

Minutes of **Ryarsh Parish Council** Meeting held in the Davison Room, Ryarsh Village Hall on
Monday 12th December 2022 at 8.00pm

Councillors Present:

Cllr M McKinlay (Chairman)
Cllr I Emson (Vice Chairman)
Cllr A Betts
Cllr C Martin
Cllr S Payne
Cllr J Sutton

Also in attendance:

L Mackie (Clerk)
3 members of public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs M Barton, County Councilor Hohler and Borough Councillors Kemp and Montague.

2. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of 14th November 2022 be approved and signed as an accurate record by Cllr McKinlay.

3. EXTERNAL REPORTS

(a) County Councilor Hohler

Cllr Hohler has provided a report:

- KCC is working hard on the budget with frequent meetings. A public consultation will be in early January
- Cllr McKinlay noted that the Kent Messenger reported there is every likelihood that KCC will be declared bankrupt next year, so there are real problems.

(b) Borough Councillors Kemp and Montague

Cllr Montague has provided a report:

- Waste collection is likely to be delayed a little this week as crews were unable to get out today. Most bins will probably be a day or two late being collected but we are asking residents to leave their bins out. Crews will be out at the weekend if necessary.
- On the subject of waste, the trial of National Enforcement Solutions to help issue fines for tackling litter and fly tipping is going well. Over 200 fines have been issued so far. There have been a couple of "training issues" but nothing unexpected for a new scheme and it is progressing well.
- New temporary accommodation (owned by TMBC) has taken on its first occupants in Tonbridge after a delayed refit, reducing our reliance on private rented accommodation.

(c) Police

There was no report.

4. PLANNING

(a) Plans Received for Comment

- i. **TM/22/02546/FL - Land South East Of Church Farm, Church Road - Change of use of land for the provision of 4 no. removable glamping pods together with associated decking areas, parking and landscaping**

The applicants talked about this proposal:

- It is almost a year to the day since the first application which was declined, on the grounds of Green Belt, some local concerns about increased traffic on Roughetts Road, disturbance to adjacent Brook Farm and visual intrusion from the A20.

Minutes of Ryarsh Parish Council Meeting

- This new application bears in mind the Green Belt concerns and those of local people. It is on a completely different site on the other side of farm which is nowhere near Roughetts Road, Brook Farm or the A20.
- The application site is much smaller. The original proposal was for 10 pods and extra amenities. This proposal is for 4 pods, without amenities such a reading room, BBQ hut or Sauna.
- The 4 pods are on waste ground adjacent to the existing farm yard.
- Access is from Hawley Drive, so there will be no cars coming down from Roughetts Road.
- The smaller site means any concerns about noise and traffic should be addressed.
- There is lot of screening, hedges and trees so it will be virtually invisible from the footpath.
- The only properties nearby are the applicants so it shouldn't cause any disturbance to neighbours.

Cllrs looked at plans of the site provided by the application. There were a number of questions:

- Was there a problem with drainage on the first site? The applicant said this site is on the boundary of the flood zone so should be out of the way.
- Has the field flooded historically? The applicant said it had flooded at the other end of the field if there is heavy rain, but not at this end of the field. The site is a little higher.
- Will there be the same pods as last time, as shown in the video? The applicant said there is one which is the same, but two are hexagonal wooden pods and one is an octagonal wooden pod. The Pods sleep 6. There are not many sites across the whole country which sleep a family of 6.
- If this is successful, would you contemplate re-applying for the original site? The applicant said the Planning Officer said there could not be pods in the open fields. It may be that hobbit houses that sink into the bank would be less intrusive in the green belt and more likely to be granted permission. If the pods are a success they may consider that for the future, but TMBC do not like constructions in open fields.

Cllrs commented that the site is tucked away, and does not interfere with the footpath, and that is a great idea to find additional use for the farm and a different source of income. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would support the application and there were **NO OBJECTIONS**.

(b) Approvals

There was nothing to report.

(c) Refusals

- i. **TM/22/02228/LDP - The Hollies, London Road - Lawful Development Certificate**
Proposed: Erection of a detached single storey building comprising a swimming pool, sauna, gym, games room, bar, plant room and changing facilities for use incidental to the enjoyment of the existing dwelling The Hollies

(d) Any other Planning Matters

There was nothing to report.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

(a) Clerks Actions Since Last Meeting

- The newsletter was prepared and circulated.
- Reported a possible fault with the defibrillator to Zoll who are collecting it to be evaluated
- Arranged a meeting in January online with Kent Highways about the Highways Improvement Plan
- Arranged a meeting with the new Kent Highways Steward in January

Minutes of Ryarsh Parish Council Meeting

In relation to the Highways Improvement Plan, Cllr McKinlay said it would be a good idea to get some new data about the speed of traffic on Roughetts Road.

