

# **Minutes of the Hadlow Annual Parish Meeting**

## **held on 11 March 2024**

### **at Old School Hall, Hadlow**

**Present:** N Collins (Chair of meeting), O Baldock, E Bright, D Carey, M Harvey, J Massy, J Newman, S O'Shea (Hadlow Parish Cllrs). KCC Cllr S Hudson, TMBC Cllr S Crisp (Green Party), PC's Caruana & Evans

**Group representatives and Members of the Community:** C Anderson, A & A Noterman (Village Hall Management Committee - VHMC), P Jones (VHMC & Kent Buccaneers Baseball), S Card & R Ellis (Hadlow Bowls Club), C Hyams (Hadlow Table Tennis) H Rogers (Golden Green Association), J Hopkinson, Mrs Cox, S Tofts (Hadlow residents)

**Also in Attendance Minute taker:** M Stepkowski (Parish Clerk),

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

Reminded attendees that the Parish Council was 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 which was due to follow on at the end of the current meeting.

#### **2/ Apologies for absence**

These were received from TMBC Cllr J Lark (attending another meeting). Anne Hughes (Historical Society) , Anne Waddingham, Dave & Jean Isted (Short Mat Bowls and Bowls Club)

#### **3/ Minutes of the meeting held Monday 13 March 2023**

**Resolved** to approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 13 March 2023 as a correct record. Proposed E Bright Seconded J Massy and carried.

## **4/ Reports from Borough Councillors, County Councillors & Community Officers**

### **TMBC Cllr**

Cllr Steve Crisp introduced himself to the meeting as Borough Councillor to the Bourne Ward and explained that he was new to the role and still had lots to learn, however he continued to assist residents whenever possible.

Proposed Hadlow to Tonbridge Cycle Path – this had been unsuccessful in its government grant bid but supporters continued to work on the project and hoped that an appeal may be possible.

Cllr Crisp was participating in meetings with other local parishes to apply for Community Energy Schemes and hoped that Hadlow would consider joining in the future.

Draft Local Plan – Cllr Crisp was not in a position to provide any information but it was agreed that when the public consultation was opened the Clerk would advise on social media.

### **KCC Councillor**

Historical Society Document Archive: Cllr Sarah Hudson reported that she had attended meetings to negotiate the longer-term archiving of Historical Society documents at Hadlow Library which had been successful.

Historical Society Exhibition – this had taken place in March and had been well attended and she thanked all those involved in the exhibition.

Speed Steers Place – Cllr Hudson continued to work with residents to have the speed limit reduce at Steers Place. It would need to be on the Parish Highways Improvement Plan and would require sufficient data to evidence the need for reduced speed.

Hartlake Road – The matter of ruined verges and pavements had been an ongoing issue but the utility companies had been held responsible and expected to make good.

General Matters – Cllr Hudson reported that she continued to assist individuals within the Bourne Ward with issues such as special needs schooling, pot holes etc.

## **Police**

PC Caruana and his associate PC Evans attended the meeting and provided an update on crimes during 2024 to date. He also spoke about the current plans to increase police numbers to enable a more local focused approach to policing.

PC Caruana had started visiting the local youth groups both at Williams Field and Hadlow College to interact with the youth. He was also aware of the local issues raised with regards to litter and antisocial behaviour at Williams Field and St Mary's Churchyard; he had attended a meeting with other interested parties at the Parish Office to discuss how everyone could assist in resolving these issues. He encouraged residents to report matters of concern to the police and confirmed that his work email address was available from the Parish Office. In response to concerns raised about drug abuse he acknowledged this was a country wide issue and that although there was local problems they were monitored and intel acted upon when appropriate.

## **5/ Summary Report from Parish Council**

**Cllr Collins (Chair of Parish Council)** read a report – see appendix a)

**Cllr Harvey (Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee)** read a report – see appendix b)

## **6/ Reports from Village Organisations**

In the absence of Short Mat Bowls Club and Badminton Club representatives reports read by the Treasurer of Bowls Club.

