

WROTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING,
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10th January 2024 at 7.30pm
In the Wrotham Pavilion, High Street TN15 7AH

Present: P Gillin (Chairman), H Rayner (Late Arrival KCC Commitment) D Beach, K Denton, C Mills, S Vick & T Jacob

In Attendance: Lesley Cox (Clerk), Jason Butler, Roy & Mary Saunders & A Boulden

1. Apologies for absence:

Cllr's Coffin & Betts (T&MBC Meeting)

2. Attendance Register

The attendance register was signed, and declarations of interest duly noted.

All Meetings

Cllr's Gillin, Rayner, Betts, Beach & Denton members of Keep Borough's Green

Cllr Beach member of the St George's Bell Ringers

Cllr Gillin member of Friends of Wrotham & Wrotham Xmas Lights

Cllr Mills chairman of Friends of Wrotham

Cllr's Rayner & Gillin members of Friends of St George's

Cllr Rayner member of St George's Church of England Wrotham

Cllr Rayner retired member of the Baltic Exchange Ltd

Cllr Rayner life member of the National Trust

Cllr's Rayner & Beach members of Kent Association of Change Ringers

Cllr Rayner assistant Village Magazine Deliverer

Cllr Rayner life member of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute

Cllr Vick member of Wrotham Fireworks

Cllr's Rayner, Gillin, Beach & Denton members of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England – WPC corporate member

Cllr Gillin committee member of Tonbridge & Malling branch of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England.

Cllr Coffin firework provider for Wrotham

Cllr Mills committee member of Wrotham Music Festival

Cllr Mills director of charity, Good Food Matters.

Cllr Rayner Conservative Party Member

Cllr Rayner Member of Tonbridge & Malling Conservative Party Executive & Management Committees

Provider of Electrical Services to Wrotham Parish Council – all meetings Cllr S Vick

Cllr's Gillin & Vick declared an interest in agenda item 6 and didn't participate in the decision.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2023 were proposed by Cllr Vick seconded by Cllr Beach and agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

4. Reports from Community Police and or Community Warden

No reports

5. Public Question Time

Jason Butler raised questions in respect of the village gritter, and the Clarion owned empty garages in the village, agenda items 7 & 8.

6. Community Fund Project – Village Xmas Lights and Infrastructure Upgrade

The proposal from Cllr Beach, seconded by Cllr Mills to agreed in principle an amount not exceeding 10K for the upgrade from Community Fund Reserves was agreed. Cllr's Gillin & Vick abstained from voting.

Actual amount to be costed and formally agreed at a later meeting.

7. Winter Maintenance Provision – Update

Website has been updated with the current situation, Cllr Vick to put a post on social media. Interim measures to be explored to be used alongside the village gritter to provide a more reactive response to snow and icy conditions.

8. Clarion Update -West Street Garages

Clarion has confirmed that 10 of the empty garages are considered to be in a satisfactory condition to be safely offered for rent. WPC to discuss with Clarion letting procedure and possible additional measures to alleviate parking problems in the village.

9. Precept 2023-24 – Deferred until the arrival of Cllr Rayner as Chairman of Finance

Based on the budget analysis provided, the proposal by Cllr Rayner, seconded by Cllr Gillin to increase the precept by 7.5% was agreed.. The precept requirement for 2024 - 2025 will amount to £138,337 which is an annual charge of £140.22 for band D properties an increase of £9.78 on the previous year.

10. Reports if any from County Cllr and or Borough Cllr

County Councillor Harry Rayner

Kent's budget report outlines it will receive £5.4m less from central government than officers had expected, raising its funding gap for the next financial year to £54.2m.

The budget to be agreed in February with include several proposals to save money including another review of the number of household waste and recycling centres across Kent. Potentially reducing the number by between 4-6.

Cllr Denton asked if the cost of dealing with increased incidents of fly tipping as a consequence had been costed.

As fly tipping is a cost to T&MBC this will not be taken into consideration as part of the review process.

Cllr Rayner has long been an advocate of Unitary Authorities as part of a two tier only system one single council is responsible for all local government services in an area.

KCC's devolution deal to help boost regeneration and create jobs is in flux as the government has indicated that only areas willing to have a directly elected mayor would get a range of new powers. KCC is not prepared to go this route.

The High Court has found in KCC's favour on the Judicial Review of the pace and urgency of the Home Secretary's decision-making process in relation to the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

The NTS was designed and implemented in 2016 after small boat crossings landing on Kent's shores increased dramatically as the shortest crossing route from France. Its purpose is to enable Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UAS Children) arriving in Kent to be cared for by other local authorities throughout the country once Kent has reached its capacity under the scheme of 346 (or 0.1% of its under 18 population). The aim of this was to prevent Kent's services becoming overwhelmed and ensure the care of UAS Children coming to the UK is equitable across the entire country.

