

HADLOW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Hadlow Parish Council duly convened and held on
Monday 13 November 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs N Collins (Chairman), O Baldock, E Bright, D Carey, M Harvey, J Kennett, J Massy, J Newman, S O’Shea,

Also in attendance: M Stepkowski (Clerk & Minute Taker), TMBC Cllr S Crisp, Paul Boxall (Hadlow Rural Community School), Hadlow Park Residents Association Representative, 4 members of the public were also in attendance.

4634 To receive apologies, reason, and approval of absences.

Approved Council absences: None.

Other absences noted: KCC Cllr Hudson & TMBC Cllr Lark (other meetings) & Community Warden

4635 To receive Declarations of Interest and confirm Declaration of Acceptance of Office

None.

4636 To resolve HPC Minutes of 9 October 2023 are a correct record.

Resolved to approve the HPC Minutes of 9 October 2023 as a correct record. Proposed Cllr E Bright, seconded Cllr Harvey and carried unanimously.

4637 To receive an update on progress of resolutions from the last meeting held 09/10/2023.

No matters addressed.

4638 To resolve Staffing Minutes of 26 September 2023 are a correct record.

Resolved to approve the Staffing Minutes of 26 September 2023 as a correct record. Proposed Cllr Harvey, seconded Cllr Collins and carried unanimously.

(Cllr Carey was invited to join the meeting)

4639 To receive oral reports from TMBC & KCC Councillors

Cllr Crisp reported that since the sad loss of life after a collision at the junction of High House Lane and Carpenters Lane a review of signage has concluded there should be a renewal of signs damaged or missing and installation of additional “slow down” signs.

Cycle path Hadlow to Tonbridge – ongoing with volunteers offering to aid in vegetation clearance.

Two Brewers Public House – no movement.

Borough Councillor meeting to view applications ahead of the Regulation 18b consultation had taken place but nothing further to report at this stage.

In Cllr Lark's absence the Clerk read his report.

"Firstly, my sincere apologies for not being able to attend this evening's meeting. My role as Mayor and therefore Chairman of the Council has impeded my planned attendance at the meeting. I must attend an emergency management planning meeting on Monday evening. You may have heard that the Chief Executive of TMBC, Julie Beilby, has just given notice of her leaving to enter retirement. This of course starts a complex chain of events and the meeting on Monday is the start.

Not too much to report. The new management system being put in place at TMBC has caused numerous problems particularly in the area of Planning. Things hopefully will be fully resolved before too long but Parish Councils look to have better information in the future. There are changes particularly regarding trees and I have attached an answer provided to another PC which goes a long way to explain that area.

The Speedwatch scheme is proving a little more challenging in that finding a volunteer team is none too easy. I have up to present been trying by personal contact but without success. I feel that the current spell of delightful weather might be putting people off together with the general time of year in the run up to Christmas. I shall next go via the village Facebook page and ask for volunteers. Hopefully, this will prove more fruitful."

KCC Cllr Hudson's report was read in her absence by the Clerk:

"We are still looking to find savings of circa £50 million from next year's budget, which is proving very difficult, as so many discretionary services have already been cut in previous years.

And I will chase up our meeting with the highways steward for Hadlow and get that rearranged."

4640 To receive report from Police & Community Warden.

Cllr Newman had attended a police meeting and reported that Neighbourhood policing was currently at 50% manning level and hoped to be at full strength in the next year.

4641 To Receive Clerk & Chairman's report.

- a) Allotment Garage – request for use by allotments holders to store compost and planting soils. The Clerk to arrange a meeting in the New Year.
- b) Christmas Lights – There had been a positive response to the public questionnaire confirming several points: residents wished the Christmas Tree in the Square to remain and were happy for the integration of Pea Lights on Street Columns as a gradual replacement of the more costly Christmas motifs.

- c) KCC Email: “This week Kent County Council will publish Cabinet Committee papers setting out the findings from our Community Services and Family Hub consultations, presenting a range of proposals for where and how we propose to deliver community services. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who submitted feedback or welcomed us to discuss these proposals with you. A coordinated decision is planned between Community Services and Family Hubs on 30 November. We will be able to update you further once decisions have been taken.” Noted.

