

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of meeting held via Zoom on Monday 19 April 2021 at 8.00pm

**Present:** Cllr P Thomas (Chair), 7 Parish Councillors; KCC Cllr H Rayner; L Thomas (Clerk); 3 members of the public

**Apologies:** Boro Cllrs T Shaw, M Taylor

### 1. Minutes of the last meeting

It was noted that the Annual Parish Meeting was cancelled in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions. The minutes of the meeting of 15 April 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

### 2. Chairman's review

The Chairman thanked his co-Councillors for their work during the year, with special thanks to outgoing Councillors Jane Denham and Mark Julio. He advised that there was a current vacancy on the Council, which had been advertised. The Chairman thanked Marian Hemsted on behalf of the Parish for her work as Internal Auditor. He reported on the following issues:

- issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic: suspension of Parish Council meetings April - June; introduction of virtual meetings from July; Parish Council Covid helpline for parishioners with over 140 volunteers; re-opening of the recreation grounds in August 2020; legislation permitting virtual meetings to end in May 2021;
- Council finance and budget: raising of precept by 10% to include street light replacement and increased S137 spending, with thanks to Harry Rayner for his contribution to the resurfacing of the drive leading to the Memorial Hall and the School; no precept increase for the coming year; Council budget of £53,254, reserves of 27% of budget, £14,147;
- planning issues: local plan rejected by Inspectors over failure to co-operate with neighbouring Planning Authorities; TMBC now considering future actions with possible Judicial Review; planning procedure changes at TMBC with the introduction of a strict 21-day consultation period for planning applications, with Borough Councillors having similar restrictions on 'call-in'; additional meetings would now be needed for complex applications;
- recreation grounds: issues with paint peeling on new equipment at the Spoute Recreation Ground; new system for Councillor monitoring of recreation grounds and extra security checks to ensure integrity of grounds;
- Basted Mill Public Open Space: Parish Councils' withdrawal from the management committee due to serious concerns over financial liability; management now reverts solely to TMBC;

- street parking: good compliance with the yellow lines installed at the School; changes to the highway below the Papermakers Arms now being proposed to address the parking issues in that location;
- reckless and speeding cyclists; still problematic but no easy answer; Police Inspector to write to local cycling clubs;
- street lighting: excellent service from the new contractor; replacement programme since 2018 now complete except for 4 bracket lights due to be installed in 2021;
- policing issues: main crimes thefts of equipment and from outbuildings and commercial vehicles, domestic violence; good relations with local police officers;
- priorities for 2021/2022: repairs and refurbishment; progress parking scheme with KCC; installation of defibrillator and refurbishment of Spoute telephone box; removal of phone box on Church Hill; continued liaison with TMBC and police.

### **3. Open Forum**

Kent County Cllr Harry Rayner provided the following update:

- domination of events by Covid pandemic; KCC purchased PPE for nursing homes and smaller hospitals;
- Brexit: working to put systems in place for traffic conditions in Kent; crossing closed from France due to Covid caused delays and issues at Dover with HGV drivers having to be held at Manston, backlog cleared by Christmas Day;
- introduction of booking system at household waste sites, likely to continue for the foreseeable future;
- much County Cllr time committed to liaison with Parish Councils, especially in relation to TMBC's now suspended Local Plan; now decided not to proceed to Judicial Review; failure to have 5 year housing land supply causing difficulties in holding to existing planning policies, making sites more vulnerable to pressure from developers; opportunities for KALC to work with TMBC to lessen the impact of the introduction of the 21-day rule on the parishes.

In response to a question from the floor Cllr Rayner advised that Sevenoaks District Council's Local Plan had also been rejected and that there were issues regarding duty to co-operate in respect of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan. It was unlikely that the Tunbridge Wells Plan, with its consequent impact on Tudeley, would be approved.

### **4. Any Other Business**

None.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public and County Councillor Rayner for their attendance and input.