

**Minutes of The Full Council Meeting held at The Rackliff Centre on  
Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm**

**Members Present:**

Cllr L Ellicott, Chair; Cllr M O'Callaghan, Vice Chair; Cllr C Ducklin, Cllr B Edwards, Cllr D Funnell, Cllr P Gripper and Cllr D Smith.

**Officers Present:**

Alison Stevens, Parish Clerk.

**Others and Members of the Public:**

Borough Councillor Jayne Sharratt. There was also one member of the public present.

- 1. Enquire whether anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting**  
No one present filmed, photographed or recorded this meeting.

- 2. To receive and approve apologies for absence**  
Councillors A Britcher-Allan and A Funnell sent apologies for their absences. The reasons for their apologies were accepted by the Full Council.

- 3. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**  
Cllr Smith declared a prejudicial interest and did not take part in the vote for Minute 8i.

Cllrs Ellicott, Gripper and Smith declared prejudicial interests and did not take part in the vote for item 9.

- 4. Declarations of Lobbying**  
There were no declarations of lobbying.

- 5. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024**  
The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were agreed, and it was RESOLVED that the Chair sign them as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**5.1** Matters outstanding from these minutes (not listed as separate items). None.

**5.2** Matters outstanding from previous minutes. None.

- 6. Open session for questions from the public**

Ms Foster said:

- The Speedwatch equipment needs repairing and asked if the Parish Council would be prepared to meet the cost if there is one. All agreed.
- The badgers are active in Lower Green Road again and further repairs are needed to the wall. She has reported the matter to the County Council.

- 7. Session for County and Borough Councillor on matters concerning the Parish**

There was no report from the County Councillor on this occasion.

Borough Councillor Sharratt said:

- The Tunbridge Wells Literary Festival this year runs from Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May and she encouraged everyone to attend.

- GO is a membership scheme for people living in the borough of Tunbridge Wells which offers discounts at sport, recreational, leisure and cultural facilities within the borough. The scheme is aimed at people on low income, membership is free and valid for 12 months. Details can be found on the GO Tunbridge Wells website.
- Public consultation on the Tunbridge Well’s draft Strategic Plan 2024-29 ends on Friday 15th March. This first stage of the consultation is to check that the priorities and direction proposed are broadly correct. Details of the proposals can be found at; [Draft Strategic Plan 2024 - 29 | Talking Point Tunbridge Wells \(engagementhq.com\)](https://www.engagementhq.com)

[Survey | Talking Point Tunbridge Wells \(engagementhq.com\)](https://www.engagementhq.com)

- She has reported the potholes in Rusthall High Street and St Paul’s Street to the County Council for repair.
- Amplifi, is a local initiative which aims to amplify environmentally-conscious business and support the community.

## 8. Finance update

**8.1:** Accounts for Payment – Councillors RESOLVED to pay the following;

				£	
04/03/2024	EE	DD	18.00	Mobile Phone	
04/03/2024	SSE	DD	53.10	Rackliff Electricity	
07/03/2024	SSE	DD	37.58	Gas - Rackliff Centre	
12/03/2024	Initial	BACS	51.20	Service contract	
12/03/2024	L Neusten	BACS	2.75	Postage	
12/03/2024	Viking	BACS	34.28	Stationery	
12/03/2024	Little Loads	BACS	975.00	Clearing allotments	
12/03/2024	Doug Smith	BACS	74.30	Chalvington	
12/03/2024	S Wadey	BACS	10.00	Security key refund	
12/03/2024	Kevin Watson	BACS	60.00	Manure bags	
12/03/2024	Simon Young	BACS	130.00	Stump grinding at WG	
12/03/2024	Kevin Watson	BACS	12.60	English Woodland	
12/03/2024	KPS	BACS	720.44	Pension Contributions	
12/03/2024	Horizon Telecom	BACS	16.61	Anti Virus - February	
12/03/2024	KCS	BACS	140.71	Photocopier Rental	
12/03/2024	HMRC	BACS	950.85	PAYE	
12/03/2024	Little Loads	BACS	625.00	Rubbish at allotments	
12/03/2024	Little Loads	BACS	500.00	Rubbish cleared at WG	
12/03/2024	The Cleaning Lady	BACS	78.00	Rackliff cleaning	
12/03/2024	Castle Water	BACS	0.64	Allotments - WG	
12/03/2024	Little Loads	BACS	25.00	Rubbish at Rackliff	
12/03/2024	Microshade	BACS	322.44	Hosting	
12/03/2024	Linda Neusten	BACS	6.99	Wall Planner	
12/03/2024	Horizon Telecom	BACS	18.86	Anti-virus	
20/03/2024	Employees	DD	3171.87	Salaries	
20/03/2024	NEST	DD	46.65	Pension contributions	
22/03/2024	BT Group PLC	DD	98.95	Rackliff telephone	

At the last meeting Councillor Edwards asked the Clerk to see if the Horizon used by the Parish Council is the same as the one involved in the Post Office scandal. The Horizon used by the Parish Council is a company, the Horizon in the Post Office scandal is a software package.

**8.2** The Vicar at St Paul’s Church is considering putting two ‘talking benches’ in the grounds of the Church Centre which residents can sit on to talk to others and help

combat loneliness and he asked if the Parish Council would consider contributing towards the costs. Councillor Smith asked whether or not any payment would be legal because historically Parish Councils have not been allowed to give money to churches, but the rules have been relaxed recently and NALC is now of the view they can.

It was agreed in principle to help fund the benches as long as they meet legislative standards for public benches, and are designed to prevent rough sleepers using them.

- 8.3** Budget updates – The Clerk has carried out the checks and balances Rialtas require at the end of month 11, and she has also analysed the budget variances. It was RESOLVED to transfer £10000 from the EMR Contingency to help balance the overspending this year.

**9. Allotments Committee –**

- 9.1** It was RESOLVED to adopt the draft minutes of the Allotments Committee Meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Crossways has offered the Parish Council a summer house, the Parish Council would just need to meet the costs of dismantling it and fitting it. A concrete base would also be needed. Councillors Smith and Ellicott have been to see it and were able to confirm that it is in a good condition. Councillor Smith was also able to confirm that planning permission would not be required and that security would not be an issue either. Councillors RESOLVED in principle to go ahead with the proposal and fit the summer house at Wickham Gardens for the allotment holders there to use. Councillor Smith will come back to them once he knows how much the work will cost.

- 9.2** The Southwood Road Working Party which consists of Councillors Ellicott, Gripper and Edwards has been looking into three possible options for the land opposite the allotments, namely:

- 1: A ‘shop’ for Flourish (Crossways).
- 2: Electric Vehicle Charging Points.
- 3: A garage for the Boxing Club’s minibus.

Flourish originally asked for a permanent shop on the land and has decided to trial a ‘pop up’ one first to test demand. It has now withdrawn its original request.

Councillor Ellicott has contacted a company called Believ who install Electric Vehicle Charging Points at their own expense because they take the revenue. They then pay the landowner a small rent. Their representative looked at the area and said they would prefer to put some in the car park at Southwood Road and will approach TWBC first. TWBC has subsequently said it is concentrating on fitting EV Charging Points in its multi storey car parks but if it were to go ahead it would need to use its own contractors. Councillor Ellicott will resume talks with Believ.

Councillor Edwards has obtained a price for a concrete garage with electric doors for £18000 and is now looking at cheaper options.

- 9.3** It was RESOLVED that the Allotments Manager and Councillor Ellicott can apply for a grant from the Gatwick Airport Community Trust to complete Phase 2 of the All Ability Garden. The work will include two new paths which will be built by JT Building, a local company, in the new financial year.

- 10. Grounds Maintenance Contract 2024-2027** – It was RESOLVED to award Landscape Services the Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2024-2027 which will save the Parish Council approximately £900 a year. Landscape Services were recommended by Speldhurst Parish Council.

11. **Annual Tree Survey** – It was RESOLVED to accept the lowest price for the work recommended in the Annual Tree Survey which was from a company called Treeworks.
12. **Defibrillator Update** – The new children’s pads for the two defibrillators have been received and will be fitted by Councillors O’Callaghan and Britcher-Allan.

It was also noted that Toad Rock Retreat is currently closed but the closure is thought to be only temporary.

13. **Highways** – At the last meeting Councillors discussed the Highways Report from the Community Engagement Officer at KCC Highways and the subsequent reply from Councillor Ellicott. Highways then arranged a meeting with Councillors Ellicott and Gripper but made no further progress. Councillor Ellicott is now looking into whether the work can be re-categorised which would mean it might be possible to have two temporary signs and two permanent ones fitted which the Parish Council, subject to costs, agreed to pay for.

It was also RESOLVED that Councillor Gripper will update the Highways Improvement Plan because although the issues in it still need to be addressed, there is other work that also needs doing. He will bring the revised plan to the next meeting for approval and then meet Nigel Rowe at Highways and run through it with him.

14. **Rusthall Volunteers** – There was nothing new to report.
15. **Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan Consultation** – The Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan is out for consultation. Councillors were encouraged to respond individually. Details of the plan can be found at;  
<https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/rtw-town-centre-plan>
16. **Chair’s Report** – Councillor Ellicott and Borough Councillor Sharratt have now visited two One Stops which have Post Offices in them, one at Hildenborough and the other at East Malling. They said both were much quieter than the one here, but their fears of security and privacy were allayed. They will continue to keep the communication going with the CEO’s of the companies involved and bring them to account if need be.

Councillors Ellicott and Gripper also met the Economic Development Manager from TWBC to review the proposed Langton to Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre (via Rusthall) Cycle Route. They suggested changes which they now hope will be taken on board.

17. **Officers’ Report** – All matters were covered elsewhere in the Minutes.

18. **Diary Dates**

8 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2024	7.30pm	Full Council Meeting
18 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2024	7.30pm	Parish Assembly
22 <sup>nd</sup> Apr 2024	7.30pm	Environment Committee Meeting
17 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	7.30pm	Allotment Committee Meeting

19. **Items for Information** – None.

20. **Next meeting of Full Council -**

8 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2024	7.30pm	The Rackliff Centre
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DUE TO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM IT WAS RESOLVED TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960.

**21. To consider confidential staffing matters and agree any further action.**

The Parish Clerk and RFO vacancy has now been advertised and the Parish Council has received one application. Councillors Ellicott, O’Callaghan, Edwards and the Clerk will now meet the applicant and were authorised to appoint them if they are suitable.

There was no further business, and the meeting closed at 9.02pm.

..... Chairman

Dated .....