4642 Public Time & Parish Matters

The current Head of Hadlow Rural Community School, Mr Paul Boxall gave the meeting an update on progress at the school. This follows in italics.

Context

HRCS opened under the sponsorship of Hadlow College (HC) in September 2013. Due to planning application difficulties the school opened in temporary accommodation (converted pigsty’s) and was significantly undersubscribed (60 students) with high student need and limited permanent staffing (2). The school was close to closure when the current Headteacher was appointed in April 2014 as the third Headteacher in a 9-month period.

The school has made considerable progress over the last 10 years, moving into its new build in 2016, having now just under 400 students on roll, being oversubscribed for the last 7 years, (consistently having one of the highest percentages of first choices in Kent) and employing 60+ colleagues.

In 2019 Hadlow College were put into educational administration (EA) and the school legally separated under the direction of the ESFA/DfE/RSC. Due to the high profile of the EA the school were heavily scrutinised and received several external reviews (Ofsted/ESFA/SBMR) during the 2019-2021 period.

Through this period the school has faced a number of challenges including substantial building costs incorrectly assigned to the school, significant issues with the fabric of the building (including key infrastructure, such as networking, kitchens, windows, block paving, broadband, fire safety, power supply and ventilation), incomplete lease, numerous planning breaches and the removal of access to land-based facilities.

The school have been meeting with the DfE every two weeks for the last 4 years to resolve the above issues.

Lease Completion

The school lease should have completed in July 2020, but the school agreed to hold this back to prioritise the completion of the transfer of HC to NKC. Due to repeated attempts to include restrictive covenants and significant delays in confirming the lease agreement, the school has not had the security of controlling its own grounds over the last 3+ years.

The lease agreement and land transfer has now been completed with the Secretary of State (3rd November 2023), with one final piece of documentation to be completed for land registry.

The completion of the lease provides control of the surrounding playing pitches (2) and a 6-acre plot of agricultural land on the field behind the school.

Land-Based Specialism

Due to the extremely prohibitive costs and other 'educational' factors, the school is no longer able to access the facilities previously used at HC. To maintain our specialism, the school has self-funded, from reserves, a temporary livestock building on the back playing field.

This has allowed the school to maintain a land-based specialist curriculum but is not sufficient for the long term (the school currently has a very small number of livestock – 3 sheep, 3 goats, 2 pigs and 40 chickens).

The school is therefore in desperate need for additional land-based facilities and, in 2021, submitted a detailed business case to the DfE to take ownership of the Court Lane site, entailing the refurbishment and repurposing of the buildings and glass houses to enable the school to expand its provision and provide suitable facilities to support the L2 GCSE courses.

The business case has been externally reviewed and endorsed on several occasions by land-based consultants however, the school has been asked to provide an updated business case, to reflect the non-inclusion of the pre-emption land and to review the condition and appropriateness of the buildings.

School Size

The school currently has just under 400 students on-roll with 3 Forms of Entry (3 FE) and class sizes of 25 (15 for land-based classes) providing a Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of 75 per year group. This is no longer a model supported by the DfE and new schools will open with a minimum of 4FE and class sizes of 30.

With the continuing popularity of the school we would ideally wish to increase to 4FE (100 PAN) for each year group. The school has already accommodated increases to 4FE in current Year 7 & 8 cohorts and would like to continue this progression over the next 3 years. This would provide an overall PAN of 500 for the school, so still remaining a very small Secondary school (National Average Secondary = 900-1000).

To accommodate this increase, the school would like to utilise Court Lane to provide a 'split site' fully self-sufficient from HRCS. This would enable a whole cohort to access land-based studies alongside other curriculum areas, such as Art, Design Technology, IT and Core Subjects for the whole day. Year groups would then rotate for each day across the week, as per the current model.

The alternative to this will be to provide additional classrooms at the main HRCS site, focused on land-based provision and enabling the current rotation with PE to continue. This is less desirable as it will require more work, have a greater cost and will not provide the additional land-based facilities required.