There was a discussion about whether the Parish Council could restart the Speedwatch scheme. This will need a group of trained volunteers. It was agreed to get some data about speed of traffic before considering Speedwatch.

- (b) To consider KALC Civility and Respect Project: Take the Pledge
KALC have launched this project and details have been circulated to Cllrs. It was agreed to wait until the KALC Meeting this week to see what KALC propose.
Cllr McKinlay reported that she is no longer the Chairman of KALC T&M.
- (c) To receive update – defibrillator and order of new pads
Following reports of a possible fault, the defibrillator will be taken away by ZOLL to be checked. The Clerk will order new pads.
- (d) To consider and adopt new Code of Conduct (NALC model or TMBC)
Details have been circulated to Cllrs. It was considered that the Code of Conduct which the Parish Council has signed up to is adequate and we haven't needed to exercise it, so there was no need to change it. Cllrs AGREED to retain the existing Code of Conduct.
- (e) TMBC Local Elections and 6 months rule (04.05.23)
It was noted that if a Parish Councillor resigns, you cannot co-opt for the vacancy until after the elections which are in May.
- (f) Boundary Commission For England 2023 Boundary Review (05.12.22)
Cllr McKinlay explained there have already been Ward Changes. Ryarsh is no longer linked with Birling and Trottiscliffe but are now linked with Leybourne and other parishes. These changes are to Parliamentary Constituencies. Ryarsh will be included in the Maidstone Constituency.
- (g) To discuss Highways Improvement Plan for 2023
This has been discussed already.
- (h) To consider Emergency Plan
Cllr McKinlay started on this plan a few years ago with Cllr Martin. They will restart work on this.
- (i) To consider Fire Hydrant Inspections
Cllrs Sutton and Barton will carry out the inspections.
- (j) To consider 2023 Meeting Dates
Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of the month. In April and May those dates fall on a Bank Holiday. Cllrs agreed to move the meetings to Monday 17th April and Monday 15th May.
- (k) Parish Council Projects
There was a discussion about the Christmas Tree. Some residents have suggested to Councillors that the Parish Council should fund-raise for the Tree. Cllrs noted that Mark and Deborah Nankivell have provided the tree and raised money as a family for 25 years. The Parish Council has made a donation towards the Christmas Tree every year in support. Last year the Parish Council offered to plant a permanent tree in celebration of the Jubilee which could be lit as a Christmas Tree every year. This suggestion was turned down. It was noted that a formal request for a contribution has never been received for the tree, and no accounts have been provided to show expenditure or funds raised.

Cllrs were aware that a large amount of the costs related to the fireworks. Cllrs were also aware that fund raising has been badly affected by covid and by the school putting on similar events such as fireworks and an Easter Egg Hunt.

Cllrs have made donations to Citizens Advice Bureau and Heart of Kent Hospice already this year. Cllrs AGREED to making their usual contribution of £200, and will pursue again the idea of planting a tree permanently

Cllr McKinlay has spoken to the Head Teacher at the Primary School. They are trying to get the children involved in understanding how society works and would like Cllrs to go in to talk to them on various topics. Cllr McKinlay will explore this and ask Cllrs to assist and make a contribution. Cllr Sutton has had an art display on a wall in the pub for the children, and does a talk once a year about the history of the pub.

6. OPEN SESSION – Public Question Time

7. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS

- i. KALC AGM 19.11.22
Cllr McKinlay was not able to attend.
- ii. JPCTCG 23.11.22
This group has now been disbanded.
- iii. KALC (T&M) 15.12.22
This has already been discussed.
- iv. KALC and Ryarsh Community Awards 2023
Cllrs would like to take part again and award KALC and Ryarsh Community Awards. Residents will be asked for nominations and Cllrs will also consider suggestions.
- v. Borough and Parish Council Elections 04.05.23
The date was noted.
Cllr Ann Kemp is retiring and Cllr Montague is standing for Hadlow. Cllr McKinlay announced that she would be standing for Borough Council along with Sam Webb who lives in Leybourne.

