

Minutes of the Hadlow Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 April 2018 at Old School Hall, Hadlow

Present: Hadlow Parish Cllrs L Bright, E Bright, D Carey, N Collins, J Massy, J Newman, S Richardson. KCC Cllr M Balfour, TMBC Cllrs J Anderson, J Sergison, PCSO Toni Matthew, Representatives and Members of the following in addition to four other members of the general public were present: P Large (Hadlow Seniors Pop In Club), D Isted (Hadlow Bowls Club & Short Mat Bowls), Cllr C Hyams (Hadlow Table Tennis & Hadlow Flower Club).

Also in Attendance: M Stepkowski (Parish Clerk), E Battain (Admin Assistant)

1/ Welcome by the Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Nick Collins

He reminded attendees that the Parish Council was only the facilitator of the meeting but it was a Parish Meeting and therefore any questions for the Parish Council would be addressed at the next parish council meeting.

2/ Apologies for absence

These were received from Parish Councillor's C Barbary, R Morley, R Smith. TMBC Cllr H Rogers, Mr & Mrs Wetton, A Hughes, A Waddingham.

3/ Minutes of the meeting held Wednesday 19 April 2017

The Chair confirmed these had been approved and signed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 8 May 2017, Minute 3694.

4/ Reports from Parish Council

Reports were read by the Chairman and reports provided by Chairs of Committees as follows: Chairman of Parish Council (appendix a), Finance & General Purposes Committee (appendix b), Planning & Environment Committee (appendix c), Staffing Committee (appendix d)

5/ Reports from Borough and County Councillors

County Councillor Mathew Balfour provided a report (appendix f). He then responded to questions from the floor;

Kent Minerals & Waste Local Plan: He confirmed he had a personal interest through family connections and therefore was not involved in the process. He could provide details of other KCC representatives who were involved in the Plan review if required. He also confirmed that both the Borough and Parish representations would be considered by KCC.

Government Funding for Culture & Media – In response to J Newman's question as to whether some of the funds would be allocated to the Parish and local area for upgrading and implementing broadband in areas with poor or no access, Cllr Balfour agreed to research.

TMBC Cllr Jill Anderson provided a report, (appendix f) and discussed the timetable for consultation with regards to housing; highlighted how well both Tonbridge & Larkfield Leisure Centres had done coming in the top twelve in the country.

(KCC Cllr Balfour was excused from the meeting to attend to other duties)

6/ Reports from Village Organisations

Hadlow Historical Society – Report (Annexe f). The meeting was also informed of ‘The Great War’ exhibition of Hadlow memorabilia that would take place in the Old School Hall on Friday, Saturday & Sunday October 26, 27 and 28 2018.

Hadlow Seniors Pop In Club – C Hyams reported that the member numbers were running a little low and they welcomed new attendees. Arrangements were available to collect those that required assistance and the club continued to be fun with quizzes, coffee chat and lots more.

Hadlow Table Tennis – The club is for the over 50’s and new people welcomed. It is a great social evening and continues to flourish.

Hadlow Flower Club – Open to all ages and meets once a month. They have excellent guest speakers and produce some wonderful arrangements.

Hadlow Bowls Club – Mr Isted reported that overheads are ever increasing and there are challenges in keeping the grounds maintained for example with fertilizer strengths being made weaker. They have recently gained half a dozen new members but are always on the look out for new members; overall the club continues to thrive and do well.

7/ Public time – matters of interest

PCSO Matthew reported that over all Kent was still one of the safest places to live in the country and that locally crime had reduce and in particular anti-social behaviour. YMCA was engaging with the youth via the youth club and numbers attending were on the increase with the older children engaging more positively.

PCSO Kim Hockey had been re-assigned to work with vulnerable adults so would still be working on occasion within the parish. This would in time benefit the community as other PCSO’s would have more time to concentrate on other aspects of the job.

Mr Isted expressed concerns about speeding traffic within the parish and particularly through the village square. A discussion was held on the subject of speed with PCSO Matthew explaining how Speedwatch works and the Clerk encouraging residents to sign up to the programme in order that additional sites could be monitored to those that already existed. It was suggested that more police presence would be beneficial but realistically acknowledged that as the main road was an ‘A’ road with what was considered historically a low accident rate a police speed check presence would not be forthcoming. Cllr Anderson also noted that the speed of vehicles and increased lorries was affecting the foundations of homes and it was agreed that the community as a whole should continue to press for improvements to the A228 Colts Hill route.