Building Development

The school has coordinated an extensive programme of remediation to the building since its separation from HC. This has included a full network installation, broadband connection, numerous rectifications of building faults (roof, windows, fire safety, block paving etc) as well as the current building of a kitchen which is due for completion in April 2024.

Alongside this, and now that the lease has completed, the school will aim to install appropriate fencing around the site to ensure the safety and safeguarding of students.

To support the resolution of a number of planning breaches, the DfE are also supporting the school in proposing a floodlit 3G artificial pitch for use by the school and local community.

Until recently the school has been unable to open its doors to members of the public and we would very much like to provide a facility that the local community can utilise outside of school hours. This has been supported by a large number of local Football and Rugby organisations. The implementation of a 3G pitch will also provide much needed parking for colleagues and visitors to the school. (There are currently 30 parking spaces for 60+ staff).

Other Parish Matters

Cllr Baldock watched the online public access of the meeting of the Tunbridge Wells Planning Committee in which the Tudeley Village proposed development was discussed and was expected to be removed from the Local Plan because of the Inspectors report. Cllr Baldock understood that development in the Capel area would still be part of the new plan but on a smaller scale.

The Colts Hill Road development was still a possibility under the new plan.

Electric Bikes – Cllr Carey raised the matter and expressed his concerns over safety issues with the bikes and illegal use which was on the rise in the area. This was noted by Members, and they recognised a new police initiative set up to educate the public on the use of these vehicles.

Citizens Advice Pilot Scheme: the following letter received by Tonbridge & Malling was read and commented on:

At Citizens Advice in North & West Kent, we are always seeking to develop and improve our advice services to best suit client needs, as well as to cope with the incredibly high demand for our support at present.

Over the last 18 months we have been piloting advice giving via video calls as an additional alternative to telephone and face-to-face advice, as it has the potential to balance the benefits of face-to-face communication with the flexibility and convenience for clients of telephone advice. Video advice has so far allowed us to reach local people who might find accessing other channels of advice more difficult: including those with communication difficulties, older people and those with mental health difficulties. It has also proved to be a great means of offering support to people who are not actively seeking out our advice themselves, by setting up video kiosks in a local setting where they already feel comfortable.

Through our virtual outreaches in Snodland and East Malling, as well as our Kent Money Advice Hub project in partnership with KCC, we have learnt significant lessons in how to best plan, deliver and embed video advice within community settings.

With support from the TMBC Household Support Fund, we are now looking to further expand our video advice, with the aim of installing up to 10 more kiosks across Tonbridge & Malling borough. To help ensure we make best use of this opportunity and really reach into the local community successfully, we would appreciate your suggestions to help us identify suitable community spaces with significant footfall - this might include parish council offices, voluntary organisations or community cafes.

The only requirement is that the locations have a quieter, more private corner or room to enable those seeking advice to feel comfortable speaking freely; the kiosks themselves are simply a tablet within a secure stand, providing a one-touch button through to our secure video software. There would be no requirement on the host venues to contribute financially; only to be supportive of the service and encouraging to their service users for whom accessing video advice could be a help.

We would be delighted hear from you with any suggestions or contacts for us to follow up, or to arrange a time to tell you more about our proposals and to discuss any settings where you feel the service would be welcomed, or where the established activities would encourage visitors to make use of the kiosk.

Members considered possible suitable sites within the Parish and suggested: St Mary's Church, St Peters Chapel, Village Hall and Hadlow Library.

4643 To approve updated 2023/24 Emergency Plan

Resolved to approve the updated 2023/24 Emergency Plan Proposed Cllr Collins, seconded Cllr O'Shea and carried unanimously. Members expressed their gratitude to Mrs L Bright for her update of the plan on Council's behalf.

4644 Correspondence

None.

4645 To receive reports from representatives of committees and pass such resolutions thereon as may be necessary:

(1) Finance & General Purposes Committee

a) To resolve payments to date

Resolved to approve payments made in October. Proposed Cllr Harvey, seconded Cllr Baldock and carried unanimously.

b) To resolve October accounts in their entirety

Resolved to approve October accounts in their entirety. Proposed Cllr Harvey, seconded Cllr Massy and carried unanimously.

