

WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER 2023, 7.30 PM
AT WEST MALLING VILLAGE HALL, NORMAN ROAD

Present: Mrs Trudy Dean (Chair)
Ms Gwyneth Barkham
Mrs Camilla Bridgeland
Mr Keith Mann
Ms Sara Margetts
Mr Peter Stevens

Minute		Action by	Action	Response
23/667	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> were received from Ms Izzy Jones; Mrs Lorna Miles; Mrs Yvonne Smyth; Ms Min Stacpoole; Mr David Thompson and Borough Cllr. Tatton			
23/668	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> - none			
23/669	<u>MINUTES</u> - the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6 th November were approved and signed.			
23/670	<u>MATTERS ARISING</u> - none			
23/671	<u>CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</u> Mrs Dean reported that the Christmas window competition was judged on Friday 1 st December and the winners were as follows: Small window – Strand Barbers Large window – Was Down Swan Street			
23/672	<u>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</u> - none			
23/673	<u>QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</u> Ms Margetts reminded members that Macey's Meadow honey was available to purchase.			
23/674	<u>POLICING MATTERS</u>			
674.1	<u>Police Update</u> There was no police report. Members received a verbal update on the ongoing issues with youth anti-social behaviour.			

	<p>It was noted that a police questionnaire had been circulated to some houses / properties within West Malling.</p> <p>Clerk to enquire of PC Whitehead as to how many properties this had been distributed to.</p>	Clerk	√	
674.2	<u>Other Policing Matters</u>			
	<p>Violence against women and girls - Ms Barkham reported that this TMBC consultation had now opened with a response deadline of 7th January.</p> <p>Ms Barkham to draft WMPC response and circulate to members for comment.</p> <p>Violence against women and girls consultation – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (tmbc.gov.uk)</p>	GB		
23/675	<u>LOCAL PLAN</u>			
	No update			
23/676	<u>ROTARY HOUSE</u>			
	<p>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.</p>			
	<p>Community Ownership Fund – it was noted that a decision on the WMPC application is expected by the end of December.</p> <p>It was noted that the site is now being advertised as a wrap-around care nursery facility to be opened in March 2024. There was a general discussion regarding the need for a change of use; the site currently being limited to the provision of community services for the elderly.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Clerk write to the owner of the site to ascertain if he still intends to negotiate with the Council</p> <p>The minutes of the Rotary House working group were received and noted. There was some discussion on how best to progress matters such as an additional survey and further finance applications. It was agreed that further progress be made once the Council has heard from the owner of the site and the outcome of the Community Ownership Fund bid.</p>	Clerk	√	
23/677	<u>WEST MALLING PUBLIC CONVENIENCES</u>			
677.1	The list of works to be undertaken by TMBC prior to transfer were noted. It was agreed to ask TMBC to also clear the roof of ivy and to check / clear the rear gutter.			
677.2	It was noted that Nick Hill Consultancy had undertaken a survey of the site, the report had been circulated to members.			
677.3	It was agreed that progress of the transfer would be delegated to Mrs Dean; Mr Stevens; Mr Mann and Ms Margetts in conjunction with the Clerk and Gullands.			
23/678	<u>TMBC CAR PARKING CONSULTATION</u>			
	<p>It was noted that the TMBC car parking consultation opened on Friday 24th November and will close on Sunday 7th January 2024.</p> <p>It was agreed that the WMPC response be delegated to the Highways Committee.</p> <p>Members agreed that they opposed both the extension of parking charges to Sundays / Bank Holidays including the Ryarsh Lane car park and the introduction of on-street parking charges in the High Street and Swan Street.</p>			

