

CHART SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2024 AT CHART SUTTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: - Cllr S. Waring in the Chair, together with Cllrs V. Underdown, R. Sagrott, P. Ward, J. Killick and W. Gatward; Mrs Lesley Windless, Parish Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE : KCC Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid, MBC Cllr Anne Dawes

PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. FILMING OF MEETINGS

There were no requests to film, photograph or record any items.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Waring declared an interest in item 17.4. Cllr Killick declared an interest in item 11.1.

4. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8TH JULY 2024

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved that the draft minutes be approved as a correct record. This was agreed and the Chairman was authorised to sign off the official copy.

6. POLICE / KCC WARDEN MATTERS

The clerk noted that, since the last meeting, no crimes had been reported on the e-watch.co website.

Cllr Underdown agreed to ask the Police Speedwatch representative for information on the number of motorists caught speeding through the village. **CLLR UNDERDOWN**

7. CLIMATE CHANGE & BIODIVERSITY

Cllr Sagrott provided an update as follows :

- Due to summer holidays there has been no recent meeting of the Parish Council Environment Network
- Various initiatives are happening, including
 - Eco Hub in the Mall from 26th October to 9th November on Wednesdays and Saturdays
 - Maidstone Riverside Rotary club are doing a collection of bikes and tools to send to Africa
 - Solar Together scheme (closing date 18th October)
 - Great British insulation scheme and boiler scheme with grants available for eligible homeowners
- Anglo Recycling scheme – residents can book a slot, pack up their items and leave on their doorstep for collection. 60% of proceeds will go to charity. It was agreed to advertise this on the Facebook page and in the Village News **CLERK / CLLR UNDERDOWN**

The clerk provided an update on the Clean & Green group as follows :

The first Clean & Green group meeting took place on 11th August. There were some good ideas and several of the volunteers carried out some tidying up on the village green afterwards. Since the meeting, Cllr Killick has kindly installed a water butt behind the bus stop on the green and has purchased some bird box kits for the cubs to make up and install in the playing field. The next working party will take place on 15th September, tackling the area around the bus shelter. Once cleared, this will be planted up with bulbs and perennials.

Cllr Killick noted that another project in hand was renovation of the finger post sign and stated that he had obtained a quote of £60 for new oak fingers. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to proceed with this. Cllr Killick stated that he would order the timber and make a start on rubbing down the post. **CLLR KILLICK**

Cllr Underdown asked if the planter on Chart Hill Road could be moved to the green. Cllr Ward stated that he would obtain a new (apple box) planter for the green and remove the one in Chart Hill Road. **CLLR WARD**

Cllr Underdown advised that she had been given some free bulbs. Cllr Killick stated that these could be planted behind the bus shelter.

8. **THREE YEAR STRATEGY**

No recent progress to report.

It was agreed to bring forward item 16.1

16.1 **County and Borough Councillors Report**

KCC Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid updated members as follows :

- Open access youth services have been cut by KCC. Lottie has been working on getting a dedicated rural youth worker. This would be hosted by KCC but funded by parish precept. Marden, Staplehurst and Coxheath are keen to be involved and this should come to fruition in the next month, Other parishes may wish to join, in time
- Warmlake crossroads is not a crash cluster site therefore no funding is available for junction improvements

Members asked whether Operation Brock could start after junction 8 of the M20 so drivers can still use the motorway services without a long diversion. Cllr Parfitt-Reid stated that she would pass this on.

The clerk thanked Cllr Parfitt-Reid for her recent member grant contribution of £1,000 towards the EV chargers in the village hall car park.

MBC Cllr Anne Dawes provided an update on the following :

- MBC Local Plan judicial review
- MBC are buying property to rent out / house the homeless
- MBC are borrowing money and loaning it to other Councils at a higher rate
- A new Police app is available for reporting anti-social behaviour

9. **HIGHWAYS**

9.1 **Visibility at Norton Road / Warmlake Road junction**

Cllr Waring noted that contact had been made with the resident living next to the junction of Norton Road / Warmlake Road. The resident advised that he does not own the hedge closest to the road. The Parish Council have since cut the hedge hard back which has improved visibility. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the Parish Council should cut the hedge down to half its current height and then continue maintaining it on an annual basis at a cost of approximately £200 per year. It was agreed that this would be a justifiable use of Parish Council funds as the junction is an accident hotspot.

Cllr Killick spoke regarding the road markings at the junction and suggested making either side of the triangle one way only. Cllr Waring stated that this has been explored with KCC in the past and is not possible.

9.2 **Speedwatch equipment**

Cllr Underdown advised that a new battery was required for the Speedwatch equipment. This would cost £135 + VAT. She added that an alternative would be to buy a speed gun for £1,245 + VAT. A speed gun would need no set up and be easier to use for volunteers. Following discussion, it was proposed, seconded and agreed to purchase a speed gun to a cost of up to £1,500 + VAT. It was agreed that the clerk should contact KCC member, Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid to ask if she would be prepared to part fund this from any remaining member funds. **CLERK**

9.3 **General highways update**

Cllr Killick advised that he had reported broken road edges to KCC. The clerk stated that she had reported the same on Norton Road. Cllr Killick advised that the block paving 'path' outside the old forge was broken. It was noted that this was private property. Cllr Killick advised that he had found a cats eye on the side of Plough Wents Road and had reported this to KCC who had attended to fill in the hole with tarmac.

10. **VILLAGE HALL UPGRADE WORKS**

The clerk and Cllr Ward gave a verbal update on the upgrade works. It was noted that the hall would be re-opening on Monday 16th September and any remaining noisy work would be carried out when the hall is not in use. It was noted that, before the upgrade work had started, the rainwater downpipe on the south side of the building was discharging directly onto the ground and had caused rot in some of the building timbers. Rotten areas have now been replaced but a soakaway needs to be constructed to prevent the same thing happening. This work will be carried out in September.

Cllr Ward stated that he would produce a brief article on the EV chargers for the Village News. **CLLR WARD**

11. LITTER PICKING

11.1 To consider new contract for regular litter picking

The clerk and Cllr Killick left the room for this item.

It was noted that Samuel Whitehead had advised that he would no longer be able to litter pick in the village due to starting university. Following discussion, it was proposed, seconded and agreed that Harvey Windless should take over from Samuel Whitehead and would be paid £12 per week for litter picking around the village.

The clerk was asked to remind the football teams to use the litter bins provided on the playing field. **CLERK**

It was noted that there was a hole in the playing field close to the picnic bench near the play area. Cllr Waring agreed to fill this in. **CLLR WARING**

11.2 To agree a date for the October litter pick

Following discussion, it was agreed that the next litter pick should take place on Saturday 19th October from 10am to 12pm. Clerk to advertise on the website and Facebook page. The clerk stated that she would speak to the Parish Council's insurer regarding use of volunteer litter pickers. **CLERK**

It was agreed that the next Clean & Green group meet up should also take place on 19th October.

12. GOV.UK WEBSITE AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES

The clerk advised that the external auditor had made a general comment to all parishes regarding gov.uk domain names for websites and gov.uk e-mail accounts. Following discussion, it was proposed, seconded and agreed that the Parish Council transfer to a gov.uk domain name and a gov.uk e-mail address for the clerk. The clerk noted that website provider, Hugo Fox have advised that they will soon have this facility available. **CLERK**

13. 3 SUTTONS MEMORIAL GARDEN

An e-mail had been received from Sutton Valence Parish Council asking if the Parish Council would be interested in setting up a 3 Suttons memorial garden in Sutton Valence. Following discussion, it was agreed that this was not something the Parish Council would wish to be involved in and Chart Sutton residents would most likely prefer to remember their loved ones in Chart Sutton. Clerk to inform Sutton Valence clerk accordingly. **CLERK**

14. CLERK'S ANNUAL PAY REVIEW

The clerk left the room for this item but had provided members with details of her contract which states that the clerk's salary is to be reviewed each year in May and, subject to satisfactory performance, the clerk's salary should automatically progress by one increment from payscale LC2/SP23 to LC2/SCP24. This equates to a pay increase from £16.67 per hour to £17.16 per hour. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the clerk's salary should increase from £16.67 per hour to £17.16 per hour, backdated to 1st May 2024. **CLERK**

15. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The clerk advised that grants were available to Parish Councils for production of Neighbourhood Plans. Following discussion, it was agreed to defer this item to the next Parish Council meeting. **CLERK**

16. MATTERS OF REPORT

16.1 County and Borough Councillors Report

Covered above.

16.2 Chairman's Report

The Chairman spoke as follows :

- Village hall committee are arranging for a second clothes bank to be placed in the village hall car park
- There was a recent accident between a car and a motorbike at the end of Lested Lane
- It was agreed to purchase and install 2 no. 'no dogs' signs for the play area within the playing field **CLLR WARING**
- Need to action signs for the green asking drivers not to park in the layby during shop opening hours (unless they are using the shop) **CLLR WARING**
- 30mph sign has fallen into the ditch on Warmlake Road. This has been reported to KCC who will be replacing the sign but will be using a metal, not timber post.

