

PLAXTOL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held in Plaxtol Church on 2 December 2019 at 8.00pm

Present: Cllrs P Thomas (Chairman), M Brewin, J Budworth, J Denham, G French, S Knights, R Simpson; L Thomas (Clerk); Boro Cllr W Palmer

Apologies: Cllrs M Carboni, M Julio; Boro Cllrs T Shaw, M Taylor

1. Matters raised by the public / Borough Councillors

Boro Cllr Palmer provided an update on the new waste collection service, which was slowly improving. TMBC had drafted in extra staff to answer the phones passing on the cost to the contractor. The contractor had also had to fund extra collections.

Cllr Palmer also reported that TMBC had responded to the request for changes to the Constitution for the management of Basted Mill Public Open Space but had declined to make the proposed amendments. She advised that both Platt and Borough Green Parish Councils would be giving formal notice of withdrawing from the agreement in January. Cllr Palmer also advised that KALC would be pressing NALC to lobby for changes to the law on unauthorised encampments.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 4 November 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising

Item 11. Tree work at the GML. It was reported that the agreed programme of work had now been completed but that there was an issue regarding a field maple, not included in the programme of work, which a neighbour felt was restricting light to her garden. The Council had received a request that this tree be trimmed. The tree surgeon and Tree Warden had reported that the tree was in good shape and not intrinsically in need of work. However, if work was to be approved it should be small crown lift and some light pruning, which would help with light in the summer. There was no issue with light in the winter, when the tree was not in leaf. Councillors considered various options outlined by the tree surgeon and decided by majority vote that work to the tree was not necessary at this stage. The situation could be reviewed should the tree cause difficulties when in leaf.

5. Correspondence

KCC

Highways & Transport: monthly bus service update, November 2019.

Planning: Kent Minerals & Waste Local Plan 2013-30, consultation.

TMBC

Housing Services: SWEP activation alerts.

Joint Transportation Board: meeting papers, 18.11.19.
 Kent Resilience Forum: Flood Warden training, 30.11.19.

Other

Action with Communities in Rural Kent: Inside Track, Issue 260, November 2019, funding opportunities.
 Communicorp: Clerks & Councils Direct, November 2019, Issue 126.
 Campaign to Protect Rural England: campaigns update, 9.11.19; Countryside Voice, Winter 2019; Fieldwork, Winter 2019.
 KALC: NALC bulletins on national developments, 8.11.19-22.11.19; NALC newsletter, 6.11.19; KCC Highways seminar dates; KCC Public Protection newsletter, October 2019; M20 smart motorway updates; Kent Police Rural Task Force report, 4.11.19; KALC Community Awards 2020; KALC CEO bulletin, Issue 2, November 2019; KALC Kent Police & Crime Commissioner scrutiny panel vacancy; KALC News, November 2019; Area meeting papers, 5.12.19
 Kent Wildlife Trust: Newsletter, 15.11.19; wilder Kent, winter 2019.
 Kent Police: Telephone Preference Service information; monthly parish update, October 2019.
 National Allotment Society: notification of AGM, June 2020; Allotment & Leisure Gardener, Issue 4 2019.
 E-watch nos 1709-1715

6. Payments/Finance

i) Budget 2020/2021. Councillors received a draft budget for consideration. Cllr Simpson drew attention to the small projected overspend on the 2019/20 budget, due to increased expenditure on the Spoute playground project. For the coming year, budgeted figures included replacement of the column street lights, fence repairs, and increased Section 137 spending to incorporate assistance for the primary school in repairing the school drive. Councillors were reminded that referendum principles would not be applied to Parish Councils in the forthcoming year. A 10% increase in precept was being recommended to Council to ensure financial flexibility in delivering some of the larger tasks. This would mean an approximate increase of £7 per year for a Band D property based on last year's tax base figure. It was reported that an updated tax base figure was expected from TMBC in the near future. Councillors were requested to forward their observations on the proposed draft budget within the forthcoming week for an updated draft to be prepared for presentation in January for approval.

Action:
All
Cllrs

ii) Electronic banking. The Clerk reported that a survey of the major high street banks had confirmed that they were unable to offer an electronic payment system with a third party (ie non signatory) payment set up, plus authorisation by two signatories, a system which would closely mirror current practice. Under the Council's current financial regulations, all payments require two signatories; the Clerk, who sets payments up, is not a signatory to the account. Unity Bank, which specialises in parish council banking, was able to offer a service which reflects current practice. There are no high street outlets for Unity, but customers could use Nat West banks and Post Office

services for paying in. There would be an account charge of £72 per annum. The Council currently enjoys free banking with Barclays. Councillors confirmed their commitment to moving to electronic banking and agreed that the Council's accounts should be moved to Unity Bank in the New Year.

iii) A financial statement and bank reconciliation was distributed to members.

The following receipts were noted:	£
HMRC: VAT refund 1.4.18-30.9.19	8,222.98
Bank interest	3.10
The following payments were approved:	£
Streetlights Ltd: repair, The Street	115.50
Communicorp: additional subscription	6.00
Memorial Hall: hall hire 18.4.19	26.00
Plaxtol PCC: church hire 2.12.19	36.00
Kent, Surrey, Sussex Air Ambulance: donation	600.00
Royal British Legion: donation	150.00
Clerk salary & re-imburements November 2019	688.07
Kent Wildlife Trust: annual subscription	50.00
Eon Energy: street lighting November supply	122.90
PWLB: car park loan 2 nd instalment	1,013.16

7. Planning

i) Councillors noted that an appeal had been lodged against TMBC's refusal to allow development on land adjoining Shrubshall Meadow. The refusal had been on the grounds of non-linear development, which the applicant was challenging. It was agreed that the Parish Council would make a response to the appeal. Cllr Brewin will prepare a draft for consideration. A response must be received by the Inspectorate before the 20 December 2019.