	<p>Link to consultations: Off-street parking consultation 2023 – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (tmbc.gov.uk) On-street parking consultation 2023 – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (tmbc.gov.uk)</p>			
23/679	<u>DONATIONS</u>			
	<p>Recommendation from the meeting of F&GP Committee that the Heart of Kent Hospice receive a donation in the sum of £300.</p> <p>Agreed unanimously</p>			
23/680	<u>KALC COMMUNITY AWARDS SCHEME 2024</u>			
	<p>It was agreed that the Council adopt the 2024 scheme. Nominations to be considered at the January Full Council meeting, (closing date for nominations is Friday 2nd February 2023)</p>			
23/681	<u>WMPC DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25</u>			
681.1	<p>Consideration was given to draft committee budgets; it was noted that additional information was required for both the Highways and Amenities Committees.</p>			
681.2	<p>It was noted that the Council Tax Base figure had not yet been provided by TMBC.</p>			
681.3	<p>It was agreed that the Council would set the budget figure at the January Full Council meeting and that before that date there would be a meeting between Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk to consider committee budgets.</p>			
23/682	<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE</u>			
682.1	<p>Allotments – recommendation that the Council consider and agree the quote for the clearance of Plot 10. The sum of £724.96 to be taken from reserves (full quote is £1,000 with balance being paid from safeguarded sums).</p> <p>This was agreed unanimously</p>			
682.2	<p>Kissing gate repair – recommendation that the Council consider and agree the quote in the sum of £180 plus VAT for repairs to be undertaken to the allotment path kissing gate; sum to be taken from reserves.</p> <p>This was agreed unanimously</p>			
23/683	<u>WMPC DRAFT POLICIES</u>			
683.1	<p>Recommendation from the F&GP Committee that the following draft policies be adopted.</p> <p>Equality & Diversity – agreed and adopted.</p>			
683.2	<p>Dignity at Work – agreed and adopted.</p>			
	<p>9.30pm - at this point in the meeting, Standing Orders were suspended to allow the meeting to continue past 9.30 (this being 2 hours after the meeting had begun).</p>			
23/684	<u>KCC PLAN TREE STRATEGY</u>			
	<p>It was agreed that this be considered further by the Highways Committee.</p>			
23/685	<u>STAFFING MATTERS</u>			
	<p>It was agreed that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (staffing matters) 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.</p>			

685.1	Salaries – receipt was noted of the 2023/24 National Salary Award. Back pay calculations for both Clerk and Assistant Clerk (April 23 to November 23) were noted and agreed. To be taken from reserves.			
685.2	Overtime payment – recommendation from the F&GP Committee that the Clerk be paid 25 hours overtime for the additional work undertaken during the Community Ownership Fund application process. Agreed. To be taken from reserves.			
23/686	<u>OFFICE MATTERS</u>			
	The Clout office lease – recommendation from the F&GP Committee that the amended lease be signed. This was agreed unanimously			
23/687	<u>FINANCIAL MATTERS</u>			
687.1	Accounts for payment - totalling £15,261.18 were approved - see attached.			
687.2	It was noted that payments in the sum of £1,011.32 were authorised at the F&GP meeting on 20 th November.			
687.3	Financial Statement – bank reconciliation as at 30 th November was received – see attached.			
23/688	<u>MATTERS FOR REPORT</u>			
688.1	Amenities Committee – receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 th November. There were no questions.			
688.2	F&GP Committee – receipt was noted of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 20 th November. 23/641 Remembrance Day – on reading the feedback of the 2023 Remembrance Day, members were in agreement that the dismissal of attending groups could take place at the same location as the wreath laying, this would cut down on the number of road closures needed and would be safer for stewards. This is to be discussed further with other organisations involved with the arrangements. Feedback notes to be altered to include the need to arrange a time with Rev. Green to collect the road closure equipment on the Sunday morning so as not to interrupt the church service.			
688.3	Planning Committee – a verbal report was provided of the meeting held on 28 th November. There were no questions however it was noted that Mr Mann hoped to attend a Kings Hill Parish Council planning meeting concerning Neighbourhood Plans and that it was hoped that the Clerk from Sevenoaks Town Council might be able to attend a future planning meeting to discuss their successful Neighbourhood Plan referendum.			
688.4	Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Group – draft notes of the meeting held on 16 th November were received. There were no questions.			
688.5	Macey's Meadow Advisory Group - a verbal report was provided of the meeting held on 23 rd November. There were no questions.			
688.6	Broadwater Action Group – no report			