Scouts & Young People – Mrs Large expressed gratitude to the Scouts for putting on the recent Seniors Tea at the Old School Hall and said they were a delightful group. The Scouts had also attended the Annual Litter Pick and everyone agreed that we are privileged to have such a well run group with many community spirited youth.

Local Retail & Shops – Cllr Carey reminded everyone of the importance of supporting where possible our local shops. It was noted that if Traffic Wardens

could occasionally attend the village square it may prevent the long stay parkers from using the bays and possibly increase shop usage.

Hadlow Remembers 1918-2018 – The Parish Clerk informed the meeting that Mr R Stanley would be preparing an exhibition of Hadlow memorabilia to commemorate 100 years since the end of The Great War at the Old School Hall in October. It was confirmed that St Mary’s Church was also having an open day on the 10 October to commemorate 81 people from Hadlow who died in the war. They were asking for residents to knit poppies for the event.

Annual Community Calendar – all groups were reminded to provide the parish office with their public event dates which would be shared within the community to assist all groups and help to advertise the activity in addition to preventing clashes.

8/ Consideration of bench in play area at Williams Field

A local resident had made a request for the bench via the Parish Council facebook page. The Clerk confirmed that investigations into ordering an appropriate bench continued and that Council had approved an installation in the play area.

Cllr Hyams thanked the Parish Clerk and Admin Assistant for their work within the Parish. There were no other questions and the Chair thanked everyone for attending and particularly those that had presented reports.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.08

Signed.....
Date.....

Appendices

Hadlow Parish Council Chairman Report
Hadlow Parish Council Finance & General Purposes Committee Report
Hadlow Parish Council Planning & Environment Committee Report
Hadlow Parish Council Staffing Committee Report
Kent County Council Member Report
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council Members Report
Hadlow Historical Society

(Appendix a.)

Hadlow Annual Parish Meeting 2018 – Parish Council Report

Cemetery Extension

I am very pleased to be able to say that this project is now very nearly completed. The surface dressing on the extended driveway and new paths should be applied in the next few weeks and that is the last stage of a project that has taken far longer than originally envisaged and cost rather more than originally planned. Nevertheless it will provide an important facility for the community into the foreseeable future.

Clearance of Hadlow Old School Annexe

This is another long outstanding task that has been satisfactorily completed this year. Thanks have to go to Melanie our clerk and Elaine the Admin assistant for an astounding amount of preparatory work that had to go in to demolishing a building that we had been advised several years ago was about to fall down of its own accord. The resulting increase in parking spaces is of general benefit and the continued provision of parking for staff of the parish office and medical centre protects the usefulness of the Old School Complex.

HY Arts Centre

The parish council continues to try and encourage appropriate users into the centre. The building is now being used to a level that covers routine operating costs but does not provide the extra for significant repairs or renovations. We hope this will improve soon.

TMBC Local Development Plan

The planning department has had to cope with several curved balls thrown by the government that have forced some rescheduling of this exercise. It remains something that I think will prove significant to Hadlow and pose some real challenges. For the moment the next significant event in the process of preparing the new LDP will be another round of consultation due in the autumn; October I believe.

Stonegate Farm Quarry

This concerns the old sand and gravel workings to the south of the River Medway, close to the parish boundary with Capel. All worked ceased there ten years ago but KCC are reviewing their Mineral extraction in the county and they are proposing to identify additional areas extending over to Hartlake Road as suitable for extraction. The environmental and amenity implications arising are very worrying especially for the southern part of the parish and Hadlow Parish Council among others are opposing any further quarrying at the site.

(Appendix b.)

Report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee

The role of the committee is to ensure:

That the Council's policies on governance, transparency and internal control are properly maintained throughout the year.

Ensure that the Council operates within its planned levels of income and expenditure.

The committee fulfils these tasks through scrutiny of: Monthly bank reconciliations, Schedules of receipts and payments, Monthly accounts compared to plan.

I am pleased to report that the Council has fulfilled its obligations as confirmed by a favourable report from the external auditor. Our thanks are due to the Clerk, who as Responsible Financial Officer, is responsible for maintaining our accounting policies and records.

Income & expenditure

In addition to the precept the Council secures income from letting of Council assets. 2017/18 has been a successful year during which the Council took over the operation of the HyArts Centre and generated sufficient income to meet its operating costs.

