



Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at The Rackliff Centre on
Monday 08 July 2024 at 7.30pm

PARTICIPANTS

Members Present:

Cllrs Liz Ellicott, Alex Britcher-Allan, Chris Ducklin, Barry Edwards, Angela Funnell, Dave Funnell, Paul Gripper (Chair), Mark O'Callaghan and Doug Smith.

Officers Present:

Claire Reed, Clerk

Others Present:

One member of the public. Borough Cllr Jayne Sharratt – left at 20.40.

RECORDING OF THE MEETING

086/24 No one present filmed, photographed or recorded this meeting.

APOLOGIES

087/24 Apologies were received from Borough Cllrs Jayne Sharratt and Matthew Sankey. It was noted that Cllr Mark O'Callaghan was absent.

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

088/24 Cllrs Doug Smith declared an interest, as an allotment tenant, in items

DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

089/24 There were none.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

090/24 It was **resolved** that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 10 June 2024, copies of which had been previously distributed to Members, be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM THESE MINUTES (NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE)

091/24 **Foliage covering the 20mph signs on Longmeads.** Minute 085/24 refers. Cllr Paul Gripper was thanked for pruning the overgrown foliage.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

092/24 **Speed Watch.** It was **noted** that speed watch volunteers had attended a session run by Kent Police at the Police training college in Aylesford. The volunteers currently carry out 3 sessions a week and were encouraged to continue by the police. It was **noted** that a police presence for some of the sessions would be advantageous.
Roundels in Lower Green Road. It was noted that these have been repainted by Kent Highways and slow signs replaced.
Foliage on Lower Green Road. It was **noted** that a resident has arranged for the overgrown foliage around the 20mph sign and mirrors on Lower Green Road at their own cost.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY & BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

093/24 **Borough Cllr Jayne Sharratt briefed council on:**

- Cllr Jayne Sharratt has been re-elected as a Commons Conservator and elected to various committees including joint transport board. Cllr Sharratt has asked for the A264 to be discussed by the board. Although it has no decision-making powers, it will bring the issue to the attention of others at KCC. The meeting will take place in September.
- The Borough Climate Change Strategy will be published in July. The strategy will support communities in getting Net Zero compatible by 2023.
- Cllr Sharratt has attended a briefing with the Family Hub, following the closure of various children's centres. There remains a centre in Sherwood with support being targeted at those who need it most.
- Nominations are now open for this year's Love Where You Live awards.
- There have been further incidents of indecent exposure on TW Common. If residents see anything suspicious they should call 999 straight away. Police presence has increased in the area following the incidents.

Borough Cllr Alex Britcher-Allan briefed council on:

- Planning – Developers for the Grosvenor Road site have been unable to commit to providing affordable housing due to costs. The Benenden old hospital site has been thwarted as the developer can't afford the S106 monies needed and as there is only one bus a week to the site it is not considered sustainable.
- There are concerns over recreational drug use in the village with drug paraphernalia having been found in Ashley Gardens/ Parsonage Road bus stop.

RESOLUTIONS

- 094/24 **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.** It was **resolved** to grant a dispensation to the members of the Allotment Committee who are allotment holders/ have partners who are allotment holders to allow them to speak and vote on allotment matters for the remainder of this council's term. **Action: Clerk**
- 095/24 **Environment Committee minutes.** It was **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Environment Committee held on 13 June 2024.
- 096/24 **Allotments Committee minutes.** It was **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Allotments Committee held on 17 June 2024.
- 097/24 **All Ability Garden.** It was **resolved** to move £5,000 from reserves into the All Ability Garden budget. **Action: Clerk**
- 098/24 **Delegated Expenditure.** It was **resolved** to increase the Allotment Manager's delegated expenditure to £250.00 and to approve the amended Financial Regulations as presented at the meeting.
- 099/24 **Garage at Southwood Road.** It was agreed that the quotes received for the work are not sufficient, as they don't cover all of the work that is needed. It was **resolved** to defer a decision until further quotes can be obtained. **Action: Allotment Manager**
- 100/24 **Vacant Allotment Plots.** It was **resolved** to authorise the Allotment committee to approve such works as and when needed, within the constraints of the committee's delegated expenditure limits. **Action: Allotment Manager**
- 101/24 **Summer house at Southwood Road Allotments.** It was **resolved** to approve the expenditure of £2583.33 and to appoint Topwood to supply a new summerhouse at

the All Ability Garden on Southwood Road Allotments. It was **resolved** to approve the expenditure of up to £250 to appoint a contractor to lay the base and construct the summerhouse. It was further **resolved** to approve the expenditure of £380 for four additional raised beds. **Action: Allotment Manager**

102/24 **Replacement laptop.** It was **resolved** to approve the expenditure of up to £850 to purchase a replacement laptop for the Deputy Clerk. **Action: Clerk**

103/24 **Grant Request.** It was proposed by Cllr Liz Ellicott and seconded by Cllr Angela Funnell that a grant of £1000 be made to We Are Beams. It was unanimously **resolved.** **Action: Clerk**

104/24 **History Society archive.** Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the archive should remain in the village however, it was noted that the current storage at The Rackliff Centre is unsuitable. It was suggested that sections of the archive could be displayed in public buildings around the village but no decision was made.

