



Minutes of Ryarth Parish Council Meeting held in Ryarth Church Hall on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024**  
at 7.30pm

**Councillors Present:**

Cllr M McKinlay (Chairman)  
Cllr J Sutton (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr A Betts  
Cllr C Bowyer  
Cllr E Dennis  
Cllr C Martin  
Cllr S Payne

**Also in attendance:**

County Councillor Hohler, 2 members of public (1 from 8pm), L Mackie (Clerk)

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

Apologies were received and accepted from Borough Councillors Banks and Boxall.  
There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES**

To receive and approve the Minutes of the meeting held on **12<sup>th</sup> February 2024** for signature  
It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be approved and signed as an accurate record by Cllr McKinlay.

**3. EXTERNAL REPORTS:**

(a) County Councillor Hohler

- Cllrs discussed TMBC's planning department and delays in reaching or publishing decisions. Cllr Hohler said they are changing staff at TMBC and have some staff absent through sickness so it is difficult
- TMBC have refused the application for a lorry park at Wrotham Heath
- Rural Officers from Kent Police have recovered £400,000 of vehicles in one month
- The Budget has been difficult. KCC are making record levels of investment in adult social care and children's social care. There is also a lot of expense on home to school transport for children who need this.
- The weather has been appalling for Highways
- There is a mature drivers club running at 37 different venues - <https://kentroadsafety.info/road-user-types/mature-drivers/>
- Secondary School offers are down as fewer children have applied this year
- School buses are safe until April/May next year
- Trading standards are working hard to tackle illegal vapes coming in, mainly from China. The legal puff limit is 600 but some of those coming in are 1500 which is very dangerous. Little disposable vapes with lights have lithium batteries
- KCC have rejuvenated Oakwood Park in Maidstone which is a good venue for weddings. In 2023-24 there were 6,304 ceremonies in Kent organised by KCC
- KCC has a Film Office in Kent which was set up in 2006. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter last year they handled 88 filming requests and logged 79 filming days, bringing £820,000 into Kent and Medway. On average, filming generates more than £5m direct spend into the Kent and Medway economy ever year

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Initials...  
9/12

- Ferns lorries have been travelling through the villages, due to problems in Ford Lane. This is being monitored, but the road should have re-opened now
- There has been a Burger Van in a small layby on the A20. The footpath was cleared of brambles and the van parked there. KCC gave 28 days notice to leave the site
- There have been quite a lot of complaints about litter and fly tipping. Rural police are working with TMBC to deal with this. TMBC are increasing fines. Fly tipping is a TMBC issue. Some parishes are getting together teams to go out and clean litter, but you cannot do this on roads where the speed limit is over 30mph.

(b) Borough Councillors Banks and Boxall

- Council Tax - The Borough Council will be increasing their section of the Council tax by £6.93 (typical band D). Although the Borough Councils financial position is good at the moment, it is forecasted that will need this increase to greater protect the future
- Fly tipping - Penalty charges for fly tipping have been increased from £150 to £500 for littering and from £400 to £1000 for fly tipping. Please be aware that we have had instances when residents' cardboard recycling bin has been emptied and 'addressed' recycling has blown out and enforcement officers have found it
- Community Grant Scheme - This scheme is now open where community and voluntary organisations can apply for funding to support their community's needs. Last year we were successful in securing grants for Leybourne's church and Leybourne Chase. Should you know any groups that wish to apply please see the TMBC website but also feel free to copy us in or let us know if you have any questions.
- 40 Acres - Pippins Place - The new housing development continues along London Road. Recently we have noticed that the developer has closed off sections of the footpath (which was a diversion from the public footpath) that had previously agreed to remain open. We have contacted the landowner of the west field and developer to get them reopened. It also appears that the developer has cleared a number of trees past the entrance to the site, where the proposed cycle/footpath is planned. This proposal has been called in to the area planning committee.
- Tree Projects - Children from Leybourne School are planting trees (whips) this Thursday at Castle Lake opposite the Brewers Fare Restaurant. Children from Rosewood School are planting trees(whips) near Hodges Close Leybourne Chase later this month. Hopefully, further planting will be arranged in October/November on new sites.

(c) Fly Tipping

It has been reported that the property in Woodgate Road has been cleared, but neighbours say nothing has been cleared and the rubbish is still there.

(d) Police

There was no report.

4. **PLANNING**

(a) Plans Received for Comment

- i. **24/00231 – 8 Chapel Close** - Demolition of existing front entrance porch, conservatory and wc/store to rear. Erection of a new single storey front porch and two storey rear extension.

There were **NO OBJECTIONS**.

(b) Approvals

There were no approvals to report.

(c) Refusals

There were no refusals to report.