Expenditure takes two aspects:

The annual costs of operating the Parish for which a budget plan is prepared which forms the basis of the precept.

Project expenditure the costs of which are met from accumulated reserves.

The Parish operated within its budget plan expenditure and generated a surplus which will be carried forward to future years and set against future expenditure.

During the year two projects have been undertaken.

The continued extension of the cemetery. The costs of preparing the site, hedging the boundary, laying the vehicle roadways and establishing a memorial garden have been met. There remains the final top surfacing of the roadways to complete the initial phase of the cemetery extension.

The removal of the pre-school annex, which it was no longer cost effective to maintain, and the extension of the car park outside Old School Hall.

New projects.

A five year repair and maintenance schedule is being prepared for Old School Hall and larger works will be completed over the next five years.

It is disappointing that the football club could not be sustained. Apart from the closure of the club and associated loss of local activity it has left a significant asset, Williams Field under utilised. The Council granted permission for the initial stages of a baseball pitch to be built in support of the Kent Buccaneers. If there is sufficient, sustained local support, for such an enterprise the Council will consider assisting with further development of the pitch in future years.

The Council is always willing to listen to realistic proposals from Parishioners for the development of new facilities within the Parish.

Chair: Stephen Richardson FCA

(Appendix c.)

Planning and Environment Committee - Report to Annual Parish Meeting 2018

The committee has two main functions

Firstly it discusses planning applications for development within the Parish and comments on these to the local planning authority, the Tonbridge and Malling District council, on behalf of the Parish Council and Parishioners. Applications are dealt with at both the Parish Council meeting and the Planning and Environment committee meeting in order to provide timely recommendations to the Planning Authority.

Secondly the Planning and Environment Committee deals with a wide range of open spaces and buildings that encompass the environment of the Parish and which the Parish Council is involved with. These include: -

Open Spaces:

Williams Field including football pitches and play areas etc.

Signpost Field in Golden Green including play area.

Hadlow Cemetery.

St Mary's Churchyard.

The Cricket Field.

Numerous Footpaths around the Parish including the Access Trail and School Lane.

The Allotments.

At Williams Field there have been repairs to fencing and play area carried out due to vandalism earlier in the year. Now that we have no football teams the field has had very little use but recently approaches have been made to play Baseball on it and as a consequence a start has been made to create the necessary alterations. The fir trees around the ball court at Williams field have all been removed. This was due to the hazardous condition of them.

Elsewhere in the parish various tree works have been carried out an example being the mature oak in the cemetery extension where a failed branch required removal and remedial work on the tree.

In the Cemetery Extension a memorial garden has been installed for internment of ashes and all the roads have now been laid. There was problems earlier on due to subsidence but the problem has now been resolved and the final coating will be laid later on in this year.

During the year the usual raft of planning applications have been considered by the committee and commented on accordingly. Various planning enforcement concerns have also been ongoing with varying degrees of success.

Recent work has been carried out by all councillors to identify areas where dropped curbs should be installed to make access for all easier. We have also put forward suggestions to aid the scheme called " The Parking Plan "for the Parish but we are awaiting Kent Highways report back.

The Xmas lights again created a festive air in the village and Golden Green together with a Xmas fair hosted by St Mary's church and carol singing in the square. An impressive tree was again donated by Hadlow College.

During this year Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council continued the process of verification of prospective for sites for future development. Due however to national government up rating potential numbers, the TMBC Planning authority have had to rework some areas and so the next consultation will now be later this year.

Buildings:

Old School Hall

Hadlow Medical Centre

Hadlow College Pre School

(The Parish Council is also Landlord for the Medical Centre, Village Hall and Hy-Arts Centre).

The Council continues to maintain and promote its buildings for hire. The Pre School building has now been demolished. It has allowed designated parking for the Parish Council and Medical Centre and there are now noticeably less problems for patients and Old School Hall users being able to park. The Parish Council continues to support these facilities so that they may continue and prosper.

Summary

As you can see the Parish Council has many varied assets to maintain and duties to perform all on a voluntary basis. The role and dedicated time of the Parish Clerk, Admin Assistant and Village Warden make this possible. They provide a friendly and efficient service to the parish and should be supported not only by the Councillors but by all the parishioners. It is their village that we are trying to keep in a condition that they wish it to be. We have welcomed two new Parish Councillors this year but still have vacancies for three more. Finally I would like to thank all the members of the Planning and Environment Committee for all their help and support in carrying out the many tasks needed to keep the village facilities in good order.

