



The minutes were agreed as a true record at the Full Council meeting on 6th April 2021. They will be signed at the first face to face meeting of the Full Council.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL ON TUESDAY 9TH MARCH 2021 HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM COMMENCING AT 7.30PM

449/21 PRESENT

Cllrs Adam (arrived late), Barker, Boswell, Jones, Mannington (in the Chair), Newton, Robertson, Stevens Tippen and Turner were present. The Clerk, County Cllr Eric Hotson and three members of the public were also in attendance.

450/21 APOLOGIES

Cllr Brown, the Deputy Clerk and PCSO Nicola Morris had given their apologies.

451/21 PARISH COUNCILLOR DETAILS

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Boswell declared an interest in item 458/21 as a neighbour of Southons Field and a relative of the correspondent. Cllr Boswell would leave the meeting when this item was being discussed.

Cllr Tippen, as a Trustee of Marden Memorial Hall, declared an interest during the meeting when County Councillor Hotson spoke about the Children's Centre.

Changes to Register of Interests

There were no changes to Cllrs Register of Interests.

Granting of Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensation of any item on this agenda.

452/21 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2021 were agreed as a true record. They would be signed at the next face to face meeting.

453/21 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS INVOLVING PUBLIC SPEAKING

Members of the public did not wish to speak on any item.

County Councillor Hotson would speak under External Verbal Reports.

The meeting was adjourned for the following items:

PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public wished to raise anything under this item.

EXTERNAL VERBAL REPORTS

County and Borough Councillors

County Cllr Hotson was pleased to report that the Youth Service in Marden was due to be up and running shortly and thanked the Parish Council for working on this.

Cllr Hotson had sent an email out late this afternoon regarding the opening of the Children's Centre – although not imminent felt the reasons given were genuine for the continued closure at the current time. Cllr Tippen reported that the Children's Centre was using the John Banks Hall, free of charge, for confidential discussions and asked why the Children's Centre could

not be used for this purpose. Cllr Hotson asked for Cllr Tippen to send an email to him so that he could take it up with the relevant Cabinet Member.

Cllr Hotson then went on to state that he was still unhappy with the latest response on the reopening of libraries with Marden being one of the last ones to open. Marden was a very busy library and could see no reason why it could not be opened in the next round of library openings. He requested that the Parish Council writes to the MP and Leader of the Council. Kent County Council had agreed its budget with a 5% increase on Council Tax. He had raised concern with his considering the high level of food banks, unemployment and small businesses struggling.

No Borough Cllr was in attendance.

Police

Not in attendance – crime figures would be reported under item 456/21/

Community Warden

Not in attendance

The meeting was reconvened for the remainder of the meeting.

454/21 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk had circulated her report prior to the meeting. The Clerk reported on staff annual leave booked for the next couple of months, gave an update on highways and S106 contributions from developers, there had been no changes to legislation regarding virtual meetings, update on election, end of year audit and newsletters.

456/21 PARISH MATTERS

Reports from MBC and KCC

KCC Libraries

Item discussed with County Cllr Hotson when he provided his report. Cllr Tippen proposed, Cllr Stevens seconded, that a letter be written to Helen Grant MP and to copy in the Leader of the Council, KCC Cabinet Member for Libraries and County Councillor Hotson on Marden's concern of the library not being open.

Police Update/Report from Police Forum

Crime figures: 8 crimes in total since the last meeting: 6 criminal damage, 1 theft and 1 theft from motor vehicle. Various reports of males with catapults had been received and investigations were ongoing. Anti-social behaviour also reported with lots of damage caused, CCTV was being reviewed and investigations ongoing.

Cllr Barker reported that British Transport Police had provided a crime number for damage to a brick wall in Station Approach.

Communication

Newsletter and E-Newsletter

The Spring edition of the newsletter was now out for delivery. Thanks were expressed to PPG members for volunteering to deliver a large majority of the newsletters. Further copies would need to be printed for the Summer newsletter due to more houses being occupied in the newer developments.

The Deputy Clerk was sending out the E-Newsletter every Friday and Cllr Boswell asked how many had signed up for this. The Clerk would ask the Deputy Clerk to forward details.

Social Media

The Communications Sub-Committee was due to meet on Monday 15th March.

8.00pm County Cllr Eric Hotson and one member of the public left the meeting.

Marden Assets of Community Value

A meeting had been held on 11th February to discuss ACVs. Cllr Boswell had spoken to the manager at The Unicorn who was in agreement for The Unicorn PH to be submitted. Cllr Turner had spoken to the landlord at The West End who, in principle, was in agreement with what was entailed with ACVs but had raised concerns especially regarding the impact which the pandemic had had on public houses. Cllr Turner had agreed to speak to them in more detail later in the week. Cllr Barker reported that no information had been obtained regarding owners of the Stilebridge Inn.

Cllrs agreed that the Clerk should submit the nomination for The Unicorn to MBC.

8.07pm Cllr Adam arrived at the meeting.