In his Judgment, Mr. Justice Chamberlain acknowledged that the approach taken by the Home Office in the management of the NTS has been "unreasonably slow" and "unlawful."

Despite KCC making many public pleas, over many years, to the Home Office regarding the failed NTS and the Council's lack of capacity to safely continue to take ever escalating new arrivals (without existing UAS Children being moved to other local authorities swiftly),

the Home Office consistently failed to consider this and plan ahead. This directly resulted in Kent's Children's Services becoming overwhelmed with this unreasonable burden and left with no choice but to announce that it could no longer safely take new referrals and meet its statutory duties.

This Judgment found that instead of taking responsibility and developing a sound plan for a working NTS, the approach taken by the Home Office was to only "make *minor modifications, at intervals of months or years*". No proper plan was formulated and, in this respect, the Home Secretary's decision-making in relation to the NTS was found "*unlawful in the period December 2021 to 27 July 2023.*"

KCC Cllr Neil Baker, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is concerned that Operation Brock will need to be implemented on a full-time basis once the EU's Entry & Exit Scheme EES is introduced in October 2024. EES will be an automated IT system for registering travellers from non-EU countries, including the UK, each time they cross a border into or out of the EU. Travellers will need to scan their passports or other travel documents at an automated self-service kiosk prior to crossing the border and it is anticipated that it will increase the processing of vehicles at channel crossings from 1 to 7 minutes per car, resulting in significantly longer queues.

The Kent Parish Council Winter Support Scheme is inviting applications from new or existing initiatives helping people financial hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. KCC manages a portion of the Household Support Fund from the Department for Work and Pensions and this latest round includes a pot for distribution by parish, town and local councils.

It is there for a wide range of low-income households in need including families with children, older age people, unpaid carers and those living with a disability.

11. Reports from various Committees

Grounds

A new bench paid for by a resident in memory of a loved one to be installed shortly in the recreation ground.

Buildings

No report

Highways

Radar SPD Camera order delayed as the supplier is awaiting a consignment of solar panels.

UK Power Networks has now completed 16 out of the 26 dangerous connection power transfers. However, following the recent bad weather the linesmen are now having to prioritise outages.

WPC is still awaiting a date from UK Power Networks for the paid connections to lights at the Lychgate and in Bull Lane.

Crime & Disorder

The decision taken at the committee meeting of the 13th December 2023, to produce a new crime diary for regular distribution to the relevant authorities, highlighting the escalating problems experienced by the village, was ratified. To promote the initiative and co-ordinate information 500 leaflets to be printed and distributed, a new dedicated email to be created and a telephone number complete with suitable handset to be purchased was agreed.

Finance

No Report

Planning

The minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on the 21st December 2023 were proposed by Cllr Mills, seconded by Cllr Denton, agreed, and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

Skatepark

No Report

Climate Change Strategy

No Report

KALC

No Report

PPP

No Report

12. Correspondence Received

KALC	D-Day 80 Anniversary 6 th June 2024 – Celebrations Previously emailed	Decision on participation – deferred to next meeting
Noth & West Kent Citizens Advice	The Energy Outreach Project Previously emailed Carbon Monoxide leaflets to be distributed with the Crime Diary flyers	Information to added to website.
T&MBC	Shopfront and Vacant Unit Improvement Scheme Previously emailed Green Business Grant Scheme Previously emailed	Call for applications closes at 11.59pm on 26 th February 2024 Opens on the 23 rd January 2024 with application deadline of 11.59pm on 13 th March 2024
SLCC	The Clerk January 2024	For Information

13. Financial Matters

i. Cheques for approval and signature

It was proposed by Cllr Rayner seconded by Cllr Mills, and resolved that the following accounts be passed for payment:

Payable To	Invoice Details	Amount	Cheque No
J Lewington	Pavilion Security Deposit Refund	£50.00	BAC 11/12/23
P Barden	Equipment Fuel * – Receipt Attached	£18.46	BAC 11/12/23
Voltacon *	Multi-Court Floodlight Return Postage	£36.00	BAC 11/12/23
Kevin Holt	Ground Maintenance Works December 1 st – 22 nd 2023	£1,020.00	BAC 19/12/23
A J Gallagher	Skatepark Annual Insurance ***	£1,465.43	BAC 19/12/23
Peter Barden	Litter Pick Open Spaces Maintenance – CPA Inspection – Hedging - Leaf Clearance/General Clearance/Rubbish Burning Burial Ground Maintenance Leaf	150.00 397.50 90.00	BAC 22/12/23