688.7	Malling Action Partnership – no report			
688.8	School Governors – no report			
688.9	Malling Society – no report			
688.10	Chamber of Commerce / Christmas Lights Committee – it was noted that residents were adversely impacted by cars parking on residential streets, in some instances without due care, during the Christmas festival.			
688.11	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council: Parish Partnership Panel – Mr Mann’s notes of the meeting held on 9 th November were received.			
688.12	KALC/NALC/ACRE/CPRE: KALC T&M meeting –it was noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 14 th December, Ms Barkham hoped to be in attendance.			
23/689	<u>MEETING DATES</u> Amenities – Monday 11 th December – West Malling Village Hall, 7.30pm Highways – Monday 18 th December at The Clout, 7.30 Full Council – Monday 8 th January - West Malling Village Hall, 7.30pm Macey’s Meadow Advisory Group – Thursday 25 th January at The Clout tbc			
23/690	<u>REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCILLOR(S)</u> The following report was provided by Mrs Dean after the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Borough wide parking consultations are running until 7th January 2024. West Malling Chamber of Commerce have expressed their concern about the loss of free car parking spaces on High Street and Swan Street, which they believe will further worsen the number of customers coming to West Malling. Charges are proposed to apply to all spaces, 365 days a year. Offham PC would like to receive a copy of the WMPC response to the consultation. There are concerns that the Sunday Farmers Market will be affected by the removal of free Sunday parking on street and in Ryarsh Lane car park. • White Ladies planning application was expected to come to Committee in December but this was delayed. The next Area 2 meeting is 17th January but there are delays in dealing with cases. • Developers have removed a lot of trees apparently to satisfy sight lines required by KCC to the east and west of the new access road onto A20 from the Forty Acres development between Winterfield Lane and Rectory Lane. A planning application to TMBC will be submitted shortly which applies retrospectively for those removed and seeks permission for further removals. The creation of a share cycle and walking route along the frontage of the development has increased the need for further trees to be removed. • Gladman have proposed a one-way system through East Malling apparently to cope with the additional traffic which the Bradbourne village development planned for East Malling Research Station which would channel into New Road East Malling from Poppyfields roundabout on the A20. Offers have been made to local residents to purchase houses needed to create suitable junction sightlines along the route. • A quick survey of WMPC following complaints about postal delivery showed about half the members are suffering problems with erratic delivery. This affects business and residents. • Police PC Dylan McElligott has taken over the Offham area from Lisa Whitehead PC. 			