### **Hadlow short mat bowls club.**

The attendance has been good throughout the winter season. Some of our matches against local clubs have been good and some we have lost badly. Our tournaments and inter club competitions have been fiercely contested but enjoyable.

Jean Isted, Treasurer.

### **Hadlow ladies badminton club.**

We continue to play in the Village Hall. Although some of the ladies are in advanced years we continue to enjoy the game.

Joan Allen, organiser.

### **Hadlow outdoor bowls club.**

We had a successful Open Day earlier in the year and recruited some more members.

Membership has been better than previously, and the bowlers have enjoyed their sport and some social events that were held.

In December our landlord gave us the option to continue to lease the ground or we could purchase it. Up until then we have been paying a peppercorn rent of £1 pa. They proposed a considerable increased rental charge, or we could purchase it for a considerable sum. This came as a bit of a shock. No decision has yet been made as to the way forward.

David Isted, chairman.

**Hadlow Table Tennis** – Mrs Carol Hyams reported that the group was doing well and numbers playing were good. They enjoyed playing at the Village Hall which was light, airy and a warm facility. She hoped that the Parish Council would look favourably upon a financial request to be made for the replacement of roof and installation of solar panels.

**Hadlow Village Hall – see appendix c)**

**Golden Green Mission Hall and Golden Green Association**

Mr Howard Rogers reported that the hall was doing well, and the hall well used by a variety of groups and it continued to be basically self-funding. He thanked the Parish Council for their contribution towards the installation of new double-glazed windows to be completed over the summer months. The Association had been led by Mr Alec Pelmore as Chair for over 25 years with no-one to date offering to take over the position. The Association continued to be active organising events such as: annual pensioners lunch, annual fete, coach trips (using the Hadlow Community Minibus Scheme) , the Hamlet newsletter, maintaining the Defibrillator.

He was also pleased to announce the upcoming intended re-start of the Golden Green Speedwatch programme.

The Bell Pub – in response to enquiry from member of the meeting he confirmed that the pub remained under private ownership but had been registered on Community Asset Register.

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## **7/ Public time – matters of interest**

- **Parish Council Vacancies** - Chair of Parish Council reminded the meeting that there remained five vacancies for Parish Councillors and hoped that residents would consider joining the council and bringing it back up to full accompaniment to ensure there was a realistic spread of opinions continuity and succession. Further information on being a Councillor was available at the Parish Office.
- **Cemetery Extension** – The Parish Clerk reported on plans to start the cemetery extension over the summer; she stressed the importance of developing a well planned cemetery keeping in mind possible long term financial constraints. She gave details of possible stonemasonry to be used in order to keep grounds maintenance at low cost.

- Kent Dementia – Parish Cllr Jo Newman reported on the Dementia Awareness groups that encompassed both East Peckham and Hadlow. To date the demand for the service within Hadlow had been minimal with those families in need of support accessing information and assistance from other organisations; with funding currently not available it had been decided to disband the service for the Parish although she would continue to ensure literature was available at the library and Old School Hall.
- Hadlow Community Minibus Scheme – the meeting was reminded that the buses are there for all local groups and details could be accessed at the Parish Office. The buses just continued to be self-funding although costs were starting to rise and therefore the cost of using the vehicle would increase from £40 per day to £60. The buses had been well used during the last year by primary schools, WI, Golden Green Association, Scouts and others and bookings for the coming year looked promising.

**Meeting closed at 19.42**

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

Appendix a)

### **Parish Council Chairman's Report**

Hadlow Parish Council's share of each household's Council Tax Bill for the coming year is about 3.75% of the overall amount due. That means most households are paying between 25p and 40p per day for your parish council. These funds contribute towards the cost of running council assets and staffing costs; Clerk, Deputy Clerk, and the Village Caretaker. Parish Councillors are not paid, and expenses are rarely claimed even if incurred.