Ed. Bright, Chairman of Planning and Environment Committee

(Appendix d.)

Staffing Committee Report 2017 to 2018

Yet again it has been a challenging year for our staff to respond to the myriad needs of our Parish. Our extensive assets require intensive management to keep them up to standard and earning an income for the Parish.

The Cemetery extension is nearing completion and the OSH carpark has been extended with a dedicated area for the Medical Centre and Parish Staff.

The Parish has been involved in the creation of a baseball field on our redundant football field. It is hoped this will encourage the youth of the village to participate in this sport.

Plans for the refurbishment of the Old School hall are underway and should take place this August.

During September the Warden attended and completed a course on Inspection & Risk Assessment of Children's Play Areas in accordance with ROSPA guidelines. The ROSPA play inspection also took place in September and the reports for both Williams Field and Signpost Field were good with all areas being considered either very low or low risk.

The Parish Clerk and Admin assistant are currently ensuring that we comply with the new data protection rules. To this end they attended training given by KALC.

Our Staff are working well as a team and keep the Parish in good state. Complaints from our Parishioners are low indicating that they are succeeding. They have been rewarded with a pay rise in line with the RPI.

Thank you to all our staff.

Lesley Bright Chair of Staff Committee

(Appendix e.)

Annual KCC Report 2017-2018

Thank you all for your support during the year and for electing me to represent you as your County Councillor for a second four year term.

The year leading up to the recent budget has been even more of a challenge: it has been calculated that funding for local government has fallen by 49% over the past 7 years whilst demand for services, particularly in social care, has been increasing.

Our aim is to deliver the budget whilst minimising reductions in services. At KCC we have planned for these budget pressures and have not run budget deficits whilst maintaining reserves. KCC remains financially sound.

A further challenge which we are aware of is the deficit in provision of infrastructure to accommodate the housing growth that Kent faces. This is the product of demographic change - or growth - and the practical inability of London to provide enough housing. KCC is working to achieve better infrastructure provision and there is some good news with investment planned by Network Rail, the Lower Thames Crossing, the Major Roads Network proposals and more, such as the M20 widening by use of the safety lanes.

Until January of this year, I had the privilege of serving on the Kent County Council Cabinet responsible for Highways, Transport and Waste. It was a hugely enjoyable and responsibility job and, having lasted in the role considerably longer than my predecessors, I hope that my longevity shows that I left the services involved in good shape.

Before Christmas we were concerned that we would need to reduce our expenditure on subsidised bus services by £2.25 million. There has been some misunderstanding in that 97% of buses in Kent are operated by commercial companies. KCC subsidises some routes, mainly in the east of the county, and mainly in rural areas when no service would otherwise be available. By talking with bus companies they have managed to link some of these routes to other services, to cause minimum inconvenience. Some services were being subsidised by tax payers by almost £20 per journey. Our savings target for this year has now reduced to £455,000. We have also put funds aside to help communities apply for help to set up taxi/bus type services that meet the needs of their community. To discuss this we are launching, through KALC, "The Big Conversation", which will lead to a Rural Bus Summit in the summer.

Speeding traffic through villages, HGVs (including parking) and congestion remain a problem for us all. Junctions 3 to 5 of the M20 will be widened by a lane in each direction which will mean a lot of disruption and inconvenience during construction.

Still on highways, we have added £2m to the £8.1m already in the budget for pothole repairs, following the recent snow emergencies. KCC deploy 60 full size gritters, 5 mini gritters and 117 farmers with snow ploughs fitted to tractors to help keep the roads clear. Treatment of main routes was carried out twice a day at times, instead of once. Problems on minor roads were sometimes caused by drivers abandoning their vehicles in the middle of the road making it impossible for

farmers to clear the drifting snow. Many messages of appreciation to highways during the bad weather were gratefully received. To help repair the roads we are also using smaller Kent based companies.

KCC dispose of the household waste collected by districts. We are proud of the fact that only about 1% of that waste now goes to landfill as most waste is either recycled to electricity at Allington or to compost at the Blaise site in Offham. Litter on roads and pavements remains a problem, despite heroic efforts by volunteers and the districts to collect it regularly. As does fly tipping. KCC are now cleaning road signs which does make things look better.