Planning & Environment Committee – Cllr Baldock to report & update on resolutions of the July and August Meetings.

It was noted that the agenda had been incorrect and July & August resolutions had previously been reported at earlier meetings. There were no updates on the October meeting.

(a) Planning Applications

- **TM/23/02016/FL** – Amendments to existing approved planning permission TM/21/0230/FL for alteration. Appledale Cottage, Maidstone Road, Hadlow, TN11 0JH.
HPC no objection.
- **TM/23/02017/FL** – Amendments to existing approved planning permission. Appledale Cottage, Maidstone Road, Hadlow, TN11 0JH.
HPC no objection.
- **TM/23/02034/FL** – Proposed three detached dwellings with double garages (resubmission following withdrawal of 23/01395/FL. Land between Birchfield and Mid Kent Nurseries, Ashes Lane, Hadlow.
HPC noted that this application had been “called in” to Area 2 and therefore would not comment at current time.
- **TM/23/02053/LDP** – Proposed: erection of a garden building. Court Lane Farmhouse, Court Lane, Hadlow, TN11 0DP.
HPC requested that if the application was successful then the building must remain ancillary to the principal property and the garden building may not be used as a separate hereditament.
- **TM/23/02072/LB** - Retrospective Listed Building Application: first floor internal reconfiguration to change the first-floor layout from 3 bed to 2 bed to create a large master bedroom. 12 Kenward Court, Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 0DX.
HPC no objection.
- **TM/23/02080/FL** – conversion and alteration of a redundant outbuilding to a dwelling house. Pear Tree Farm, Matthews Lane, Hadlow, TN11 0JG.
HPC no objection.
- **TM/23/03031/** - Application to discharge condition 1 of TM/22/02390/TPOC (species, size and siting replacement tree) 10 Dunsmore, Hadlow Park, Hadlow, TN11 0HX.
HPC no objection.

(b) To note: recent TMBC planning decisions and appeals.

Noted that due to difficulties with the TMBC new online app “Agile”, planning decisions and appeals notices have not been accessible for some time.

4646 To receive reports from representatives of external committees and pass such resolutions thereon as may be necessary.

- KALC – Cllr Bright attended the meeting and reported that there had been an informative presentation on Climate Change. Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) were developing a new website.
Minutes of the Meeting available from the Parish Office.

- TMBC Parish Partnership Panel – Cllr Newman attended and reported on:
 - Presentation from the Senior Forum.
 - Standards Committee: she confirmed the decision taken that if representatives did not attend regularly, they would lose their place on the committee.
 - TMBC Agile System – Due to the implementation issues TPO’s lists were noted to be backlogged.
 - Elections – May is the Police Commissioner election and the Elections Office is seeking staff to main the polls.
 - Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan – Regular 18b consultation due in the Spring. Minutes available from the Parish Office.
- TMBC Joint Transportation Board – No meeting convened.
- TMBC Standards Committee – No meeting convened.

4647 Motion to Exclude the Press and Public (to enable Council to consider any items on the agenda in which significant aspects will be of a confidential and financial nature).

Resolved to exclude the Press and Public to enable Council to consider items in which a significant aspect will be of a confidential and financial nature. Proposed Cllr Harvey, seconded Cllr Newman and carried unanimously.

To consider draft budget in advance of receiving tax base

Cllr Harvey as Chair of Finance and the Clerk had now completed the budget review. Although Councillors had hoped to curtail the increase in Precept to no more than 7.5% the detailed review resulted in a Precept increase of circa 17.8% partly due to the need for increased staffing costs. Cllr Harvey proposed that circa eight thousand pounds contribution from General Reserves would enable precept request to be reduced to circa 7.5%. Members to resolve the budget once Tonbridge & Malling confirmed the Tax Base figure.

Members agreed that a contribution from General Reserves would be appropriate on this occasion but not sustainable in the long term.

Council to resolve upon receipt of the tax base and final figures.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.53.