Action:
Cllr
Brewin

ii) The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had had a meeting with the TMBC Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, David Lettington, regarding the introduction to the Constitution of a rule limiting call-in of a planning application to Area 2 Committee to 21 days. It had been accepted that there had been some confusion regarding the non-alignment of planning response dates and that this would be investigated. Some flexibility in the system was also needed to accommodate the timing of parish council meetings. Cllr Lettington agreed to make further enquiries regarding process and make a response to the Chairman before the KALC meeting on 5 December, when this issue was due for further discussion.

iii) Planning applications

TMBC decisions

High Cross House, Tonbridge Road TM/19/02319/FL altered to TM/19/02319/LDP

Demolition of conservatory, replacement extension. **Approved.** Parish Council had not objected to this application.

Tree Island, Yopps Green TM/9/02446/TNCA

Copper Beech- crown lift low branches to clear highway. It was noted that this application had been submitted on behalf of the Parish Council as part of the annual tree management programme, which the Tree Warden had approved. **No objection.** Parish Council had not objected to this application.

Parish council decisions

Nutwood House, The Street TM/19/02658/FL

Mezzanine level, 5 skylights and glazed feature panel on south elevation of outbuilding. The Parish Council has no objection in principle to the creation of an art studio as claimed in the application, but is concerned about the inclusion of a bedroom and bathroom, making this more like an annexe or rental property than an art studio. Some clarification would be appropriate. If the Planning Officer is minded to approve, the Parish Council requests that future development rights be restricted.

Summer Court, School Lane TM/19/02780/TNCA

T1 and T4 Silver Birch to fell; T2, T3, T5, T8, T9 and T10 Ash trees to fell; T6 Damson to fell; T7 Maple to reduce away from neighbours house and reduce in height by 2m, shaping the side by reducing by 1m; and T11 group of trees to be reduced by 1-2m to suitable growth to maintain them at a height and size. Councillors noted that this planning application had not been received in time to action before the meeting. As the response date of 18 December falls before the next meeting, Councillors agreed to accept the Tree Warden's recommendation when it is received and for a response to be made on that basis.

Wealden House, Church Hill TM/19/02634/TNCA

T1 Leylandii hedge in rear garden - reduction in height to eastern half of the hedge. Height to be reduced by one third because of excessive shading and height at the boundary with neighbouring property, T2 Leylandii hedge in rear garden - removal of two most eastern trees (at end of hedge) because of excessive shading and prevention of other plants growing at base and T3 Plum trees - removal of two trees because of overgrowth, lack of management/pruning, and too large to pick fruit from. To be replaced with one new fruit tree. The Tree Warden reports that the hedge is overgrown and neglected and has grown to large for its situation. The fruit tree is old and needs replacing. **No objection.**

8. Meeting Feedback

i) Parish Partnership Panel, 14.11.19. Cllr Thomas had attended this meeting and reported on the following issues:

- Police reports on thefts keys to steal motor vehicles from homes at night, thefts of catalytic converters, initiatives to address anti-social behaviour;
- action plan to address waste & recycling collection issues had been developed by the contractor; who would be subject to penalties should a deadline for implementation be missed; 0.4% only of waste was now sent to landfill;
- TMBC had launched a grant scheme to enable independent retailers and food outlets to improve shopfronts.

ii) KALC AGM, 30.11.19. Cllrs Brewin and Thomas had attended this meeting. Cllr Thomas reported that KALC had passed motions calling on Local Authorities to undertake monitoring of Particulate Matter on roads directly impacted by mineral operations, and calling on NALC to lobby for changes to the law in relation to traveller activity.

9. Environment

Cllr Budworth reported that the deadline for 2019 registration had been missed, but that registration could take place in 2020. The key issue was to find locations for tree planting for next year.

10. Recreation Grounds

Councillors approved an application by a parishioner to use the Spoute Recreation Ground for charity activity events to be run in Red January. This would be in association with West Kent Mind. Proposed dates for events are 4th, 13th, 18th and 25th January. The organiser had provided a risk assessment and insurance cover.

11. Highways & Transport

- i) JPCTCG, 28.11.19. This item was held over to the next meeting.
- ii) It was reported that a letter had been received from a parishioner regarding vehicles speeding in School Lane. The support of the Parish Council for a 20's plenty campaign was being sought. Councillors agreed that there was no objection to such a campaign being organised to which support could be given as appropriate.
- iii) Bus update. The Chairman reported that issues of overcrowding on the school bus appeared to be abating. The problems of inconsiderate parking, however, had not, especially on the narrow stretch of road just below the Papermakers Arms. The bus was regularly getting stuck at this point, resulting in services having to be re-routed without being able to inform passengers, leaving them waiting pointlessly at bus stops which could not be serviced. Cllr Carboni had confirmed that he would be relocating the 'bus route' signs to a more visible location and that more stringent measures to remove parking at this point were under consideration. Cllr Thomas confirmed that he would be having a meeting with bus company representatives on Tuesday 3 December to address their issues with the Plaxtol route. One operator had already indicated the likelihood of withdrawal of the service.

12. Any Other Business

It was reported that Cllr Carboni had advised that he would be arranging a reception in the New Year to thank the contributors to the play equipment at the Spoute Recreation Ground.

13. Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 6 January 2020 at 8 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm