

**Minutes of The Full Council Meeting held at The Rackliff Centre on
Monday 11th December 2023 at 7.30pm**

Members Present:

Cllr Liz Ellicott, Chair; Cllr M O'Callaghan, Vice Chair; Cllr C Ducklin, Cllr P Gripper, Cllr A Britcher-Allan and Cllr D Smith.

Officers Present:

Borough Councillor J Sharratt and Alison Stevens, Parish Clerk.

Others and Members of the Public:

There were five members 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**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Edwards, A Funnell and D Funnell. The reasons for their apologies were accepted by the Full Council.

- 3. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**
Cllr Smith declared a prejudicial interest in and did not take part in the vote for Minute 9.

Cllrs Ellicott, Gripper and Smith declared prejudicial interests in and did not take part in the vote for item 10.

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

- 5. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 13th November 2023**
The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 13th November 2023 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 asked;

- i. For an update on the state on the trees near the Red Lion. The Tree Officer at TWBC said he can find no evidence to show that a tree has been removed so the Clerk has requested a site visit with the resident who raised the issue. Councillors agreed they would like the remaining trees to be protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
- ii. Pupils aged between the ages of 8-11 from St Paul's CE Primary School in Rusthall have been part of Kent Police scheme called 'Mini Cadets'. This is a nine week course, where students learn about many topics including, anti-social behaviour, first aid and online safety. During the course of the 9 weeks the students decide on a social action project. They decided they wanted to tackle the issue of speeding in Rusthall and educate others within the community around this issue. The young people produced posters, which will be placed around the area. On Wednesday 29th November on Rusthall Road, the mini cadets took part in a Speed Check, with

Rusthall Speed Watch group, where they got to see the speed indication device in action and use a speed gun. They really enjoyed the experience and will go back to school and into their communities continuing to educate around speeding in the area.

- 7. Ms Hazel Dunscombe** – Ms Dunscombe introduced herself and read from her written report in which she said;
‘First I would like to introduce my colleagues. Jayne Sharratt, Editor of Rusthall Life. The rest are members of the Rusthall Local History Group. Jenny Blackburn founder and Chair is not here because she is recovering from an operation, Carol Mellors historian and author, John Arkell volunteer archivist at The Amelia and myself Hazel Duncombe.

Dennis’ original hand written manuscript on the History of Rusthall was found when Barry (Edwards) rescued all the material from Dennis’ home. We feel, as Dennis wished, this should be published. It would be a fitting memorial to him and his knowledge about Rusthall.

When the Rusthall Local History Group was disbanded, as the Constitution decreed, all monies were donated to Rusthall Parish Council on the understanding the funds were used for local history projects.

I would like to formally request access to this money to pay for the manuscript to be professionally typed and eventually published. We would also like access to the archives for suitable illustrations.’

Permission for access to the archives was subsequently granted and the remaining funds will be released to help pay for the manuscript to be professionally typed and eventually published, upon receipt of invoices.

8. 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 reported:

- i. The Borough Council’s Community Safety Consultation on Safe Travel has now closed. There was a high response rate from young people who were specifically targeted.
- ii. A consultation on violence against women and girls is now underway. One of the areas of concern in Rusthall is the path which leads off Woodside Road and measures are in hand to make it more inviting and therefore increase footfall.
- iii. The Budget Consultation is now also underway and residents are being invited to say what they think the Borough Council’s priorities should be.
- iv. There is a new Sustainability Officer in post at TWBC whose role is to propose and implement strategies which address environmental concerns.
- v. The decision has been made to close the Harmony Children’s Centre but the decision has been called in for scrutiny.

Borough Councillor Britcher-Allan said:

- i. She would like to thank Borough Councillor Sharratt for organising the latest Reclaim the Night Walk.
- ii. The Local Plan is being submitted to Tunbridge Wells’ Full Council on the 13th December. No significant developments have been planned for Rusthall but the Sports Hub still seems to be an option.

9. Finance update

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

£

04/12/2023	EE	10.86	Mobile Phone
12/12/2023	Horizon Telecom Ltd t/as SCG	25.61	Anti-Virus
12/12/2023	Paul Gripper	10.50	Stationery
12/12/2023	EK Smithers	60.00	Allotment Rent Refund
12/12/2023	Doug Smith	79.60	Reimbursement
12/12/2023	Little Loads	35.00	Rubbish Collection
12/12/2023	Rusthall Scout Group	2500.00	Grant for tents
12/12/2023	Home Start South West Kent	1000.00	Grant
12/12/2023	Viking	76.80	Stationery
12/12/2023	Ultimate Sparkle	30.00	Cleaning
12/12/2023	Capel Groundcare	449.12	Allotment Maint - Nov
12/12/2023	Employees	4088.12	Salaries
12/12/2023	KCS	140.71	Photocopier Rental
12/12/2023	Microshade	322.44	Hosting - December
12/12/2023	The Sticky Monkey Group Ltd	55.20	Lanyards
12/12/2023	Horizon Telecom Ltd t/as SCG	16.61	Anti-Virus
12/12/2023	The Cleaning Lady	78.00	Cleaning the Rackliff
12/12/2023	Doug Smith	82.50	Reimbursement
27/12/2023	BT Group PLC	90.67	Rackliff telephone bill

The Summary Receipts and Payments, detailed Receipts and Payments and Budgets for 2023/2024 were distributed before the meeting.

9.2 Councillors reviewed the Internal Audit Report and **RESOLVED** to formally adopt the recommendations made. The Financial Risk Assessment was also formally adopted.

9.3 It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £600 to Rusthall Lunch Club towards the costs of this year's Christmas Lunch.

10. Allotments Committee –

10.1 It was agreed to consider adopting the draft minutes of the latest Allotments Committee Meeting at the next Full Council Meeting.

10.2 Crossways has asked the Parish Council for permission for its Gardening Project (Flourish) to sell some of its produce on land opposite the allotments in Southwood Road which, by doing so will help their members to get back to work.

Councillors agreed, in principal, to Flourish selling produce on the land and also to form a Working Party which will consist of Councillors Ellicott, Gripper and Edwards who will look into three possible options for the land namely:

- 1: Electric Vehicle Charging Points.
- 2: A garage for the Boxing Club's minibus.
- 3: A 'shop' for Crossways.

11. Defibrillator Update – The defibrillator at the URC has now been risk assessed. New pads will be needed soon and will be ordered once Councillor O'Callaghan has checked the ones at Toad Rock.

12. Highways – Councillors Ellicott and Gripper attended the KCC Transport Seminar in November. The three subjects of most interest to this parish were:

- i. KALC is going to have a new website which it plans to have ready in the new year. The new website will include a transport hub which will enable the user to report highway's faults direct to KCC Highways.
- ii. Nikola Floodgate, the Road Safety and Active Travel Group Manager, would like communities to identify areas of concern so they can be more proactive and prevent accidents and deaths rather than reactive as they are now.
- iii. Mark Bunting, Vision Zero Strategy Manager, spoke about Vision Zero. Vision Zero is a road safety philosophy with the aim that eventually no one will be killed or seriously injured on the highway network.

Councillor Gripper said KCC installed two automated traffic counts on the A264 in November as promised. The Clerk will now request the findings.

13. **Rusthall Volunteers** – The package for the new website has been paid for. Councillor O’Callaghan has also been experimenting with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and will report back to the next meeting.
14. **Rusthall Civic Plaque update** – At the last meeting Councillors **RESOLVED** to include an article asking for nominations that meet the criteria to go in the next edition of Rusthall Life. An article was subsequently submitted for the January edition. The Clerk will update Councillors with any nominations she receives at the next meeting.
15. **Chair’s Report** – Councillor Ellicott updated everyone on the changes planned at the Post Office. She wrote to One Stop, Tesco, the Post Office and the MP Greg Clark and received the following reply from the Managing Director of One Stop;

‘We want to reassure the residents of Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells that the Post Office in our High Street, Rusthall One Stop store is not closing. Working together with the Post Office, the Mains format will change to a Local format, meaning the counter will be closer to the till making better use of retail space to enhance store operations.

Our banking, billing, postal and travel services will remain. We have made these changes to ensure we are becoming more efficient due to evolving customer needs. Residents may also be pleased to hear that the opening hours of our Post Office services will extend significantly – the new hours will be Monday to Sunday 8am until 8pm once the conversion has completed next Spring.’

In addition to the Borough Councillors’ on line petition which netted over 1800 signatures, Councillor Gripper organised a paper one for those not on line which added another 500. The Borough Councillors will now decide how they want to proceed next.

16. **Officers’ Report** – Officer Stevens had nothing new to report because all updates were included elsewhere on the agenda.
17. **Diary Dates**

12 th Feb 2024	7.30pm	Full Council Meeting
22 nd Jan 2024	7.30pm	Environment Committee Meeting
4 th Mar 2024	7.30pm	Allotments Committee Meeting

18. **Items for Information** – There will be a Community Larder on Christmas Eve, the times for which have yet to be confirmed. Look Ahead (Care and Support Housing) had to close recently and has distributed its funds to Community Larders, one of which was Rusthall.

Councillor Britcher-Allan said the Community Larder also has seven oil heaters it would like to hand out and invited anyone who needs one to contact her.

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

12 th Feb 2024	7.30pm	The Rackliff Centre
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There was no further business, and the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

..... Chairman

Dated

