

CHART SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14TH OCTOBER 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

PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Anne Dawes

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 15.

4. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER 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, the following crime had been reported on the e-watch.co website :
Between 00:01 on 12th September and 12:00 on 13th September in Chart Hill Road. Somebody broke into a container and stole tools.

It was noted that the Police had removed an abandoned car with a gun inside from the car park at the Lord Raglan pub. A parked car had been damaged in Amber Lane.

It was noted that cuts have been made to the KCC Community Warden service. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council do not wish to express an interest in employing or sponsoring a warden to cover Chart Sutton.

The clerk advised that Sutton Valence Parish Council (SVPC) have asked if the Parish Council wish to share their speed gun. Following discussion it was agreed not to share, even with a financial contribution from Sutton Valence. Clerk to inform SVPC accordingly. **CLERK**

7. CLIMATE CHANGE & BIODIVERSITY

Cllr Sagrott provided an update as follows :

- A Parish Council Environment Network (PCEN) meeting was held in Hunton on 2nd October. New chair is Derek Eagle. Other parishes to the east of Maidstone are considering forming their own PCEN
- There are two new officers in MBC responsible for climate change. MBC are currently adding solar panels to some of their buildings
- Yalding Parish Council is considering a toll bridge in an effort to tackle traffic pollution

Going forwards, it was agreed to add 'Clean & Green group' as a regular heading under the Climate Change & Biodiversity item. **CLERK**

Cllr Killick provided an update on the Clean & Green group as follows :

- Bus stop area will be weeded and bulbs planted
- Finger post sign has been renovated. Members noted how good the sign looks and expressed their thanks to Cllr Killick for kindly refurbishing it
- Community litter pick will take place on Saturday 18th October

8. **THREE YEAR STRATEGY**

No recent progress to report.

9. **HIGHWAYS**

9.1 **Highway Improvement Plan review**

The Parish Council's Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) was discussed. The following amendments were proposed by Cllr Killick :

- **Lested Lane / Plough Wents Road junction – request ‘slow, concealed entrance’ sign on western approach.** Rather than include in the HIP the clerk stated that she would report missing crossroads sign to KCC via online portal **CLERK**
Post meeting note : KCC have agreed to install a crossroads sign on the western approach, to warn drivers of upcoming junction
- **Warmlake Road speed limit reduction from 60mph to 40mph, from east of playing field to A274.** It was agreed to include this on the HIP. The clerk advised that this would be costly to implement but could be discussed further with KCC at the next HIP review meeting. **CLERK**
- **Road safety improvements to Warmlake Road / A274 junction.** It was noted that this junction was outside the parish and therefore not relevant to include in Chart Sutton's HIP
- **Installation of speed indicator devices (SIDs) at Warmlake Road, Amber Lane and Chart Hill Road.** Cllr Waring noted that the Parish Council had previously looked into this but KCC had advised there were no suitable locations. It was agreed not to include it on the HIP
- **Speed limit reduction to 30mph on Plough Wents Road.** It was agreed to leave this on the HIP

Cllr Killick provided a general highways update as follows :

- Drainage problems near junction Plough Wents Road / Norton Road – KCC will be investigating this before the end of the year
- Green Lane flooding – need to find culvert, which may be blocked. This is KCC's responsibility
- Footpath near the old forge – KCC are investigating whether or not this is private land

10. **VILLAGE HALL UPGRADE WORKS**

The clerk and Cllr Ward gave a verbal update on the upgrade works. It was noted that final snagging work on the roof and walls remains outstanding. A meeting will be held with JGF Electrical to deal with the following :

- Collation and submission of paperwork to enable village hall committee to sell excess energy back to the grid. Provision of 'My Solar Edge' app details to village hall committee to allow them to monitor the working system
- EV charger commissioning

The clerk had produced an interim account for the hall upgrade works but a number of invoices remain outstanding. It was agreed that this should be discussed further at the next meeting and agreement reached on who should fund the additional cost. It was noted that the extra cost was a result of additional scope of work including revised UKPN design, installation of battery storage cupboard, replacement of rotten timber, installation of wall ties, stump grinding and construction of soakaway. **CLERK**

11. **VE DAY 80**

Following discussion, it was agreed that information should be included in the next edition of the Village News, asking if anyone in the village would like to organise an event. **CLLR UNDERDOWN**

12. **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLAN**

Cllr Sagrott advised that he was producing a Community Resilience Plan. It was noted that resident, John Gatward might be prepared to act as leader in an emergency situation and it was agreed this would be appropriate if he is willing. Cllr Killick agreed to deputise. It was noted that Cllr Waring and Chris Webb are both flood wardens. It was agreed that an article should be included in the next edition of the Village News, asking for volunteers with relevant skills and equipment (chainsaws, 4x4 vehicles etc) who would be prepared to help out in an emergency. **CLLR SAGROTT / CLLR UNDERDOWN**

Post meeting note : Resident, John Gatward has confirmed that he is prepared to act as leader in an emergency situation.

13. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council should produce a Neighbourhood Plan (NHP). It was noted that the first step in this process would be to write to Maidstone Borough Council to formally designate the parish of Chart Sutton as a Neighbourhood Area. **CLERK**

It was noted that grants of up to £18,000 were available for producing a NHP which should cover most if not all of the cost. It was agreed to engage Alison Eardley as the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Planning consultant. It was noted that Ms Eardley's early advice would be needed to apply for the relevant grants therefore a budget of up to £2,000 was agreed to allow the Parish Council to engage her on an initial basis. **CLERK**

14. MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Cllr Sagrott noted that KALC had produced a draft model code of conduct and stated that he would enquire at the next area KALC meeting in November about how other parishes feel about adopting this. It was agreed to add this as an agenda item for the December meeting. **CLERK**

15. DONATION TO CHURCH

Cllr Waring advised that the church do not yet have permission for the new pew heating. It was agreed not to award any grant for pew heating or churchyard maintenance, for the time being.

16. MATTERS OF REPORT

16.1 County and Borough Councillors Report

Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid was not at the meeting. Cllr Anne Dawes was not at the meeting but had provided a brief written report which included information on nuisance motorbikes and cuts to the KCC warden service.

16.2 Chairman's Report

The Chairman expressed concern regarding flooding on the private lane adjacent to Hop Engineering.

16.3 Individual Councillor's Reports

Cllr Sagrott provided the following update :

- Both judicial reviews relating to proposed large developments in the borough have failed
- KALC have provided details of the relevant MBC officer to contact with any issues relating to refuse collection

Cllr Gatward noted that Amber Lane was flooded recently after heavy rain. Clerk to report suspected blocked drains. **CLERK**

Cllr Underdown gave the following update :

- Pete Underdown has now finished refurbishing the Parish Council noticeboard. Members expressed their thanks to Mr Underdown for kindly doing this
- Fraud information has been received from the Police who have offered to do a one hour presentation for residents on recognising scams and staying safe. It was agreed this could be held in the village hall on a Monday. Cllr Underdown to confirm date. Clerk to advertise on website, Facebook and noticeboards.

CLLR UNDERDOWN / CLERK

Cllr Killick asked whether the flower planter would be moving from Chart Hill Road to the green. It was agreed that it should be left where it is and left to weather.

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. She added that an e-mail had been received from a resident regarding the bus service. It was agreed that this should be passed to KCC member, Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid for her response. **CLERK**

17. FINANCE

17.1 Budget Monitoring to 30th September 2024

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

17.2 To note Income received since the meeting held on 9th September 2024

Members noted income received during the period as follows:

Unity Trust – bank interest

£655.90

17.3 To approve payments already made

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

Peter Skinner – village hall upgrade works	£2,385.00
Peter Skinner - village hall upgrade works	£860.00
Arcool Ltd – village hall upgrade works	£11,484.00
D A Edwards – timber for finger post sign	£60.00
J. Killick – materials for finger post sign	£29.17
Parish Clerk – September salary – paid by standing order	£854.11
Unity Trust bank – bank fees	£18.00
Parish Clerk – Clerk’s September salary and expenses – paid by bank transfer	£114.98
HMRC – tax and NI September	£295.52
Village hall committee – hall hire June to Sept	£90.00
Four Jays Group – portaloo hire	£126.00
MBC – sweep / litter pick	£84.02
S. Whitehead – litter picking	£24.00
M. Fitzgerald – Village News printing	£542.00
Forvis Mazars LLP – external audit fee	£252.00
JGF Electrical Services – village hall upgrade works	£19,545.82
N Power – electric supply – street lighting	£44.37

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.

JGF Electrical – village hall upgrade works	£2,061.60
Four Jays Group – portaloo hire	£126.00
Kent County Playing Fields Association – annual subscription	£20.00
FGS Pilcher – soakaway construction – village hall car park	£1,450.80
Four Jays Group – portaloo hire	£51.00
EDF Energy – electric supply to pavilion	£16.16
Castle Water – water supply to pavilion	£14.79
V. Underdown – noticeboard repairs carried out by Pete Underdown	£28.24

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the next meeting will be held on Monday 11th November 2024 at Chart Sutton village hall.

There being no further matters to be discussed, the meeting closed at 10.05pm.