105/24 **Storage for the Commons Ranger.** It was **resolved** to permit the Commons Ranger to store excess materials (from the new Happy Valley accessible path) to the rear of The Rackliff Centre. **Action: Clerk**

FINANCE UPDATE

106/24 Council **noted** the summary of receipts and payments in June 2024:

Receipts UTB in June 2024

Allotments	£200.00
Rackliff Hire	£86.00
Gatwick Airport Grant	£2,700.00
Total Receipts	£2,986.00

Payments in May 2024

UTB	£11,533.37
Total payments	£11,533.37

Cash Balances at Bank on 30 June 2024

UTB	£62,683.31
Cambridge Building Society (31 March 2024)	£86,416.42
Hampshire Trust Bank (31 March 2024)	£60,904.62
Total	£210,004.35

107/24 **Mileage Rates.** It was noted that the NJC mileage rate payable have increased to 52.2p per mile for 1000-1199cc vehicles and 65.0p for 1200-1450+cc vehicles as of 01 April 2024.

- 108/24 **Accounts for Payment.** Council **resolved** to approve the payments for June 2024 as presented at the meeting and detailed in Appendix 1.
- 109/24 **Q1 expenditure.** Council received a report on Q1 expenditure against the agreed budget. It was noted that

HIGHWAYS UPDATE

- 110/24 Cllr Liz Ellicott reported on the update received from KCC regarding new Highways Improvement Plan:
1. **Reduction in speed limit on A264.** The Parish Council has been asked to provide the number of elderly/ frail people who cross the road.
 2. **Lower Green Rodd.** Kent Police have highlighted this as an area of concern following work with Speedwatch as there appears to be a compliance issue. Traffic surveys will be carried out to establish what other interventions may be required.
 - 3/ 4 **Junctions of Meadow Road/Ashley Gardens and Southwood Road/Cranwell Road.** Traffic surveys will be carried out.
 5. **Common View/Rusthall High Street.** More information is needed on who is parking on the junction (residents/ shops customers) so that the displaced parking can be managed before the proposal to extend the double yellow lines on Common View can be fully considered.
 6. **Erskine Park Road/Rusthall High St.** Kent Highways have said is unlikely the bus stop could be moved as this would not provide sufficient clearance of the junction when a bus is present however, it may be possible to extend the double yellow lines. It was agreed that the engineer needs to come and look at the bus stop and space.
 7. **Rusthall High Street proposed loading bay outside one-stop.** Highways will speak to the public transport team regarding the bus stop.

The Highways action group are continuing to meet with the conservators and youth group regarding the proposed speed restrictions on the A264. There is a QR code for the petition which currently has 362 signatories.

DEFIBRILLATOR UPDATE

111/24 There was no update.

RUSTHALL VOLUNTEERS UPDATE

112/24 There was no update.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

113/24 Cllr Paul Gripper reported:

- He attended the KALC Tunbridge Wells area committee meeting and noted that lots of parishes have Neighbourhood Development Plans. Is this something the Parish Council should consider?
- The Chair also recently attended NALC training entitled 'Unleashing the power of Parish Councils to tackle to climate emergency' which also alerted councils to the nature emergency and what councils can do by influencing change.
- The Village Fete was very successful and well attended. The chair thanked the members who manned the Parish Council gazebo for the event, engaging with residents on various issues.

CLERK'S REPORT

114/24 The Clerk, Claire Reed, reported:

- **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs).** Members with changes to their DPIs were reminded to return their completed forms to the monitoring officer at TWBC.
- **Load Testing of lamp posts.** The current KCC safety certificate for the lamp posts is due to expire later this year. The Deputy Clerk has requested a re-test of all the lamp posts, including those recently installed. The testing will cost £950 and is valid for 3 years.
- **Training.** KALC and NALC offer a range of relevant training courses for councillors. Anyone wishing to attend a course should inform the Clerk who will be happy to make the booking.
- **Approval of Expenditure.** The Clerk reminded members that expenditure cannot be approved by individual councillors. Expenditure must either be approved in a properly convened meeting of the council/ committee or by the Clerk/ Allotment Manager under their delegated authority. Approval of expenditure by a committee is subject to the limits set out in the approved Financial Regulations and the committee's Terms of Reference.
- **Garage at Southwood Road.** Legal advice is being sought on access across the garage site.
- **Bike Racks.** Clerks are awaiting a further quotation for the concrete base and are investigating possible funding streams.
- **Community First Aid Training.** Following a request from a local resident at the Village Fete, the Clerk has been looking into possible options for community first aid training.

CORRESPONDANCE

115/24 Members **noted** the consultation received from KCC on development at Broomhill Bank school. Whilst broadly in favour of the proposal, the council wished to raise with KCC the impact this will have on traffic on Lower Green Road traffic.

DIARY DATES

116/24

- 09 September 2024 at 7.30pm - **Full Council Meeting** in The Rackliff Centre
- 16 September 2024 at 7.30pm – **Environment Committee Meeting** in The Rackliff Centre
- 23 September 2024 at 7.30pm – **Allotment Committee Meeting** in The Rackliff Centre

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

117/24 The following was noted by the council:

- There has been a further report of indecent exposure on Tunbridge Wells Common. The police have asked anyone who witnesses such a crime to call 999 immediately so that the police have the best chance of catching the perpetrator.
- Cllr Doug Smith has invited Southwood Road plot holders the opportunity to visit plots at Wickham Gardens.

- There have been reports of items from the Larder being sold on – possibly door to door. If anyone sees or hears anything, please let the steering group know.
- Two quotations have been received for the painting of the donated pavilion at Wickham Garden allotments, the lower being for £920.

Claire Reed, Clerk

..... Chairman

Dated