WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 7TH MARCH 2022, 7.30 PM AT THE CLOUT, 9 HIGH STREET, WEST MALLING

Present: Mrs Trudy Dean (Chair) Mrs Dean left at 8.22p.m

Mrs Gwyneth Barkham

Mr Keith Mann
Ms Sara Margetts
Ms Camilla Medhurst
Ms Min Stacpoole
Mr Peter Stevens
Mr David Thompson

Also Present: Borough Councillor Paul Boxall

Minute		Action by	Action taken	Response
22/105	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Mrs Javens and Mrs Smyth.			
	Mrs Dean left the meeting at 8.22 and Mr. Stevens chaired the remainder of the meeting.			
22/106	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Mrs Dean declared an interest at minute number 22/115 and 22/118 as she is a KCC Member. Although the Clerk is not part of the decision making process, it was noted that agenda item 22/119 concerned a heritage project which is being devised and implemented by her husband, Matt Christmas.			
22/107	CASUAL VACANCY			
107.1	It was noted that T&MBC had notified the Parish Council that the casual vacancy could be filled by co-option at this meeting. One application had been received from Lorna Miles. Ms Medhurst proposed that Ms Miles be co-opted and this was seconded by Ms Stacpoole and agreed unanimously.			
107.2	Clerk to advise T&MBC.	Clerk	✓	
22/108	MINUTES - the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7 th February were approved and signed.			

22/109	MATTERS ARISING - none		
22/110	CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS		
	Mrs Dean expressed her concern that people with Covid symptoms are still mixing with		
	others in close contact without wearing a face mask.		
	Clerk to display the latest guidelines (as of 22 nd February 2022) on the website.		
	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts/covid-19-people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts	Clerk	✓
	It was agreed that due to the increasing number of Covid cases that the parish meetings will remain at The Clout for at least the month of April. To be reviewed.		
22/111	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - none		
22/112	QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS		
	Ms Medhurst noted that the dog waste bins across the town are constantly full to overflowing. The Clerk confirmed that she regularly reports this issue to T&MBC and that the issue had been ongoing for a while. Borough Councillor Boxall agreed to discuss this further with T&MBC and Ms Margetts will provide him photos of overflowing bins.	SM	✓
	Clerk to send waste services email* to all members to enable them to also report issues to T&MBC directly. *waste.services@tmbc.gov.uk	Clerk	✓
22/113	POLICING MATTERS		
113.1	Police Update – the Police report for February was received.		
113.2	Other Policing Matters - none		
22/114	LOCAL PLAN		
	No update.		
	It was noted that 2 senior officers have left the T&MBC planning team.		
22/115	ROTARY HOUSE		
	It was agreed that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (purchase of land) it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.		
	WMPC is still awaiting a decision as to whether or not their bid has been successful.		
	It was noted that following the damage caused by storm Eunice that the roof has now been made safe. The damage to the back door and the telephone cables has been reported to KCC.		
22/116	CAR PARKING CHARGES REVIEW		
	It was noted that T&MBC is consulting on increasing car parking charges in the short term car park and introducing charges on a Saturday in the long term (Ryarsh Lane) car park. Proposed changes as follows:		
	In the town of West Malling,		
	Group 16, covering High Street car park		
	an increase of 10 pence to 50 pence for parking up to 30 minutes		

- an increase of 30 pence to £1.10 for parking up to 1 hour
- an increase of 20 pence to £1.80 for parking up to 2 hours
- an increase of 20 pence to £2.60 for parking up to 3 hours
- an increase of 20 pence to £3.40 for parking up to 4 hours

Group 10, covering Ryarsh Lane car park

- no change to the 12 month car park season ticket, at £255
- the introduction of a 1 month car park season ticket, at £26
- the introduction of parking charges (managed by phone payment) on Saturdays between 8am and 5:30pm o £1.10 for parking up to 1 hour
- o £1.80 for parking up to 2 hours
- o £2.60 for parking up to 3 hours
- o £3.40 for parking up to 4 hours

The following response was agreed and submitted:

Further to your email of 17th February regarding off street parking charges, West Malling Parish Council would like to make the following comments:

The Parish Council strongly objects to the proposed increase in car park charges and in particular, the introduction of charges in the Ryarsh Lane car park. The increases / introduction of charges will be introduced at a time when the High Street is attempting to recover from Covid 19 and difficult trading conditions; these charges will have a detrimental impact on the High Street.

