

Minutes of **RYARSH PARISH COUNCIL** meeting
Held virtually on **Monday 8th February 2021 at 8.00pm**

Councillors Present:

Cllr M McKinlay (Chairman)
Cllr I Emson (Vice Chairman)
Cllr M Barton
Cllr T Butler
Cllr C Martin
Cllr D Storey
Cllr J Sutton

Also in attendance:

L Mackie (Clerk)
County Councillor Hohler (left at 8.10pm)
Borough Councillor P Montague (left at 8.15pm)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Borough Councillor A Kemp and PCSO Robinson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes arising from the Parish Council Meeting on 11th January 2021 were agreed by all Councillors and will be signed by Cllr McKinlay at the next available opportunity.

4. EXTERNAL REPORTS

(a) County Councillor Hohler

- The asymptomatic Covid testing sites are busy and doing well. There is some concern about the South African variant in the ME15 area. Almost 10,000 tests were carried out and around 1% were positive. It will be about two weeks to establish if any are the SA variant.
- There are many scams to be aware of at the moment.
- New businesses setting up in Kent have increased by 8.1% from 2019, 1,378 were in Tonbridge & Malling.
- The KCC budget will be set this week and it has been a real struggle. KCC gets 70% of its money through Council Tax and 30% from Government and the amount of people paying Council Tax has decreased.
- Kent has to look after asylum seekers under 18. This year Government has agreed to cover KCC's costs. There is a COVID emergency grant fund, Helping Hand Support. Available for people who need help.
- Fly Tipping is being reported. It is not likely this is linked to the need to book a slot at the Household Waste Recycling Centres. People will not normally throw their waste in the countryside rather than book a slot. Residents should contact TMBC about fly tipping.
- Government has decided that local Council elections will take place in May. Cllr Hohler has decided to run again

(b) Borough Councillor Montague

- Fly tipping is a common issue in all parishes in the ward. Covid has taken priority in many areas and it has been difficult to deal with fly tipping as a apriority. Cllr Montague has liaised with Cllr Robin Betts, the Cabinet Member for Street Scene and the Environment Services at TMBC, stressing the importance of the street scene in rural areas. There needs to be a holistic approach – Kent Highways may need to install cameras, and offenders need to be prosecuted with heavy fines imposed. Cllr Montague is working to make a plan, policy and

Signed

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Date

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commitment to get action taken. He does not believe that the changes at the Household Waste Recycling Centres are the issue, but offenders need to be prosecuted.

- There was a discussion about the Bulky Refuse/Saturday Freighter collections. The priority of Urbaser, the waste contractor, is household waste collection. They are running as many shifts as they can but still have staffing issues due to isolation. It is hoped that they can reintroduce these Bulky Refuse collections, but domestic waste collection has to be the priority.
- The Local Plan documents are on the website. TMBC have formulated a response to the Inspectors criticism. TMBC feel they have complied in every aspect, and consider that the Inspector is not following the rules which they are bound by. Planning Officers feel strongly that their case is genuine and that they did everything asked of them.

(c) Police

Police are unable to attend zoom meetings.

Cllr McKinlay has been in contact with Inspector Lizzie Jones who is responsible for our local policing. Cllr McKinlay reported issues and local concerns about break ins and how upset, worried and angry residents are. Inspector Jones confirmed that Kent Police are doing a lot about this in rural areas. They are keen to encourage residents to report any incidents or concerns to them. They are not able to publicise all action that they take for operational reasons, but are taking these matters seriously and want to reassure the public.

It was noted that a catalytic convertor was stolen from a car in the village, and a mechanic reported that the criminals have been made known to the police who say there is not enough evidence to take any action. Cllr McKinlay will raise this with Inspector Jones.

5. PLANNING

(a) Plans Received for Comment

- i. **TM/21/00256/FL - 2 Brooks Drive** - Proposed two storey side extension and minor internal alterations on the ground and first floors to suit
There were NO OBJECTIONS.

(b) Approvals

- i. **TM/20/02695/FL - Charlton House, Birling Road** - Part single/part two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, new front entrance porch and external alterations
- ii. **TM/20/02635/FL - School Cottage, Old School Lane** - Single storey detached car port with pitched roof in driveway/part garden
- iii. **TM/20/02608/FL - Hillview, London Road** - Single storey rear extension and alterations

(c) Refusals

There were no refusals to report.

(d) Any other Planning Matters

- i. **TM/20/02970/AGN - Park Barn Farm, Park Farm Road** - Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: formation, alteration or maintenance of a private way for agricultural or forestry use. PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED

6. MATTERS ARISING

(a) New Parish Council Website

Cllrs were pleased with the new website which is now live. The Parish Council has received funding from KCC, made through KALC, for the set up and first year of the website.

(b) Workhouse Road Flooding

This has been reported to KCC who have attended. Gallagher have also been on site to look at the issue. The water has been pumped away as a temporary solution but the pipes need to be sorted out. Flood water is coming from several different directions. Cllr McKinlay will chase for progress.