- (d) TMBC Local Plan and Local Green Space  
The Recreation Ground is already a designated Village Green which protects the space. Councillors suggested that the green areas in Ryarsh Park should be considered by TMBC as Local Green Space.
- (e) Any other Planning Matters  
To receive an update - **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 note new Parish Council address: PO Box 503, West Malling, ME6 9NN  
This was noted.
- (b) To consider and approve Land Registry documents – Change of Parish Council address  
The Clerk will complete the documents to change the registered address for the Parish Council on the title documents for the Village Hall. There will be a cost for the identification needed including verification by a solicitor.
- (c) Environment Agency Flood Resilience Plan  
Cllrs McKinlay and Martin will work on the plan. It was noted that 13 properties in Ryarsh are at risk of flooding <https://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk>
- (d) To consider replacing damaged street lights – Birling Road  
Councillors noted that the contractor has recommended replacing the damaged lantern with a robust LED lantern also in black. Councillors agreed just to replace that one lantern
- (e) To receive update about Highways Improvement Plan and approve KCC Proposals  
The works on Roughetts Road, Birling Road and The Street could cost up to £4-5,000. KCC have asked if there is any opportunity for the Parish Council to fund or part fund this work. Cllrs agreed they could not financially assist this year, but may be able to help if it was budgeted for in a future year.
- (f) To approve contribution to number 58 Bus Service  
Cllrs have previously agreed to contribute to this service if needed. The cost for Ryarsh for the year may be £154.90 and Cllrs APPROVED this payment.
- (g) To consider request by West Malling Parish Council for a Traffic Regulation Order for the layby next to Brickfields  
The layby as you exit Brickfields turning left just falls within Ryarsh. Cllrs have no objections to West Malling applying for a Traffic Regulation Order for this layby.
- There was a discussion about shrubs and plants at the end of Hawley Drive. There have been accidents as visibility is blocked for cars joining the A20. The Clerk will report this on the Highways Portal.
- The Clerk reported that Birling Parish Council had not replied with any complaints made about cars parking on Birling Road.
- (h) To consider presenting KALC and Community Awards at the APM 13.05.24  
Cllrs AGREED to the presentation of the awards at the APM. The recipients will be invited to attend.

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

The Clerk will chase Liberty for approval to site the bench in Ryarsh Park.

Cllr Hohler has offered funding which could be used for a picnic bench or a notice board.

Cllr Betts has obtained a quote for the Notice Board by the Recreation Ground to be removed and the new one installed. The quote also includes the supply and installation of grass matting at the entrance to the play area. Cllrs APPROVED this quote for £588 for labour and materials. The contractor can carry out other maintenance work while on site.

The Clerk will go ahead and order a Notice Board, the same as in Ryarsh Park, but with one locked side and one unlocked for residents to use.

(j) Annual Review: Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Media Policy, Complaints Procedure, Freedom of Information Act, Retention of Documents and Records, Travel and Expenses Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, GDPR Action Plan, Grievance and Disciplinary procedure, Risk Assessments

These are considered and reviewed annually. There are no updates needed. Cllrs considered and approved the policies and procedures without amendment.

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

- There are no plans in the village for a D Day event
- Would there be a plan for a village event to combine with fund raising, perhaps for the Christmas Tree and lights?
- Cllrs discussed an email from the Village Hall asking about a request by the school to hire the Recreation Ground for their fireworks event. Cllrs supported the school event last year. The Recreation Ground is owned and managed by the Village Hall who can hire it out, and the Parish Council has no objections to the school hiring it for their fund raising event
- It was reported that the village is split 50/50 between those who want fireworks and those who don't. It would be more suitable to have fireworks for the children on fireworks night, but not for the Christmas Tree lighting. Carols around the tree for the Christmas Lights may be best. There has been some interest in a Committee for the Christmas Tree. Cllrs discussed their offer to plant a substantial permanent tree, for a similar amount of money as the trees which are used each year. This could be reused each year.
- The Parish Council will make its annual donation for Churchyard Gardening this year
- Cllrs would like to purchase two new Silhouettes for Remembrance.

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

Details of KALC training courses have been circulated. Cllr McKinlay encouraged Cllrs to attend.

**8. MONTHLY CHECK LIST**

**To receive reports about:**

(a) Play Area and Recreation Ground

Cllr Betts is completing his regular checks and there are no issues to report.

(b) Highways, Footpaths and Footways

There were no issues to report.

It was noted that potholes reported on the KCC website are fixed very quickly.

(c) Street lights

There were no issues to report.

(d) Village Hall

There is nothing to report.

- (e) Parish property: Defibrillator, Ryarsh Resource Room  
 A trained resident is carrying out weekly defibrillator checks. Cllr Betts has asked her to provide her report to the Parish Council for our records.  
 The Ryarsh Resource Room has become messy again. Cllr Payne will tidy it up.

**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 Sutton. The Clerk has provided a financial report to Cllrs and there are no new issues to be raised.

- (b) To consider and approve invoice payments

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

Payee	Description	Total
<b>Payments approved at the Meeting</b>		
PSR Lighting	Streetlight Maintenance February 2024	£116.40
Clerk	Salary March 2024	£943.94
HMRC	March 2024 PAYE and NI	£133.51
Clerk	Travel Expenses/Reimbursements (PO Box)	£405.10

Payment to N Power for Electricity for February 2024 of £450.61 will be paid by Direct Debit. This covers part of February, and SSE should be taking over the contract for supply of electricity soon. A Direct Debit to SSE has been set up.

- (c) To consider Donations 2023-2024

There was a discussion. Cllrs AGREED to make donations of £100 each to:

- Citizens Advice Bureau. They have helped 22 clients in Ryarsh this year with more than 150 issues.
- Heart of Kent Hospice. They treated 8 patients from Ryarsh this year
- KSS Air Ambulance Charity. They have requested a grant for emergencies that could happen to anyone, anywhere including our parish

Cllrs may consider a donation to Leybourne Grange Riding Centre for the Disabled later in the year, around the time of their annual nativity.

- (d) Insurance Due for Renewal 01.06.24

Cllrs confirmed that they had nothing to declare and the Clerk could sign the Declaration as part of the insurance renewal process.

- (e) To consider any other financial matters

There were no other matters.

**10. MATTERS FOR NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that Ofsted are visiting the Primary School this week.

The Meeting concluded at 8.30pm

Date of the next Parish Council Meeting is **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024**, 7.30pm, Ryarsh Church Hall.

Signed .....  .....

Dated ..... 8-4-24 .....