The introduction of charges in the Ryarsh Lane car park will impact on Saturday shopping with shoppers losing the ability to park in a long stay car park. The Parish Council is surprised that the proposal mirrors the scheme in the short stay car park. The Parish Council does not support the introduction of Saturday charges, but would ask that if charges are to be introduced, that any new charging structure enables shoppers to stay in excess of 4 hours which will allow shoppers to enjoy all of the shops and businesses that West Malling has to offer.

Any monies raised from parking charges should be reinvested back into West Malling, including the provision of traffic enforcement.

22/117 SURPLUS LAND REQUEST FOR LAND AT LEYBOURNE BYPASS ASHTON WAY

In an email received on 16th February, KCC ask if WMPC (and other consultees) object to the above land being declared as surplus. The following response was agreed and submitted:

Surplus Land Request for Land at Leybourne Bypass, Ashton Way, West Malling.

Further to your email dated 16th February, West Malling Parish Council would like to make the following comments:

The site is an important wildlife corridor which should be protected for visual, acoustic and biodiversity reasons. We would ask that consideration be given to TPO's being placed on the significant trees within the corridor.

The Council is also concerned about the risk of unauthorised encampment and land banking – this is a concern to the parishes of both Leybourne and West Malling. If the land were to be declared as surplus, we would ask that the land be protected from possible incursions.

In view of the above, it is the Parish Council's preference that the land not be declared as surplus.

22/118 WEST MALLING PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

In readiness for the T&MBC Overview & Scrutiny Committee which is to be held on 10th

March, WMPC has been asked to comment on whether the Parish would re-consider its decision not to take a transfer of the toilets, in the event that the Committee recommends that the toilets should remain closed. The following response was submitted to T&MBC.

Thank you for your letter to West Malling Parish Council dated 17th February, regarding the future of West Malling Public Toilets asking for my Council's current view.

The Council considered your letter at its full council meeting on Monday 7th March.

My members were pleased that it was agreed at a site meeting with 2 Borough Councillors and Parish Councillors Stapleton and Dean, that the existing site is no longer appropriate. Mrs Dean therefore made £5,000 available from her KCC Member's Fund to reopen the toilets whilst an alternative site and future funding were discussed with the Borough Council. It is disappointing that no further action progress been taken by TMBC in the last five months in this respect. My Council is keen to progress negotiations and urges the Borough Council to engage with us.

The Council members were unanimous in holding to the following views.

The Parish Council believes that

- a. the particular nature of West Malling's economic and civic role as the Borough's largest retail and business centre outside of Tonbridge economically and socially means that it is appropriate for Public Conveniences to be funded from the Borough Council Tax and not by the 1,100 households in the Parish. We have Civic Parades on St George's Day, the Remembrance Day Parade, and national events such as the Jubilees and Royal weddings have been celebrated within the closed High Street. The Winter Festival, Farmers' Market and Charity Markets also take place in the High Street. These events attract between 400 and over 3,000 people each.
- b. closure of the Public Toilets does result in discrimination towards people within the protected characteristics, the elderly, disabled and women in particular. There are no toilets in St Mary's Church and several residents have sadly reported their inability to attend church services as a result. In addition, the personal feedback from Malling residents of several surrounding villages, is attached. These demonstrate that many people have a range of medical conditions including pregnancy, diabetes, bladder and kidney problems, endometriosis, crohns disease, and antibiotic intolerance, which all require more frequent use of toilets. Many residents reported the closure of the toilets therefore meant their shopping, exercise and trips to meet friends were more restricted or ceased and that they became less confident, and more lonely as a result.
- c. for some people the closure presented particular problems because of their daily schedules. School children reported needing the toilets after an hour's journey on the bus coming home from Tonbridge at the end of the day. The owner of a bus company commented that toilets were no longer available for drivers' use during their stand still times, which for several bus routes are commonly in West Malling. The High Street bus layby is a pick up/setting down point early and late during the day. The owner of the Farmers' Market was particularly concerned that stall holders are setting up in the High Street from 7am when no other facilities are available, and hygiene is essential for food producers in particular. Our street cleaner and other outdoor workers were also forced to seek facilities elsewhere which involved long detours during the day.
- d. the reduction in people coming to West Malling resulted in several businesses reporting that their customers numbers had reduced. A number of people said that increased public urination in the street and car parks which they had seen meant they were no longer comfortable in West Malling.