<p>23/691</p>	<p><u>REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR</u></p> <p>Cllr. Dean provided the following report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have approved spending from my Members Community Fund to cover the design cost of the 20mph scheme in West Malling. • KCC have agreed a pattern of Family Hubs which includes two outside Tonbridge Town, one in Woodlands Centre East Malling, and one in Snodland Holmesdale former Samays Centre. These hubs will provide all services to parents and their children to 18 years normally, including online and virtual advice and detached sessions at alternative premises including voluntary organisation buildings such as village halls and churches. • All Youth Services delivered by independent contractors will cease at the end of March this year, and be replaced by KCC in- house staff. It is not clear in what form, if any they will continue, though all Family Hubs were said to be providing a 'safe space' for young people. I understand it may be 2025 or more before services are provided at Woodlands. • KCC's has won its High Court action against the Home Office provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers. The High Court rules that Home Office provision was inadequate, often late, and at times unlawful in providing too few resources for KCC to cope with the UASC numbers arriving in Kent. This resulted in KCC being unable to provide Statutory services to Children resident in Kent. The Home Office is now discussing the funding of increased temporary accommodation in Kent for UASC children awaiting transfer to other councils. • Kent Highways are beginning a system where they will collect data about car crashes that do not involve fatalities or serious injuries. • KCC are looking for Parish Council land on which to install electric vehicle chargers. • The budget is a seriously big issue with damaging cuts to many services proposed. KCC need to find £30m in savings this year and it is looking like there will be a £50-60m gap next year between money available and costs. In addition to the loss of youth services, there are likely to be cuts in care packages to vulnerable children including children with disabilities, and reductions in transport to school for children with SEN. • Government has allotted £4.296m to KCC for additional road repair funding for the next year and £134.5m over the next decade. The Cabinet member stressed the amount was inadequate to meet the need and he expected road pothole conditions to worsen even beyond their current worst level in nine years. • There is a new KCC scheme to recycle laptops or phones so they won't be going to landfill: https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/rubbish-and-recycling/devicerecycling-scheme • Emma Tilbury, West Kent Community Engagement Team Leader at Kent Highways, has got funds she is willing to provide for Speedwatch. She needs to know it has got police support and what equipment is required. 		
	<p>There being no other business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 10.02</p> <p>Signed..... Dated.....</p>		

West Malling Parish Council					
<u>Accounts for Payment 4th December 2023</u>					Cheques to be drawn
Specialist Hygiene Services Ltd (cheque 2647) (invoice 45541 - King Street toilet cleaning costs for November)				554.07	£ 664.88
	VAT			110.81	
Streetlights (cheque 2648) (invoice 14082 column 3 repair)				97.75	£ 117.30
	VAT			19.55	
Safeplay Playground Services Ltd (cheque 2649) (invoice 25414 - to carry out repairs & renewals to play equip)				2007.00	£ 2,408.40
	VAT			401.40	
Four Seasons Gardens Ltd (cheque 2650) (invoice 5849, Macey's Meadow hedge cut - hedge 2 & 3)				825.93	£ 991.11
	VAT			165.18	
Four Seasons Gardens Ltd (cheque 2651) (invoice 5850, cricket meadow hedge £454.31 +VAT, Churchyard) hedge £174.30 + VAT).				628.61	£ 754.33
	VAT			125.72	
Four Seasons Gardens Ltd (cheque 2652) (invoice 5851, Norman Rd playing field hedges)				656.11	£ 787.33
	VAT			131.22	
Four Seasons Gardens Ltd (cheque 2653) (invoice 5852, Macey's Meadow hedge cut - hedge 1)				799.37	£ 959.24
	VAT			159.87	
Four Seasons Gardens Ltd (cheque 2654) (invoice 5853, allotment hedge cut)				698.63	£ 838.36
	VAT			139.73	
CIA Fire & Security Ltd (single cheque 2655) (invoice 265002 - installation of smart access gate entry system at tennis courts				2500.00	£ 3,000.00
(invoice 265003 - SmartAccess Netcode Subscription)	VAT			500.00	
				156.00	£ 187.20
	VAT			31.20	
Mr M Pearce (cheque 2656) (reimbursement for diesel £120.04 & Applefest tools £24.46)					£ 144.50
December salaries					
Mrs Claire Christmas - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Clerk - net salary for December £2193.34 + reimbursement for fax £1.20, sundries £8.65)					£2,203.19
Mrs Sarah Howard authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Ass. Clerk - net salary for December + back pay = £792.25+ reimbursement for cable ties for ball park £6.89)					£799.14
Mr Nathan Howard authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Litter picking duties for December 8 hours @ £10.42 per hour)					£ 83.36
HMRC - authorisation to pay via Faster Payments (Deductions from salaries - December)					£1,119.65
Nest - authorisation to pay pension contributions by Direct Debit for December					
Employer's contributions					£ 87.08
Employee's contributions					£ 116.11
					£ 15,261.18

