



Minutes of **Ryarth Parish Council** Meeting held in the Davison Room, Ryarth Village Hall on  
**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023** at 7.00pm

**Councillors Present:**

Cllr M McKinlay (Chairman)  
Cllr A Betts  
Cllr C Bowyer  
Cllr E Dennis  
Cllr C Martin  
Cllr S Payne (arrived at 8pm)

**Apologies:**

Cllr J Sutton

**Also in attendance:**

4 members of public (3 left at 7.30pm and 1 left at 7.45pm), Daniel Childs - Head Teacher Ryarth Primary School (left at 7.30pm), L Mackie (Clerk)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Sutton and County Councillor Hohler. There were no Declarations of Interest.

**2. MINUTES**

To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on **13<sup>th</sup> November 2023** for signature  
It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 be approved and signed as an accurate record by Cllr Bowyer.

**3. EXTERNAL REPORTS:**

(a) County Councillor Hohler

Cllr Hohler's report will be circulated after the meeting.

(b) Borough Councillor Banks and Boxall

There was no report.

(c) Police

Pc Dylan McElligott has replaced PC Lisa Whitehead. He has circulated details of recent shed and garage break ins. It was noted that a white van was stolen on Birling Road recently.

(d) Village Hall

There was no report.

**4. PLANNING**

(a) Plans Received for Comment

- i. **TM/23/03202/OAMIN- Former Ryarth Place Farm, Birling Road** - Outline Application: all matters reserved except for access, layout and scale for the demolition of an existing range of modern agricultural buildings and the redevelopment of site with six dwellings with garaging together with associated creation of car parking and turning areas, conversion of existing stable building into an ancillary domestic outbuilding and landscaping works (responses by 19.12.23)

The Chairman and the Clerk met with the Head Teacher at Ryarsh Primary School recently. Residents at the meeting made comments and representations, together with the Head Teacher as follows:

- The access to the site runs along the back of the Forest School and Outdoor Areas
- Taking down the existing buildings would mean any houses look straight into the school
- The School is concerned about:
  - Safeguarding of the children
  - The proximity of the houses to the Forest School, with a low fence means it is easy to potentially jump into the school from that area
  - The negative impact on the natural area – there have been owls and bats in recent years
  - Noise during the construction phase, especially for children with sensory processing difficulties
  - The school have contacted Nick Abrahams the Tonbridge & Malling Education Lead for support
  - The position of the access road with vehicles coming out at school drop off and pick up times coming out is a massive concern of ours.
  - They will put together the objections and submit it from the School Leadership Team and the chair of Governors
- the application is full of factual inaccuracies, inconsistencies and omissions
- Any reference to asbestos is missing
- AT 1.9 they say there is no threat to highway safety and that is rubbish
- The application says quieter use. At the moment one or two people work there and occasionally once or twice a day come in with a tractor and one lorry. That would compare to 12 cars from 6 houses 24/7. At the moment it is purely during working hours. The application says a reduction in traffic to and from the site, but how can that be with 1 tractor and 1 flatbed lorry currently versus 12 cars in future?
- Concerns – the traffic, the people, the noise and the extra movements in the village
- The application states that TMBC are behind with building and this group of 6 will help greatly – but what about the 92 houses in Ryarsh Park?
- There is concern about The Stable. It is listed and must have a separate application. At least half of that stable is in a neighbour's property. 2 windows face their garden with a pane of glass. It is brick, ragstone and weatherboarding - not just brick. The use they say is domestic ancillary. But what is that? If it is a study, it can include a sofa bed and soon become a B&B or similar
- The Old Stable would belong to house 3 in the plans. They cannot access it for maintenance without coming into the resident's garden.
- It is difficult to move through Ryarsh at school times. There is single lane traffic not helped by traffic calming. A lot of traffic is parked in single file. Add another 12 cars to that, perhaps late for work etc and it creates a problem. There will be children moving and all sorts of other traffic
- Cannot believe anyone would consider an entry point for 6 houses at that location
- The access road is single file. You cannot get in or out unless you wait for cars to park
- What if someone drives into the access road when someone is leaving their house? They will have to wait for someone to reverse.
- The access road has a dog leg. They mention a passing spot, but how will a driver see that? Someone travelling from Birling waiting for school traffic cannot turn if someone is pulling out of the access road, and the person leaving the access road cannot go anywhere.
- It is not just vehicles from the properties, but couriers and delivery vans – there will be a lot of extra traffic
- For at least an hour a day it will be impossible
- Children will be exposed to danger
- People will end up reversing onto the main road
- People are already driving too fast – it is chaos



