

Minutes of **Ryarsh Parish Council** Meeting held in the Davison Room, Ryarsh Village Hall on
Monday 7th February 2022 at 8.00pm

Councillors Present:

Cllr M McKinlay (Chairman)
Cllr M Barton
Cllr A Betts
Cllr C Martin
Cllr S Payne
Cllr J Sutton

Also in attendance:

Borough Councillor Montague (left at 8.20pm)
3 members of public
L Mackie (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr I Emson (illness), County Councillor Hohler and Borough Councillor Kemp. There were no declarations of Interest.

2. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of 10th January 2022 be approved and signed as an accurate record by Cllr McKinlay.

3. EXTERNAL REPORTS

(a) County Councillor Hohler

- The KCC budget meeting is on 10th February. It is a one year budget, not the 3 year one we anticipated. The budget consultation had over 2,000 responses. 70% of respondents were not comfortable with reductions in social care for the over 65s or for children, nor for savings on highways, the environment and waste. KCC have looked for opportunities to deliver services at a lower cost to give better value for money: a challenging time to deliver a balanced budget.
- The consultation on the booking system for visits to the Household Waste Recycling Centres has also been out to consultation. Residents were asked for their opinions on the booking system with 10,705 replies. About 30% of those responding said they would like to be able to book a slot on the day, as well as booking in advance, and this is now being phased in. The sites are open for 362 days a year.
- There have been fewer visits to the sites but residents are bringing more waste (from an average of 60kg a visit to the 44kg before). Recycling has gone up from 63% to 69% which has led to lower costs of disposal, which is good news and has enabled a saving. The booking system has also meant that queues of traffic waiting to get in to the centres from busy roads have gone. This has made it better for everyone and has given the staff more time to help residents.
- KCC has 99 libraries and is currently engaging with residents on how to make the libraries more user friendly. Logging on to KCC libraries explains the engagement process which runs until 7th March so please do send us your suggestions. We have received over 100 ideas already and 94% of current users say they will continue to use their library. Later this year there will be a full public consultation. Libraries offer so much more than book borrowing and I think they are going to become increasingly important as community centres, as well as places for children to learn to enjoy reading, with all the benefits that brings, especially at this time.
- We are discussing our new strategic plan, delayed because of the pandemic. We will develop a Civil Society Strategy soon, to strengthen our relationship with the voluntary sector. Kent Together is still available to help and support more vulnerable residents.
- She is chairing the cross-party member group which is developing the next five year strategy for our wonderful country parks. We are currently providing new playground

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equipment, or improving what we already have, and discussing all sorts of exciting new plans. Do look online to get a feel for what the parks offer and consider buying an annual parking ticket which allows you to park all day at any of the KCC country parks.

(b) Borough Councillor Montague

- Negotiations are continuing between TMBC and Urbaser about the refuse collections. It is hoped these will conclude in a matter of weeks rather than months.
- The Cabinet have a budget meeting this week. It is likely Council Tax will go up by the maximum it can without a referendum. There is not enough money to pay for all of the services, costs have increased in the way all of our bills have gone up, but the revenue they get is not increasing.
- There was an operation in November with the Police and Council about Fly Tipping and this will take place again in February.
- Platinum Jubilee in June- make any applications for road closures or event licences in a timely manner as they are going to get quite busy.
- There was a question about refunds for those who had subscribed to the garden waste collections. Cllr Montague explained that there is an administration cost to a refund. It has been difficult as they didn't know how long the situation would last, and had thought it may only be a couple of missed collections. The cost is about £1.50 a time to empty. Subscriptions have been extended for the length of the missed collections. Waste collections are now running ok and the driver situation seems better than it was.
- Tonbridge & Malling are top in Kent for recycling at 51.5%. There is a marked difference in garden waste in Borough compared to TW – Victorian houses and smaller gardens, so bit of a difference between waste in both Boroughs.
- A comment was made that drivers are going through bins and rejecting them if they contain the wrong things. Cllr Montague explained they are supposed to do that, but it is difficult when there are other things they are not doing. Collections are rejected for payment if there is too high a proportion of wrong materials.
- Crews often work Saturdays to catch up on collections they could not do in the week.
- Reports of missed bin collections are going down.

(c) Police

Cllr McKinlay hopes everyone has signed up for the neighbourhood police information through My Community Voice. They provide regular reports about everything they are doing, where they are on duty and what they are working on. The police also send us a report about crimes every month. Our relationship with the police is getting much better.

4. **PLANNING**

(a) Plans Received for Comment

There were no plans received.

(b) Approvals

There were no approvals to report.

(c) Refusals

There were no refusals to report.

(d) Any other Planning Matters

We are still waiting for the local plan. All the while we are without a local plan, developers can submit planning applications and they are not scrutinised in the same way.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

(a) Clerks Actions Since Last Meeting

- The newsletter was prepared and circulated
- Submitted the KALC citation for the Community Award
- Contacted the supplier about damage to picnic bench and received a rebate
- Liaised with school about Queen's Jubilee Mugs

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(b) Chapel Street Hedges

Overgrown hedges have been reported, and Kent Highways notified. There was a discussion about ownership of the field.