16.3 Individual Councillor's Reports

Cllr Sagrott provided the following update :

- Residents are encouraged to knit or crochet poppies to wire on to the chains around the village green, for

remembrance day. Patterns will be available in the shop and clerk to advertise via the noticeboards and Facebook page **CLERK**

- Items of note from the KALC meeting in July were as follows :
 - Gypsy and traveller review ongoing
 - Refuse collection update
 - New model code of conduct is being reviewed by KALC
 - Talk on dementia
- Mrs Joan Johnsons charity trustees are Val Underdown, Robert Sagrott and Mary Underdown. Wendy Gatward to be added and 2 ex-trustees to be removed **CLLR SAGROTT**
- It was agreed that, as well as advertising on the noticeboards and website, the clerk should advertise Parish Council meetings on the Facebook page. **CLERK**

Cllr Gatward stated that a car appears to have been dumped in the parking area outside the playing field.

Cllr Underdown noted overgrown vegetation on the path alongside Warmlake Road, leading to the playing field. The clerk advised that she would report this to KCC. It was agreed that if no action was forthcoming the Clean & Green group would be asked if they can help clear it. **CLERK**

Cllr Killick noted that he and his wife had attended the recent Royal Air Force Association service. He asked when the 'Tommy' statue would be installed on the green. Cllr Waring stated that this was in hand. **CLLR WARING**

Cllr Ward had nothing further to report.

16.4 Clerk's Report

The clerk had produced a written report which was included in members' agenda papers. Further update as follows:

. Advice received regarding VE day 80. It was agreed to add this to the agenda for the next meeting. **CLERK**

. A refund of monies paid to UK Power Networks has been received. This was for the 3 phase supply work to the village hall. Last minute design changes made by UKPN resulted in additional costs to the Parish Council, hence the refund.

17. FINANCE

17.1 Budget Monitoring to 30th August 2024

The budget monitoring report to 30th August 2024 was agreed.

17.2 To note Income received since the meeting held on 8th July 2024

Members noted income received during the period as follows:

MPE football club – one off pitch fees	£110.00
Coxheath football club – first instalment of pitch fees	£325.00
KCC – member grant towards EV chargers	£1,000.00
Football club – one off pitch fees	£55.00
UKPN – refund of monies paid for 3 phase electric supply	£3,315.60
Bearsted football club – first instalment of pitch fees	£325.00

17.3 To approve payments already made

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved that the following payments should be ratified.

This was agreed.

Parish Clerk – June salary - paid by standing order	£854.11
BT – village hall broadband – monthly charge	£33.53
Parish Clerk – July salary – paid by standing order	£854.11
Hugo Fox – website – monthly charge	£23.99
BT – village hall broadband – monthly charge	£33.53
HMRC – tax and NI – July	£237.36
Parish Clerk – expenses – website domain name annual fee	£11.99
S. Whitehead – litter picking	£26.40
MBC – sweep / litter pick	£84.02
JGF Electrical – supply and install solar panels and battery storage (interim payment)	£16,928.71
FGS Pilcher Ltd – civils work associated with UKPN 3 phase supply and EV chargers	£6,846.00
BG Electrical contractors – annual electrical inspection to pavilion	£98.00
M. Fitzgerald – newsletter printing	£390.00

JRB Roofing – roofing and wall insulation and cladding work to village hall	£36,000.00
Castle Water – pavilion water bill	£7.51
John Killick – water butt and associated materials, bird box kits	£168.97
EDF Energy – electricity to pavilion	£16.16
Hugo Fox – website – monthly charge	£23.99
Parish Clerk – August salary – paid by standing order	£854.11

17.4 To resolve to make payments as presented for online authorisation

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved that the Council approve the following payments. This was agreed.

CPRE – annual membership	£36.00
S. Whitehead – litter picking	£60.00
Man about the house – village hall upgrade works	£2,385.00
JGF Electrical – village hall upgrade works	£8,815.04
HMRC – tax and NI – August	£237.16
L. Windless – clerk’s expenses – key cutting	£9.00
JRB Roofing – village hall upgrade works – bottom edge detail to wall cladding	£1,464.00
MBC – sweep / litter pick	£84.02
P. Waring – tree surgery work to village hall car park	£2,400.00

17.5 Consideration of donations to be made to charities / organisations

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to make the following donations :

Citizens Advice Bureau £150
 Kenward Trust £150
 Breast Cancer Kent £150
 Royal British Legion (poppy appeal, including cost of wreath) £200
 Age UK Maidstone £150
 Three Suttons Helpline £150
 Heart of Kent Hospice £150
 Demelza £150

17.6 Annual Governance & Accountability Return – year ended 31 March 2024. Conclusion of audit

The Mazars external auditor report of the 23/24 AGAR was noted by members, with no actions. Minor scope for improvement was advised, as follows :

The variance analysis initially provided by the Council did not include a breakdown of earmarked reserves. In future, the Council should ensure all earmarked reserves are included in the explanation of the box 7 figure in the variance analysis.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the next meeting will be held on Monday 14th October 2024 at Chart Sutton village hall.

There being no further matters to be discussed, the meeting closed at 10.10pm.