Council owned assets include Williams Field Recreation Ground, Signpost Field Recreation Ground, Hadlow Cemetery, the Old School Complex (other than the KCC library), Hadlow Cricket Ground, the Allotments adjoining Carpenters Lane and several plots at the Freehold. Additionally, grounds maintenance and safety in St. Mary's Churchyard is the parish council's responsibility. For a parish council, even a relatively small one, this represents quite a large estate and creates a significant workload and expense.

The other significant area of a parish council's duties is its role as a consultee on Planning matters for TMBC and KCC.

All executive authority on a parish council resides with the Clerk who can delegate some authority to council employees. Councillors make the decisions and instruct the Clerk who additionally must conduct a range of statutory duties.

Hadlow parish has two wards. Hadlow Ward and Golden Green Ward. Hadlow Ward should have eleven parish councillors and Golden Green Ward should have two parish councillors. Whilst Golden Green Ward is up to strength, Hadlow Ward currently only has six councillors, and we are hoping that residents will consider joining the council and bringing us back up to full accompaniment to ensure we have a realistic spread of opinions continuity and succession.

The council wishes to thank all those groups and volunteers that also contribute to the successful running the of Parish and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Nick Collins

(Hadlow Parish Council – Chair)

Appendix b)

**Finance Report, Hadlow Parish Council 2023/24**

Two major projects have been undertaken during the current financial year. Firstly, the toilets at the Hy-Arts Centre were refurbished at a cost of £18,955, which was financed out of funds received from S106 monies (being money paid to us via TMBC for major residential development schemes in Hadlow). Secondly, the kitchen at Old School Hall was refurbished and improved at a cost of £27,515, which was financed out of Parish Council reserves.

Other notable expenditure was incurred on rebuilding the wall adjoining the medical centre, additional noticeboards at Council properties (e.g. allotments and playgrounds) and tree works to Williams Field, the churchyard and the allotments. In addition, the Council gave a grant to the Golden Green Mission Hall towards the cost of installing double-glazed windows.

Mike Harvey

Chair of Finance

Appendix c) – see overleaf

# **Hadlow Village Hall**

## **Management Committee Report**

### **March 2024**

Hadlow Village Hall Management Committee continues to make progress in improving infrastructure, facilities and equipment year on year as it has done for the past 9 years.

The fact that we have improved turnover by over 5 times supports the view that our clientel, both regular and casual, appreciate these improvements.

In summary, we have carried out the following works -

- A continuing cycle of decorations, window and roof maintenance
- Invested in a new scaffold tower and 3 part ladder
- Upgrades to kitchen equipment
- Replaced kitchen cupboard fronts and sinks
- Replaced lobby and corridor flooring
- Replanned storage space in cuboards and under stage
- Replaced curtaining and blinds
- Changed all lighting to LED standard
- Installed a new suspended ceiling, with intergrated lighting, in the main hall
- Replaced the hall's old gas infra-red heating with 2 air-conditioning units
- Installed a high level projector with roll-down screen, together with a PA system and speakers
- Erected an enclosing fence at the rear
- Replaced 2 Emergency Exit Doors

We are pleased to acknowledge the help we have had with grants from Hadlow Parish Council, Kent County Council and HM Government Covid Support.

However, there is still much to do and our efforts go on !

We are currently engaged in raising funds for the main roof replacement followed by installation of solar panels. The existing roof is 50 years old and has a number of leaks. The recent rise in energy costs has further highlighted the need for energy efficiency. Consequently we have identified the need for solar panels which can reduce our energy costs by 50% with a capital payback period of 10 years.

The expected cost of both roof and solar panels is nearly £40,000. We are able to offer matching funds from our own resources.

However this expense will absorb nearly all our reserves. We then need to raise funds for the next project - Reconfiguration and modernisation of Toilets - and also to replenish our funds to cover normal repairs and replacements.

Any help in this regard from Hadlow Parish Council would be much appreciated by this Committee and indeed by the Hadlow Community.

Caroline Anderson (Chair)

Hadlow Village Hall Management Committee