8. MONTHLY CHECK LIST

(a) To receive reports about

- i. Highways, Footpaths and Footways
Two residents reported that the Grit/Salt Bin on Roughetts Road was empty, so the road was hazardous in this snowy and icy weather. Kent Highways are responsible for keeping this filled and it will be reported to them to be refilled.

Cllr McKinlay is meeting the new Highways Steward in the Duke of Wellington on 10th January.

There has been a water leak in Old School Lane for five months. Cllr Sutton calculated that around 1 million litres of water has been wasted. It has been reported, and the latest reason given that they couldn't get a permit to close the road – although it was needed as this is a no through road. There are two leaks now. This is the third year in a row this has happened. Water leaks into Cllr Betts driveway, depositing mud into the drain, putting his property at risk of flooding again. The Clerk was asked to contact South East Water about this, copying in Tom Tugendhat MP and County and Borough Councillors.

It was reported that there has also been a leak at the junction of Church Road. This was supposed to have been fixed, and they did close the road and left markings on the ground, but did not carry any work out.

Minutes of Ryarsh Parish Council Meeting

It was reported that the pathway on Birling Road on the corner of the school has a massive dip which fills with mud and water causing children to walk into the road. The Clerk will report this to TMBC.

ii. Street lights

It was reported that the streetlight on the traffic calming island between Godrey's and Lilac Cottage is not working.

iii. Parish property: Defibrillator, Ryarsh Resource Room

New pads will be ordered for the defibrillator. The defib will be taken away by ZOLL to be checked.

iv. Village Hall Trust and vacancy for Treasurer

David Lucas is retiring and a new Treasurer is needed. Cllr McKinlay will find out how many hours the role requires then the Parish Council will help advertise the vacancy.

(b) Play Area and Recreation Ground

The Clerk was asked to look at pieces of equipment for all abilities which could be added to the Play Area. This cost can be built into the precept.

New picnic benches for Ryarsh Park could be built into the precept.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) To consider and approve invoice payments

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

Payee	Description	Total
	Payment Approved at December Meeting	
PSR Lighting	Streetlight Maintenance November 2022	£116.40
Wrotham Computer Care	Anti Virus Protection – 2 years	£38.71
Play Inspection Cp	Annual Play Area Inspection	£129.00
Clerk	Salary December 2022	£1197.66
HMRC	PAYE and NI December 2022	£293.73
Clerk	Expenses November 2022	£9.10

Payment to N Power for Electricity for November 2022 of £132.29 will be paid by Direct Debit.

(b) To receive bank statements, consider and approve financial statements for signature and to monitor budget

These have been circulated and considered by Cllrs. The statement was approved and was signed by Cllr Emson. The Clerk reported on budget matters:

- Overall 40% of the budget has been spent to the end of December, which is 75% through the year
- Parish Property is at 166% due to the purchase of the Notice Board for Ryarsh Park
- Insurance is at 114% as the amount was slightly higher than anticipated

(c) To consider NALC 2021-2022 National Salary Award

The Clerk left the room while this was discussed.

Cllrs agreed to increase the Clerk's Salary in line with the 2021-2022 NALC National Salary Award.

(d) To consider Clerks Home Office Allowance

The Clerk left the room while this was discussed.

The Clerk's Home Office allowance was increased to £86 in line with CPI.

(e) To consider N Power – Electricity Contract Renewal

Cllrs agreed to accept the renewal contracts offered by N Power.

- (f) To consider Recreation Ground Maintenance Contract Renewal
Renewal details have not yet been received.
Cllrs praised Landscape Services for their fantastic work cutting the grass on the Recreation Ground this year. It was noted that they were regularly there, and Cllrs have told workers what a fantastic job they have been doing.
- (g) To consider draft budget and precept request 2022-2023
Cllrs will consider the figures, with the budget and precept to be approved at the January meeting.
- (h) To consider donations for 2022-2023
Cllrs have agreed the annual donation of £200 for the Christmas Tree.
There has been no request for funding or details of projects received from the Village Hall Trust.
- (i) Appointment of auditor for smaller authorities
Mazars LLP have been appointed as auditor to replace PKF Littlejohn LLP.
- (j) 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 9.14pm

Date of the next Parish Council Meeting is **Monday 9th January 2023** at 8pm

Signed
Wendy Nockley

Dated
9-1-23