With regard to alternative premises, the only alternative 24/7 toilet is at Parkfoot garage, a 15 minutes' walk away. Manor Park public toilets have limited opening hours and the car park is charged. Discussions through the Chamber of Commerce regarding shops making their facilities available resulted in no offers being made. The point was frequently put that small

	independent shops do not have space to accommodate the general public. Many residents are reluctant to ask for permission to use the toilets, particularly in pubs and betting shops. There are no toilets in the church currently. The Borough Council's assessment of alternative toilets in other premises was incomplete, on its own admission, and incorrectly records that there are toilets at the church.			
	My Councillors do not wish to undo the arrangements made with other Councils on toilet provision and closure. West Malling Parish Council does however believe that for the reasons given above, West Malling's particular needs and limited Council Tax base, justifies levying the charge to all residents of the Borough. We therefore ask for the Borough Council to fulfil the resolution of the Street Scene and Environment Advisory Board of 11th Feb 2019 which states:			
	"If the Parish/Town Council do not accept responsibility for the future operation of the toilets, the Borough Council will work in partnership with the Parish/Town Council to help identify suitable alternative publicly accessible toilets in the near vicinity."			
22/119	WELCOME BACK FUND			
	The Clerk confirmed that works to the planter, village sign and the High Street water pump had been completed at a total cost of £2465.00			
	The Clerk had made extensive enquiries about adding permanent lights to a tree on the village green, but due to the distance between the tree and the power source this was not possible.			
	Benches – the benches on the village green have been repaired by T&MBC.			
	T&MBC have now confirmed that the My Street History heritage project could attract funding from the Welcome Back Fund as the project aims to bring visitors to the town. Members agreed unanimously that this project should benefit from funding.			
	Clerk to process	Clerk	✓	
22/120	SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS			
	With the addition of the wording 'off street' under the Highways paragraph (para 5 1 (a)) the document was agreed.			
	It was agreed that the document be reviewed at planning committee every 6 months.			
	Clerk to note September agenda	Clerk	✓	
22/121	QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE			
	It was agreed that the Parish Council work towards a picnic at Macey's Meadow on Sunday 5 th June.			
	It was agreed that the Clerk speak with the Chamber of Commerce to offer support for any event that they may be organising.			
22/122	ANNUAL PARISH MEETING			
	Members were asked to consider date and topic for special presentation. This meeting is to be held between 1st March and 1st June inclusive.			
	It was agreed that consideration be given to a Welcome Back to the High Street topic with perhaps representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and the My Street History project.			
22/123	TWITCH INN SERVICE CHARGES			