- Very often a resident hears cars go down there by mistake. They must reverse all the way back. There is a little turning area but logs have been put there so that no one can use it.
- The access road is about 100 m so they cannot see a car coming. If they are late, they will push and someone must reverse onto the main road but they will not be able to
- Traffic is already a nightmare
- It is a safety issue
- The applicant says it is easy to see out. But when the tractor is coming down the landowner cuts the hedge because they need that to be able to see both ways. If that is in a tractor, what about cars?

Councillors **AGREED** to strongly **OBJECT** to the application.

It was noted that the planning system at TMBC has been modernised, but software changes have been difficult to get working properly and there have been many delays.

(b) Approvals and Refusals

- i. **TM/23/01792/FL -98 Park Farm Road** - Single storey in-fill extension, single storey link between the house and garage and conversion of garage with associated landscaping works **APPROVED**

(c) Any other Planning Matters

- i. **Land West of Roughetts Road** – Request for an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion to determine the information to be provided in an Environmental Statement to accompany a planning application for the proposed extraction of aggregate (sand) – KCC/SCO/TM/0140/2023 – [www.landwestofroughettsroad.co.uk](http://www.landwestofroughettsroad.co.uk)

There were no updates to report.

**5. MATTERS ARISING**

(a) To approve change of time of Parish Council Meetings

The meeting started at 7pm. However, music from the Main Hall made it difficult to concentrate and at times impossible to hear. The Clerk will contact the Village Hall Committee to discuss. The Main Hall is already booked until 7.30pm (with music) and the Committee has now taken a booking at 8pm (with music) so it will not be possible to continue to run meetings in the Davison Room on a Monday where they have been held for decades.

(b) To Consider KALC Community Awards and Ryarsh Village Award Schemes

Cllrs **AGREED** to take part in the KALC Community Awards Scheme and the Ryarsh Village Awards Scheme. Nominees will be sought and a decision made at the January meeting.

(c) TMBC Changes to On and Off Street Parking restrictions Consultation (07.01.24)

[www.tmbc.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk/consultations)

This will impact Ryarsh. The proposal is to increase existing charges and to begin charging in West Malling High Street, Martin Square and Aylesford. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Betts would respond on behalf of the Parish Council and object to the proposals.

(d) To receive update about Highways Improvement Plan

Cllr Betts reported on a suggestion for the HIP made by a resident. On Birling Road near the school, parked cars mean the road can be narrow making it difficult for wider vehicles to pass. A wider space would make it easier and could free up traffic.

Removal of the traffic calming island is on the HIP, but the KCC Planning and Advice team did not recommend its removal.

The HIP has already covered double yellow lines at this location and the KCC Planning and Advice Team stated: "P&A did consider the possibility of double yellow lines however this would be a lengthy and costly process for a short section of road and could displace vehicles to an even less appropriate place. If parking at this location is caused by parents on the school run, this will be addressed by the School Travel Planner who has been contacted to discuss a possible Travel Plan and provide details of what educational support and resources are available with the Primary School."

(e) To discuss problems with the postal service

There was a discussion about problems with post not being delivered and parcels being prioritised by Royal Mail. Staff are already working long days and there is a shortage of workers. Cllr McKinlay reported that this has been taken to Tom Tugendhat MP and Tracey Crouch MP. It was suggested that this could also be reported to Offcom.

(f) Kent Local Flood Risk Strategy 23-24 Consultation

This was noted.