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It was noted that the land owner near the school was responsible for keeping the pipes and ditches clear under Riperian Law. Following intervention by KCC the landowner is making plans to ensure the water flows clearly under Birling Road. It was suggested that the landowner at his junction is also responsible to ensure the pipes and drains are clear, no matter where the water comes from.

(c) Verge at Workhouse Road/The Street junction

Cllr McKinlay has met with Gallagher, who have agreed to put back the stones at the edge of Workhouse Road to prevent vehicles parking there. They are also planning work to the hedge and verge, tidying up and preparing the area for the Parish Council to plant wildflowers. Cllrs were pleased with the help offered.

(d) To consider Highways Improvement Plan

There can be no further action due to Covid Restrictions. Cllr McKinlay has been in contact with Kent Highways about the flooding at the Roughetts Road/ The Street junction following the works there.

(e) Litter Picking in the Village

There is no progress to report until Covid Restrictions are lifted. Cllr Storey and Ba were thanked for the litter picking they have carried out along The Street. Cllr Martin reported that residents on London Road regularly litter pick along there.

(f) To consider Beacons

A resident has suggested a Beacon to celebrate a number of forthcoming events, and it is understood that other BART parishes have beacons. There was a discussion about suitable locations for a beacon, taking into account the need for parking and space for spectators. Cllr McKinlay will investigate possible options.

(g) To consider, approve and adopt Grievance and Disciplinary procedures, Equal Opportunities Policy and Travel and Expenses Policy

Draft documents have been circulated to Cllrs for consideration.

(h) To consider, approve and adopt Clerk's amended Contract of Employment

This has been previously discussed and agreed, and is linked to the policies and documents above as they are referred to in the draft contract.

(i) To consider updating Zoom or subscribing to Microsoft 365 and TEAMS

It was agreed that the Parish Council would upgrade Zoom to allow meetings to carry on without being stopped and restarted after 45 minutes. This costs around £9.99 a month.

7. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS

(a) Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and T&M KALC

Cllr McKinlay reported on the Executive Committee meeting of KALC. We need Local Government permission to continue meetings remotely and KALC have written to MP's about this. Parish Councils are asked for their support. Traffic was discussed, and HGV's have been banned from parking in various areas and they are being clamped. Residents can report lorries which are parked where they should not be.

8. MONTHLY CHECK LIST

(a) General Data Protection Regulations

- i. To consider next stage in Data Audit – Data Sharing
This will take place at an appropriate time in the future.

(b) To note any problems and receive reports about

- i. Highways

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Cllrs were pleased to note that works on the M20 Smart Motorway have now ended. The Clerk was asked to look into whether Decibel monitoring can be carried out on Ryarsh Park to establish if the Sound Barrier is up to standard.

- ii. Footpaths and Footways
There were no issues to report.
 - iii. Street lights
There were no issues to report.
 - iv. Trees
There were no issues to report.
- (c) Play Area and Recreation Ground
Cllr Storey was thanked for completing his regular inspections of the play area. Cllrs were pleased it was possible to keep the play area open at this time. The Clerk will circulate prices for children's benches/picnic tables.
- (d) Ryarsh Village Hall
There is a leak from the roof which the Village Hall are obtaining quotes to repair.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- (a) To receive bank statements, consider and approve financial statements (to be physically signed at the next available opportunity)
These have been circulated and considered by Cllrs. The statement was approved and will be signed by Cllr McKinlay at the next available opportunity.
- (b) To consider and approve invoice payments
The following invoices were APPROVED and the payments will be authorised by Cllrs Martin and Barton:

Payee	Description	Total £
PSR Lighting	Streetlight Maintenance January 2021	£116.40
NALC	Training – Leaders Talk: Why Representation in Local Councils matters	£38.93
KALC	Training – Freedom of Information Essentials	£16.80
KALC	Training – Managing and Reducing Stress	£16.80
KALC	Training – Introduction to Leadership	£16.80
Clerk	Reimbursement Costs - Dropbox	£95.88
Clerk	Feb 2021 Salary, expenses, allowance	£857.09
HMRC	Feb 2021 PAYE and NI	£66.45

A payment to Eon for Electricity for January 2021 of £131.81 will be paid by Direct Debit.

- (c) To consider financial donations 2020/2021
It was agreed to make a donation of £200 to Leybourne Riding School for the Disabled.
- (d) To consider Internal Auditor 2020/2021

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It was agreed to appoint Lionel Robbins again as Internal Auditor.

- (e) To consider and approve amending Financial Regulations to authorise a Debit Card
Councillors AGREED to authorise a Debit Card for the Clerk to use from the Unity Trust Bank Account and to amend the Financial Regulations so that "any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by the Parish Council in writing before any order is placed". Councillors will then retrospectively approve the payment at the next meeting. Cllrs APPROVED a procedure for making payments.
- (f) To consider any other financial matters
There were no other financial matters.

10. MATTERS FOR NEXT MEETING

There were no matters.

The Meeting concluded at 9.00pm

Date of the next Parish Council meeting is **Monday 8th March 2021**