives to T&MBC Proposal ➤ Short Timeframe to fix concerns with Public Services etc. ➤ Clarification as to how Business Car Park will be managed Etc Etc <p>WMPC is anxious to enter into a dialogue with T&MBC on best solution for all before 22-Mar-16 Deadline</p> <p>STREET LIGHTS:-</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>WMPC Inventory</i></p> <p>125 Lights & Lanterns includes 50 Mercury Lights! EEC directive means that there will be no replacements for Mercury Lights once existing stocks run out! A staged replacement plan is required and initial guidance has been received from Kent Highways and a Marwood Lighting Co. Funding for a 2 Year roll out refurbishment plan has now been set aside.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Regular Maintenance Contract :-</i></p> <p>•WMPC Services contract with Simmons was terminated in November 2015 when company ceased trading. WMPC is actively seeking replacement Service Provider, whilst retaining "Streetlights" a local company to undertake any Emergency Repairs.</p> <p>SPEEDS, SPEEDING, SPEEDWATCH</p> <p>The 20mph Speed Limit is on High St from A20 to St Marys Church and into Swan St Junction with Lavenders now being Enforced By Police</p> <p>The Police Speedwatch Group has established 2 positions on Swan St close to Abbey where Speedwatch Camera can be safely deployed. This brings number of "Speedwatch Approved Locations" in West Malling to 8! Safety & Insurance Pre-Requisites a Minimum of 2 Fully Trained Speedwatchers are needed at each session! WMPC will be seeking to recruit more Volunteers to establish a Speedwatch Training and Rota Program</p> <p>OTHER ITEMS – DISCUSSED DOCUMENTED IN MINUTES</p> <p>Gas Mains Upgrade on High St was not fully completed in 2014! Was finally finished within July-August 2015 Schedule!</p> <p>•A20 Congestion – the degree of Traffic Congestion on this road from Hermitage Lane through West Malling is giving cause for concern by all the Parishes on the route!</p>		
<p>6.3</p>	<p>MACEY'S MEADOW</p> <p>The main two events in Macey's Meadow during the past year were the Orchard Day in May and the Applefest in October. Both were well supported and the feedback was very positive. It is planned to repeat both events this year.</p> <p>Other activities included a Dawn Chorus walk in April to identify birds in the Meadow and bat and moth spotting in July. It is hoped to expand the range of such activities this year.</p> <p>The 20 acre site is maintained by a small group of volunteers and more helpers are urgently needed to ensure that the area will continue to be well looked after. A number of tasks are carried out during the year, including grass and hedge-cutting, tree pruning, fence repairing and</p>		

	shredding of tree and hedge debris to maintain paths.			
6.4	<p style="text-align: center;">Planning Committee Report 2015 to 2016</p> <p>Planning Applications It has been a busy year, with many planning applications coming to us for our consideration. The most prominent of these was the recent ‘Church Centre’ planning application. As a Parish Council we wanted to ensure there was a comprehensive local discussion. Working with the Church, we held a public meeting that was very well attended. This allowed residents to see the scheme and discuss any concerns. We followed this up by having a dedicated Planning Committee meeting to just discuss this one application. Again this was very well attended.</p> <p>Planning Enforcement Over the course of the year we have identified a number of planning enforcement issues. We have worked with TMBC to ensure these are investigated quickly. This is important to ensure we maintain the West Malling Conservation Area.</p> <p>Call for Sites This is the first part of the production of the TMBC Local Plan. There were over 250 sites submitted across the Borough with a large number of them in and around West Malling. The review of these is due to be completed by TMBC in Autumn 2016. In the meantime, we as a Parish Council are preparing ourselves to ensure we are trained and able to work effectively to participate in the consultation stage.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new type of community planning. Communities such as West Malling now have the right to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, setting out policies on the development and use of land in the Parish. These plans are optional, but once adopted will form part of the TMBC’s plans. We, as a Parish Council, will be deciding if we are going to do this in the next couple of months.</p> <p>Engagement with local people As we enter a busy period, with the Local Plan, we will be exploring different ways to interact and engage with local residents. The ‘Church Centre’ application showed there is a real interest in how West Malling develops and we are keen to build on this.</p>			
7.	<u>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS</u> – None			
	There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 10.15pm Signed..... Date.....			