	by Mr Stevens and the Clerk.	1	
	by Wil Stevens and the Clerk.		
	It was agreed that the sum of £548.38 be taken from reserves as there is insufficient money in the current budget.		
22/124	FINANCIAL MATTERS		
124.1	Accounts for payment - totalling £8,979.22 were approved - see attached.		
124.1	Accounts for payment - totalling 20,979.22 were approved - see attached.		
124.2	It was noted that payments of £2665.00 were authorised at the planning meeting held on 22 nd February 2022.		
124.3	Financial Statement – bank reconciliation as at 28 th February 2022 was received – see attached		
22125	MATTERS FOR REPORT		
125.1	Amenities Committee – receipt was noted, of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2022		
	There were no questions.		
125.2	Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Group – Ms Margetts and Ms Stacpoole provided a verbal report of the meeting held on 22nd February. Main points to note: Representatives from Tesco and the Kings Hill & West Malling eco-hub have been invited to attend future meetings. The KALC Carbon footprint calculator has been considered by the group A letter to Parish Council contractors is to be drafted and considered by the Amenities Committee. Mr Mann is making further enquiries with regards to electric charging points within the town. Borough Councillor Boxall reported that T&MBC have suggested that there is a current lack of infrastructure to roll out a charging point scheme within West Malling High Street.		
405.0	Planning Committee receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the receipt held on 200d		
125.3	Planning Committee – receipt was noted, of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 22 nd February 2022 It was confirmed that the Gladman Appeal decision had not yet been made public.		
125.4	Malling Action Partnership – no report		
125.5	School Governors – no report		
125.6	Malling Society – it was noted that the schedule of talks to be held at West Malling Primary School has been published and that there had been 2 face to face meetings but unfortunately these had been poorly attended.		
125.7	Chamber of Commerce / Christmas Lights Committee – no report		
125.8	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council		
	Parish Partnership Panel – it was noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 26 May 2022 and that it will focus on the subject of general policing and anti-social behaviour.		
125.9	KALC/NALC/ACRK/CPRE:		
	KALC: KALC News for January was received.		
22/126	MEETING DATES		
	Amenities – 14 th March at the Clout Climate & Biodiversity Action Group – Monday 21 st March at the Clout, 6.30 Finance & General Purposes Committee – Monday 21 st March at the Clout		

	Planning – Tuesday 22 nd March at the Clout		
	March Full Council – Monday 4 th April 2022		
22/127	REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCILLOR, PAUL BOXALL		
	Council Tax increase –TMBC has agreed a 2.3% increase (Band D property). TMBC's income from council tax from April 2022 is forecast to be £11.7m which is an increase from £11.3m, however, the council's grant funding from central government has been cut. Boundary Commission - ward boundaries are changing, West Malling will be joined with East Malling & Offham. Planning permission was granted to build an Aldi's on Kings Hill. A £4k grant has been secured for the Leybourne church food bank. The bus route consultation was noted.		
22/128	REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR		

County Councillor's Report March 2022

Helping Ukraine

Many people have been asking what they can do to help Ukraine people. People are being magnificently generous. **Be careful though.**

The most direct and effective way to help is to give money to the international funds being created. The Red Cross, Medecins Sans Frontieres and UNICEF are all working in Ukraine. The government has promised to match donations given to the <u>Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal</u> (@DEC appeal) DEC is made up of fifteen charities all expert in delivering aid, so you can be sure your donation will be spent on what is really needed.

BUT A number of private small collections are being held up at Dover because they don't have the proper paperwork which is now necessary because of Brexit. A number of collection points have been set up including Morrisons and the café in Snodland. Several have been overwhelmed by the amount of clothing donated and have had to close, so check before you call to leave items. The Polish government has asked for clothing collection to stop as they cannot cope with the amount already sent.

Lunsford School Roof replacement

At a site meeting with Headteacher Garry Anscombe and Chair of Governors, Jacky Sharpe, I was concerned to hear of problems with the roof replacement. I met with Christine McInnes, KCC Director of Education and KCC apologised that the project had not gone smoothly. There had been a lack of KCC communication with the school. The Covid outbreak had delayed the start of the project, and several problems with contractors and suppliers of mobile classrooms had been experienced. KCC promised that the permanent school building is going to be refurbished and this will result in better insultation and lower energy costs. The move back into the permanent premises will be fully planned with the school, and all systems including IT equipment will be fully operational before the move is made, so that it can be achieved in a "one and done" move. The plan at present is to move at October half term. Any potential OFSTED inspection at this time could be rescheduled to ensure the school rating does not suffer from building works.

Public Toilets

TMBC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee meets on Thursday 10th March to 'consider the position of public toilets in the Borough'. The Committee report records none of the objections previously made to the closure of West Malling toilets and recommends no change to the TMBC policy to close all toilets which Parish Councils decline to accept.