	Clearance/General Clearance Total	£637.50	
KCC	West Street Car Park Rental 25/12/23 to 24/03/24	£1,125.00	D D 27/12/23
S Burr	Pavilion Deposit Refund	£50.00	BAC 27/12/23
St John Ambulance *	Xmas Fayre First Aid Provision Contribution to Wrotham Traders to facilitate T&MBC Grant	£126.72	BAC 27/12/23
Kevin Holt	Ground Maintenance Works December 27 th & 29 th 2023	£320.00	BAC 29/12/23
B Brand	Pavilion Security Deposit Refund	£50.00	BAC 03/01/24
Suffolk Life Annuities Ltd	Storage Facility Kemsing Road Rental 5 th December 23 – 29 th February 2024	£1,155.05	BAC 08/01/24
Lesley Cox	Salary December 2023 deductions include pension contribution. Amount includes NJC pay award for 2023-24 backdated to April 23. Telephone Underpayment November Total	3,197.85 20.00 5.00 £3,222.85	BAC
HM Revenue & Custom	PAYE / NI December 2023. Amount includes NJC pay award for 2023-24 backdated to April 23.	£1,534.13	BAC
KCC Pension Fund	Pension Contribution December 2023. Amount includes NJC pay award for 2023-24 backdated to April 23.	£1,645.25	BAC
Borough Green PC **	Skate Park Litter Pick / Checks December 2023	£155.00	BAC
Four Seasons Gardens Ltd *	Grounds Maintenance Contract 1 x3 instalments – Final Payment	£1,313.32	BAC
Astra Security Systems *	1 GB Monthly Data per Router Old London Road / High Street	£60.00	BAC
NKCS *	Contract Cleaning November 23 St George's Hall to contribute	£837.72	BAC
We Are Beams	Donation agreed 6 th December 2023	£200.00	BAC
Npower	Public Toilets – Electricity November 2023 December 2023 Total	42.47 44.01 £86.48	BAC
S V Electrical *	St George's Pre-School Electrical Installation In conjunction with DG Stark Electrical	£3,491.94	BAC
DG Stark *	St George's Pre-School Electrical Installation In conjunction with S V Electrical	£4,308.06	BAC
Metro Bank Account Transfer	Evri * – Floodlight Postage Oven Doctor – Pavilion Oven Clean Skatepark *** Container Keys x 6 Mobile Phone * – Crime & Disorder Committee Use Fasthost * - Generic Emails Monthly Account Fees Monthly Transfer Total	6.56 75.00 28.00 123.94 12.00 10.20 £255.70	BAC

* denotes items including VAT

** denotes 22.3% to be reimbursed

*** denotes 73.3% to be reimbursed

Payments made by Direct Debit / Standing Order Since Previous Meeting 06th December 23

EDF Energy	Multi-Court Electricity	£57.78	06/12/23
Water Plus	Pavilion Metered Water	£47.45	18/12/23
Water Plus	Allotment Metered Water	£9.84	
Water Plus	Burial Ground Metered Water	£4.78	
Engie	Pavilion Gas	£17.25	21/12/23
BT Group	Parish Email	£7.50	22/12/23
SSE	Streetlight Electricity Supply	£750.89	27/12/23
T&MBC	West Street Car Park Non-Domestic Rates	£134.00	01/01/24
Opus	Pavilion Electricity	£372.94	04/01/24

ii. Bank Reconciliation for sign off

The following account balances were checked, agreed and signed by Cllr Denton

BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES as at 5th December 2023

ACCOUNT	BALANCE
Current	£50.00
Business Reserve	£1,272.62
Business Savings	£61,581.70
Community Skate Park	£1.02
CCLA Parish Fund	£42,340.21
CCLA Community Fund	£76,290.37
Metro Account	£701.79
TOTAL	£182,237.71

BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES as at 5th January 2024

ACCOUNT	BALANCE
Current	£50.00
Business Reserve	£3,463.99
Business Savings	£48,142.51
Community Skate Park	£1.02
CCLA Parish Fund	£42,523.37
CCLA Community Fund	£76,620.41
Metro Account	£744.30
TOTAL	£171,545.60

14. Date of next Parish Council Meeting

The date for the next meeting was proposed for the 7th February 2023 to be held in the Wrotham Pavilion at 7.30pm. The date for the interim planning meeting to be advised.

15. Planning Committee to Consider

1. Applications received

Application Number	Address	Details	Parish Council Recommendation

i. Notifications of Decisions

Application Number	Address	Details	Decision
TM/23/02019/FL	Potters Mead Borough Green Road	Erection of a single dwelling with an attached single storey garage and associated works	Approved 21 st December 2023

TM/23/01434/FL	Cedar House St Mary's Road	Partial demolition of an existing boiler cupboard/lean-to and construction of a single storey extension with the renovation of the adjoining part of the house along with the addition of a new boundary wall with the gated access to the front of the property	Approved 3 rd January 2024
TM/23/01435/LB	Cedar House St Mary's Road	LBA: As Above	Approved 3 rd January 2024

2. Correspondence Received

T&MBC Weekly Planning Lists

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

.....Chairman

.....Date