Date of next meeting: Monday 11 December 2023, 7.30pm at Old School Hall

Signed

Date

Date: 16/11/2023

Hadlow Parish Council

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Time: 14:10

Current Bank A/c

List of Payments made between 01/10/2023 and 31/10/2023

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
02/10/2023	Total Energies	DD	37.60		Inv807 HyArts Electricity
04/10/2023	British Telecom	DD	237.51		Inv160GO Phone & Internet
06/10/2023	MFG Fuel Station	FP1132	47.70		Truck & Equip Fuel
09/10/2023	Tate Fencing Ltd	FP1133	48.44		Inv705 Pot Hole Repair Materia
09/10/2023	EDF Energy	DD	100.15		Electricity Street Light
10/10/2023	Kent County Council	1134	127.00		Xmas Lights App 2023
10/10/2023	Business Stream	DD	89.01		Inv836 Water HOS
10/10/2023	Total Energies	DD	326.59		Inv851 HOS Electricity
10/10/2023	Total Energies	DD	318.23		Inc6541 Electricity HOS Aug
16/10/2023	Lloyds TSB	FP1135	15.40		Bank Serv Chg Inv321
17/10/2023	Castle Water	DD	9.70		Inv5571 Water Cemetery
17/10/2023	Aviva Pension	DD	253.84		Cncl Cntb Clk Pension
19/10/2023	Clerk's Wages	FP1136	2,639.39		Clerks Wages Wk32
19/10/2023	Admin Wages	FP1137	877.52		Admin Wages Wk32
19/10/2023	Caretaker Wages	FP1138	862.66		Caretaker Wages Wk32
19/10/2023	Tunbridge Wells MOT Ltd	FP1139	204.00		Minibus 10Wk Inspection
19/10/2023	Flash Mobile Welding Svs	FP1140	216.00		Inv7960 Replacement Bins Signp
19/10/2023	King & Sons Kent Ltd	FP1141	280.00		Inv5581 Cemetery Skip
19/10/2023	Datasharp I Solutions	FP1142	36.00		Inv79062 Copier Prints
19/10/2023	CSG Global Education	FP1143	134.11		Inv768 Stationery & Clean Prod
19/10/2023	Gel Creative	FP1145	160.00		Inv21845 Ann Web Host to Ap 24
19/10/2023	Zest Commercial Cleaning	FP1144/5	693.60		Inv883 Hall Cleaning
19/10/2023	EJP Fire Protectin	FP1146	963.60		Inv975 Fire Alrn/Emg Lght/Ext
19/10/2023	D Evans	FP1147	55.00		Oct Window Clean HOS
19/10/2023	Kent Association Local Council	FP1148	60.00		Inv919 Climate Chg Crs Clr OS
19/10/2023	Screw fix	FP1149	26.97		Inv823 Maintenance Equip O/Spa
20/10/2023	HMRC	FP1151	1,210.26		PAYE Wk32
20/10/2023	Tonbridge & Malling B.C.	DD	84.00		Rates Cemetery
24/10/2023	Total Energies	DD	34.24		Inv955 Ballcourt/Cpk Elect Lig
24/10/2023	Total Energies	DD	346.25		Inv999 Electricity HOS
26/10/2023	Kent County Playing Fields Ass	FP1150 A&B	40.00		Annl Subscription22/23&23/24
26/10/2023	Training At Work (MS)	FP1152	22.80		Inv875 Food Hygiene Train Clk
26/10/2023	Mazars LLP	FP1153	756.00		Inv844 External Audit 22/23 Ac
26/10/2023	Miltons Plumbing & Heating Ltd	FP1154	84.00		Inv399 Gas Repair
26/10/2023	Harris Grave Tending	FP1155	300.00		Inv10957 War Memorial Clean
26/10/2023	Down To Earth Trees Ltd	FP1156	1,058.88		Inv221 Tree Wks W/F & St M
26/10/2023	Castle Water	FP1157	142.56		Inv443 Sept Allot Water
30/10/2023	MFG Fuel Station	FP1158	77.08		CA65 Minibus Fuel
30/10/2023	Veolia	DD	36.12		Inv241 Euro Bin Waste Collect
Total Payments			13,012.21		