(g) To note completion of Registration of Village Hall Lease with the Land Registry

This has been completed. It was noted that this has cost the Parish Council quite a lot of money as it has paid all costs associated with the new Lease and no costs have been passed on to the Village Hall.

(h) Parish Council Projects – Picnic Bench (Ryarsh Park), Notice Board

The Clerk was asked to circulate bench details to Councillors again for agreement. The Notice Board can be ordered in the New Year and a resident will quote for removal of the old Notice Board and installation of the new Notice Board. One side of the board should be locked and one side left open.

**6. OPEN SESSION – Public Question Time**

It was suggested that contact is made with the business that operates in the former Ryarsh Place Farm, as they may have a lease or some sort of right to be using the land.

Christmas Tree – Mark N explained that there were carols this year, no fireworks and no lighting event. Most of the cost of the ceremony is the fireworks, which can cost around £2,000. The cost of the tree with ancillary items is about £500.

Cllr Sutton has handed over money raised during the Coronation Event which has been used towards the tree. Mark and Deborah are happy to finance the tree, but if the Village would like an event then help is needed to fund raise, perhaps with a Committee. The Parish Council will include a request for help in the newsletter.

**7. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS – to receive updates and reports**

(a) Remembrance Service

The service went well. The wreath was lovely and was laid by Cllr McKinlay. Cllr Betts also attended.

Cllr Dennis will take the Tommy down and it will be stored by Cllr McKinlay.

(b) Annual Play Area Inspection 25.11.23

The report has been circulated and will be considered at the January meeting.

Consideration will be given to laying slabs or grasscrete at the entrance to the play area.

(c) KCC Parish Highways Seminar 22.11.23

Notes have been circulated.

**8. MONTHLY CHECK LIST**

To receive reports about:



- (a) Play Area and Recreation Ground  
Cllr Betts is carrying out regular checks. Cllrs McKinlay and Betts attended the annual play area inspection.
- (b) Highways, Footpaths and Footways  
There was a discussion about whether emergency vehicles can get past the parked cars on Birling Road.
- (c) Street lights  
Cllr McKinlay reported that our budget this year has been overrun by the huge increase in our streetlight electricity costs.  
The clerk will report a streetlight not working on Birling Road.
- (d) Parish property: Defibrillator, Ryarsh Resource Room  
Defibrillator training was carried out. Cllr Betts looked at the Ryarsh Resource Room today which was neat and tidy. Cllr Payne will look before the next meeting.

**9. FINANCIAL MATTERS**

- (a) To receive bank statements, consider and approve financial statements for signature and to monitor budget  
These have been circulated and considered by Councillors. The statement was approved and was signed by Cllr McKinlay.
- (b) To consider and approve invoice payments  
The following accounts for payment were approved. The payments will be authorised by Cllrs Betts and Martin

Payee	Description	Total
	<b>Payments approved at the Meeting</b>	
PSR Lighting	Streetlight Maintenance November 2023	£116.40
Commercial Services Ltd	Grounds Maintenance July-Sept	£786.62
Play Inspection Co	Annual Play Area Inspection	£200.00
Helen Munro	Locum Clerk Salary Oct-Nov	£292.00
Clerk	Salary December 2023	£848.88
HMRC	December 2023 PAYE and NI	£93.31
D&M Nankivell	Christmas Tree	£200.00

- (c) To consider Un-metered Electricity Supply Renewal  
The Clerk approached an agent, but they could not give prices for unmetered domestic supplies. They did advise that the Standing Charge is too high. The Clerk was asked to negotiate a reduced Standing Charge.
- (d) To consider any other financial matters  
The Clerk will check with Unity Trust Bank for progress in adding Cllr Bowyer as a signatory.
- (e) Confidential Agenda Item – to consider NALC Salaries Pay Scale agreements for Clerk  
Cllrs have received details of the NALC Salaries pay scale and AGREED to the increase in pay for the Clerk and the back dated pay.

**10. MATTERS FOR NEXT MEETING**

There were no matters raised.

The Meeting concluded at 8.15pm

Date of the next Parish Council Meeting is **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024** at 8pm

Signed .....  
Dated .....  
15-1-24