Manor Country Park

The playground will be closed during April and May for an improvement scheme costing £150,000 from Government funding to help children recover from Covid restrictions. The new equipment will include new swings, two climbing frames, seesaw, ability roundabout, sensory features providing texture and sound, and cradle swings. The play area will also be resurfaced with an all weather recycled, rubber 'Wetpour' safety surfacing. Nine of KCC's parks are receiving new equipment, the largest scheme being at Shorne.

Wildflower Verges

KCC has put £300,000 in the budget for an extra cut of highway verges to allow plants, flowers and pollinating insects to flourish. Members of the public can suggest areas where roadside verges could receive special protection. Please let me know if you have any ideas.

Storms Eunice and Franklin.

KCC have been requested to remove the fallen bricks from walls on the top of the bank on New Hythe Lane north of the traffic lights by the Fire Station. This is highway land and in at least one case the wall fell because it had been undermined by the roots of the tree on the embankment. The tree has now been removed. Please report any debris that needs collecting on webapps.kent.gov.uk "Report a Problem"

Changes to Parking Arrangements.

Following informal consultation with residents, the Joint Transportation Committee this Monday has several proposals for approving final formal consultation on Traffic Regulation Orders to change current parking arrangements. Details with maps and consultation responses are on the Borough Council website. The roads affected are as follows:-

Larkfield

Walnut Tree Court

Lunsford Lane near the Lakes entrance

Lunsford Lane Green roughly opposite the one stop shop.

Oak Drive/ Maple Close

Stevenson Way/ Kipling Drive

East Malling

Lavender Road/ Lavender Close and Carnation Crescent

Lavender Road

Upper Mill/Mill Street

West Malling

Churchfields. Local members views are requested following a majority of people opposing the change to residents' parking.

Road Resurfacing

The A228 West Malling and Leybourne bypass is to be resurfaced in two places this spring. The slip road from A20 London Road to the bypass, and the road between junction 4 and the Birling Roundabout will be machine resurfaced.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers dispersal

As a result of large increases in the number of UASC arriving in Kent over the last decade, KCC has been lobbying government for a statutory scheme to disperse asylum seekers across all authorities in the country. KCC has on many occasions exhausted the number of foster parents available in the County to look after these young people...some as young as 11 years old. Voluntary schemes have all failed.

An unaccompanied Asylum Seeker is defined as a person under 18 who is separated from both parents, is not being cared for by an adult who by law has responsibility to do so, and has applied for asylum in the United Kingdom in their own right. Last November, the Government has finally legislated for a mandatory scheme.

All authorities must now look after a number of UASC calculated as being 0.07% of the child population in their area.

Education for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities. (SEND)

The number of parents asking for their children to be assessed for Special Education Health and Care Plans has hugely increased. The Plans set out any special support the children might need in class or individually, and whether they need a place at a Specialist school. Each Plan should be completed within a maximum of 20 weeks, but this is not being achieved anywhere in Kent. In Tonbridge and Malling around 60% of Plans are meeting that target, and in more deprived areas like Thanet the figure is around 25%.

The team of Specialist SEND teachers and advisors is being reorganised to ensure qualifications and standards of support are consistent across the County.

Home to school transport for children with SEND.

KCC has had to apologise for a bungled reorganisation of transport arrangements for children with SEND which resulted in many being unable to attend school after half term. Hastily arranged changes aimed at achieving budget cuts included new drivers, routes and vehicles. Children with SEND find it very distressing to cope with change, particularly in the

drivers they meet every day. Many parents received very little or no information on the changes which prevented them preparing their children. A special meeting is being held this week to explore why the arrangements went so badly wrong. Please let me know if you are aware of parents and children who suffered upset.		
There being no other business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.38		
Signed Dated		