(c) Parish Council Projects – Ryarsh in Bloom

Cllr McKinlay will sow more seeds onto the verge by the Village Sign. Gallagher have kindly agreed to trim the area.

(d) KCC – Household Waste Recycling Centre Booking Update

An update has already been provided from County Councillor Hohler

6. OPEN FORUM – Public Participation Session

- It was reported that the railings outside the school don't come all the way along, and a child was witnessed nearly running out. The Clerk will notify the school and Kent Highways
- The Parish Council talked about giving all school children a souvenir mug that has the date and platinum jubilee on it, and there are 210 children at the school. Following a discussion, it was agreed to only provide souvenirs for the children at the primary school.
- The suggestion was made that instead of a souvenir mug the children may prefer a water bottle they can use at school. The Clerk will look into options.

7. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS

(a) KALC T&M 24.02.22

Cllr McKinlay will be Chairing the meeting.

(b) KALC Planning Conference and Health and Wellbeing Conference (MM)

Cllr McKinlay will be attending.

(c) Queens Jubilee Event 05.06.22

Jean Edwards from St Martin's Church addressed the meeting. The Church are organising the event, and there has been a change of plans which were provisionally suggested by the Parish Council. There will now be a Tea Party on Saturday 4th June with a Service in the Village Hall on Sunday 5th June 2022. The event will be similar to the one held ten years ago for the Diamond Jubilee, which was very successful and many people from the Village attended. It will be slightly different this year, but there will be entertainment and it is hoped different groups and associations who use the Hall will take part. The Church is hoping for everybody's agreement, but do need help planning and physical help on the day. A committee will help make arrangements, and Cllrs McKinlay, Sutton, Martin and Betts agreed to be part of that. Cllr Barton will help on the day.

8. MONTHLY CHECK LIST

(a) To receive reports about

i. Highways, Footpaths and Footways

A white Van is parking on Chapel Street just above the Baptist Chapel. Every day it gets closer to the bank and has taken about a metre off the bank and leaving mud across the road. Lorries struggle to get past when it is parked and are eroding the other side. The Clerk will send details to the PCSO and will report to Highways.

The Highways Steward inspected the drains at the bottom of Chapel Street and reported that they are SE Water drain covers, within acceptable limits and not too high.

Cllrs noted that the drains which are too high are at the bottom of Old School Lane, not Chapel Street. The Clerk will report this to Highways.

ii. Street lights

The light from the play area, over the notice board, is still intermittent. The Clerk will report again to the contractor. It is a sodium light which for some reason was not converted to LED at the same time as the other lights. The Clerk will ask for a quote to replace it.

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iii. Parish property: Defibrillator, Ryarsh Resource Room

The broken notice board on Roughetts Road was removed. Trinity have given approval to put a Notice Board on Ryarsh Park. There was a discussion with a representative from Ryarsh Park about the best location, which he suggested was from the footpath towards the play area and not the main entrance which is used by vehicles. A wooden Notice Board with Ryarsh Parish Council at the top was agreed, that would be durable.

Residents from Ryarsh Park had wanted to attend the defibrillator training but there were not enough spaces, and asked if more training was planned. The Clerk will contact the Village Hall Committee.

(b) Play Area and Recreation Ground

Cllr Barton has oiled the new bench but found some damage which occurred in transit. The company has offered a rebate which will be accepted and Cllr Barton will fix the damage.

(c) Ryarsh Village Hall

The boiler is not working again and there is no heating, and the Clerk will report this to the Village Hall Committee.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) To receive bank statements, consider and approve financial statements for signature and note budget monitoring

These have been circulated and considered by Cllrs. The statement was approved and signed by Cllr McKinlay. There were no issues relating to budget monitoring for the year.

(b) To consider and approve financial donations 2021-2022

The Parish Council has already made donations this year to Citizens Advice Bureau and for the Christmas Tree. There was a discussion about making a donation next year to the Baptist Church to support the food bank donations they collect. These donations go to the Halling Food Bank. Donations of dry food, tins, packets, toiletries etc. can also be left in the Porch of St Martin's Church. They are passed to the Pilsden Centre in West Malling who distribute.

(c) To consider and approve invoice payments

The following accounts for payment were approved. The payments will be authorised by Cllrs Martin and Betts.

Payee	Description	Total £
PSR Lighting	Streetlight Maintenance January 2022	£116.40
Clerk	Reimbursement - DropBox	£95.88
Clerk	Salary February 2022	£835.39
HMRC	PAYE and NI February 2022	£96.56

A payment to N Power for Electricity for January 2022 is due, but the invoice has not been submitted. This will be paid by Direct Debit.

(d) To consider and appoint Internal Auditor 2021/2022

It was agreed to re-appoint the existing auditor Lionel Robbins.

10. MATTERS FOR NEXT MEETING

There were no matters raised.

The Meeting concluded at 9.00pm

Date of the next Parish Council Meeting is **Monday 14th March 2022** at 8pm

Signed 

Dated 14-3-22