KCC have won national acclaim for their apprenticeship scheme, placing 236 young people in jobs in the year. Pressure on school places remains, mainly due to a population bulge which we have addressed at primary level but is a budget challenge as pupils move to secondary schools.

Most recently the big issue concerning all of you is the refresh of the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan. I hope that all residents are fully aware of the consultation (now closed) and been able to respond to the issues involved. It is to my regret that I have been unable to be involved due to a conflict of interest but I am confident that those making the final decisions will do so in the most professional way. I would reassure those who are concerned that the sites being put forward will still require planning permission, which is not being considered in this consultation.

My KCC member grant has been spent on a number of community, educational and highway projects, trying to improve road safety. I also look forward to arrival of the new Speed Indicator Devices for Hadlow, East Peckham and Mereworth.

I would lastly thank the Parish Councils for all their help, advice and patience during the year and I look forward to the coming year with confidence.

Matthew Balfour
Kent County Councillor
Malling Rural East

(Appendix f.)

Borough Councillors' Report for Hadlow Annual Parish Meeting 2018

The Borough Council's activities over the past year have been driven by the need to achieve value for money, which has meant that savings in excess of £1.8m have been delivered over the last three years. A further £1m in savings has to be found over the next three years.

To complicate matters, the Borough Council no longer receives direct grant from national government. This means that paying for services provided by the Borough Council, including emptying bins, sweeping the streets, providing a housing service, the planning function, licensing, leisure activities and parks, is now wholly dependent upon local taxation, a share of business rates, charging and how the Council makes best use of its capital resources.

The Borough Council is working hard to submit our Local Plan to the Secretary of State by December this year. This will influence important decisions to be made about Planning, the types of homes needed and the supporting infrastructure across the Borough for the next 15 years and beyond. Currently 696 properties have to be built in the Borough every year for the next 25 years, which means that all communities will need to take a share.

Jill has asked that the Local Plan includes accommodation for older people who may no longer need their family home but who do need to stay within their local area. It is not appropriate for people to lose not just their home but also all their friends and neighbours and contacts which they have built up over many years. This applies particularly in villages such as ours.

The new Homelessness Act will be very challenging because eg rough sleepers will have to be housed quickly and currently there is a shortage of properties for them. The involvement of Housing Charities such as The Bridge Trust and Porchlight, for example, will be key but it will inevitably have an effect on those on the Housing Lists.

As the recycling and street cleaning contract with Veolia is ending next year, much thought has gone into the way the Council will provide this service in the future. The negotiations and tendering processes for the contract are near completion. Not only do we hope this will result in savings by providing a larger, more efficient fleet of vehicles and staff in conjunction with Tunbridge Wells Borough but we aim to increase the amount of kerbside collection provided to include glass and plastic. Food, paper and other green waste will continue to be collected but it is likely that garden waste collection will be an optional chargeable service.

On a lighter note, the Leisure facilities in the Borough are first class. The Angel Centre and Poulton Wood both have Quest accreditation and scored highly. Both Tonbridge Swimming Pool and Larkfield Leisure Centre have succeeded in achieving Quest Stretch, and with over 700 sites registered nationally with Quest, only 12 have achieved 'Stretch', placing these sites in that top 12. Haysden and Leybourne Lakes Country Parks have both successfully retained their national Green Flag status and are also both 'Accredited' under Natural England's Country Park Accreditation Scheme.

We continue to hold our regular surgery sessions timed to coincide with the Church Saturday coffee mornings. If you have any concerns about local issues or problems affecting your homes or family, please pop in and ask if we can help. The sessions are confidential and if we don't know the answer ourselves, we usually know a

person who can help. For any pressing enquiries, please telephone or email us on the contact details below:

Jill Anderson	01732 850445	jill.anderson@tmbc.gov.uk
Howard Rogers	01732 850329	howard.rogers@tmbc.gov.uk
Janet Sergison	01732 851663	janet.sergison@tmbc.gov.uk

(Appendix g.)

The Historical Society

This has now been running for over 40 years. There is a programme of talks on the 4th Tuesday of each month from September to May (December a week earlier) on subjects of local and general interest. We meet at 8pm in St Mary's Upper Room. Our AGM is on Tuesday, May 22, followed by a talk by Donovan Hailstone on 'The Hailstones of Hadlow'. Visitors welcome.

We also have a small archive collection of material on Hadlow and would welcome any donations, or the opportunity to copy photos, documents etc.

Anne Hughes