Accounts for Payment 7th March 2022			cheques to be
			drawn
Authorised under Section 137			
Citizens Advice in North & West Kent (cheque 2398)			£ 550.00
(donation - agreed at Full Council on 7/2/22)			2 550.00
donation agreed at 1 an obtained on 172122)			
Kent County Council (Laser) (Single cheque 2399)		7.43	
(Electricty supply period January 21 at 5% VAT)	VAT	0.37	
Kent County Council (Laser)		555.01	£ 666.01
(Electricty supply period December 21 at 20% VAT)	VAT	111.00	
1-100mety - 04ppry - ponou 2000m201 2 m = 2070 17 m			
Day Tree Fellers (cheque 2400)		83.33	£ 100.00
(invoice 2268 - to remove wind blown tree in play area)	VAT	16.67	
Specialist I hydrono Sopieso 144 (single share) 2424)		E07.50	0 045 00
Specialist Hygiene Services Ltd (single cheque 2401) (invoice 42194 - cleaning of King Street public conveniences	VAT	537.50 107.50	
from 26th Nov - 30th Nov & the month of December)	V/31	107.30	
(invoice 42302 - cleaning of King Street public conveniences for January)		460.00	
	VAT	92.00	
(invoice 42422 - cleaning of King Street public conveniences for February)		460.00	£ 552.00
(Invoice 42422 - cleaning of King Street public conveniences for February)	VAT	92.00	
	V/(I	32.00	
Viking (cheque 2402)		23.69	£ 113.43
(invoice 8440099 stationery £28.43 + stamps £85.00 - no VAT)	VAT	4.74	
M. W. M. i. H. W. i. (i. h. h. 0400)			40.50
Malling Memorial Institute (single cheque 2403) (invoice 3/22 - room hire, 7, 14 & 22nd February @£16.50 per session)			£ 49.50
invoice 3/22 - 100m file, 7, 14 & 22nd February @£16.50 per session)			
(invoice 6/22 room hire, 7, 14, 21 & 22nd March @£16.50 per session)			£ 66.00
Zurich Municipal (cheque 2404)			£ 2,157.34
(invoice 512812069 - insurance renewal (including toilet block)			
ELM Header Account (single cheque 2405)			
Twitch Inn service charges 1st May 20 - 30th April 2021			
(invoice 73445 - agreed costs for water (£91.46) and insurance (£175.71)			£ 267.17
(invoice 73444 - agreed costs for electricity)			£ 413.81
Town & Country Planning Association (cheque 2406)		81.00	£ 00.00
(invoice TCPA22/287 annual membership April 22/March 23)	VAT	9.00	
		0.00	
March Salaries			
Mrs Claire Christmas - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments			£1,582.65
(Clerk - net salary for March £1566.16 + reimbursement for fax £1.20,			
sundries £5.09 + stamps £10.20)			
Mrs Sarah Howard authorisation to pay via Faster Payments			£426.92
(Ass Clerk - net salary for March)			
HMRC - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments			£601.69
(Deductions from salaries - March)			
Nest - authorisation to pay pension contributions by Direct Debit for March			
Employer's contributions			£ 59.10
Employee's contributions			£ 78.80
	TOTAL		£ 8,979.22

		WEST	N	IALLIN	G PARIS	H COUN	CIL		
		Fina	ncia	al Stateme	ent as at 28	February 202	22		
Reconcilia	ation_								
Balance b/	f from 2010)/21						£	115,499.31
		,							
<u>olus</u>									
otal receip	ots 1.04.21-	31.03.22						£	145,786.14
ess_									
		4 04 00 00							440,400,55
otai payme	ents 1.04.2	1-31.03.22						£	112,480.55
							Total	£	148,804.90
Deposit ac	count							£	72,055.66
Current acc						£81,669.04			
	less unpre	sented chec	lues	3		£4,919.80			
	•							£	76,749.24
							Total	£	148,804.90
<u>Unpresente</u>	d Cheques				Date Issued				
2351			£	94.80	6.12.21				
		of Commerc	£	2,250.00	7.2.22				
	Karen Mile	es .		£50.00					
	KALC			£60.00					
	G Pursar			£440.00	22.2.22				
	G Pursar			£1,400.00					
2397	G Pursar			£625.00					
				£4,919.80					