Marden Flooding

Following the February Full Council meeting the two interested members of the public had submitted comments on the draft report. Cllr Adam would incorporate these in the report and once completed the Clerk would send to Kent County Council.

One of the members of the public had offered to view the drainage details of the new developments and agreed to look at The Parsonage in the first instance. The Clerk would provide the relevant paperwork. Thanks were expressed by Cllrs.

Diffuser Tubes – 2020 results

These had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk was asked to keep on file so that a year-on-year comparison could be made.

MPC Use of Dropbox for Document Sharing

The Clerk had trialled the use of Dropbox for sharing large numbers of documents which seemed to work. Unfortunately, the free Dropbox was not large enough to accommodate the Parish Council work. The cost of Dropbox Business was expensive so the Clerk would investigate Sharepoint and other applications.

MPC Meetings – April/May and after 7th May 2021

No changes had been made to legislation regarding continuing to have virtual meetings after 7th May. The Clerk raised concern on how the Parish Council would be able to meet after this day until full meetings could be held in person – this would be discussed on more detail at the next Full Council meeting in April.

Meetings until elections were discussed to incorporate the Annual Parish Meeting and the following was agreed:

23rd March: Amenities Committee

30th March: Planning Committee

6th April: Full Council

13th April: Annual Parish Meeting

20th April: Planning Committee / Finance Committee

27th April: Amenities

Cllrs agreed that the format of the Annual Parish Meeting would be reports from the Parish Council Chairman, Planning, Amenities Committees and any which organisations wished to submit. Organisations would be invited to link into the meeting and speak if they wished. No speakers would be asked to attend this year.

MPC Policies and Risk Assessments

The Chairman reminded Cllrs to read through the policies which the Clerk had circulated. This would then be agreed and ratified at the April Full Council meeting along with the policies and risk assessments from Committees. The Clerk was asked to send a list of all policies to Cllrs.

Parish Elections 2021

Cllr Tippen reported that she had attended a Parish Liaison Meeting with MBC where the election process was discussed. The Clerk had also attended Election training earlier in the day arranged by SLCC.

The Notice of Election was to be advertised before or on 29th March but it was not known whether nomination papers would be in hard copy or electronic format. Once known the Clerk would advertise. All nomination papers had to be returned, by hand, to MBC by 4pm on 8th April. The Clerk was happy to take any forms in but would not be responsible for checking so all details would need to be checked by candidates beforehand. If candidates wished the Clerk to take in their nomination paper these should be put through the Parish Office letterbox before 10am on 6th April – any later than that would have to be taken in by the individual. The Clerk was proposing to put a paper together to place on social media/website for all candidates regarding elections and the role of the Parish Council. It was hoped that the Full Council meeting could go ahead on 11th May but it depended on whether contact details would be made available to the Clerk to be able to send out agendas giving three clear days' notice.

Playing Field CCTV

The Clerk was still in talks with Golding Homes regarding obtaining an electricity supply for new CCTV cameras.

Anti-social behaviour had been reported at the play area/Rookery Court. Police had suggested that infra-red/sensor lighting would assist with the CCTV night recording. Cllrs proposed to look at options at the playing field site meeting on 10th April including installing lighting in play area (additional cost for electricity supply); Rookery Court installing lighting; or upgrading CCTV. The Clerk was asked to contact the CCTV company for costings.

8.30pm Member of the public left the meeting.

Highwood Green Allotments

Cllrs Boswell and Tippen, together with the Clerk, had met to draft the allotment agreement and update the specification. These had been circulated to all Cllrs and after a couple of amendments it was agreed to send this 1st draft to the Marden Allotment Association for comments. The Clerk was asked to stipulate that this was the very 1st draft, including the rents and termination sections, were subject to change and would need legal advice before adoption.

The specification, which was to be sent by Redrow to Maidstone Borough Council, would also be sent for comment once amendment had been made regarding parking.

457/21 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Amenities Committee

Draft minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 23rd February had previously been circulated. Cllr Robertson, as chairman of the Amenities Committee, reported that some projects have had to be put on hold due to the pandemic, but work was hoped to start again shortly.

Site meetings for Cemetery, Southons Field, Public Conveniences and Playing Field had been planned for 9th and 10th April.

Planning Committee

Draft Minutes of Planning Meeting held on 16th February and 2nd March had been previously circulated and were available on the Parish Council website. The next meeting will be held on 16th March.

Finance Committee

No Finance Committee had been held.

Conferences/Meetings/Webinars attended

11th February – Allotment meeting – discussed under item 456/21

11th February – Assets of Community Value – discussed under item 456/21

15th February – Memorial Hall meeting – attended by Trustees. Report had been given at the Amenities Committee meeting.

16th February – Planning Committee

23rd to 25th February – SLCC Practitioners Conference (virtual) – The Clerk and Deputy Clerk had attended several of the seminars. Some good information had come out of this and reports would be circulated to Cllrs.

23rd February – Amenities Committee

24th February – Youth Meeting – KCC Youth Worker confirmed that staff had been secured to commence outreach youth work later this month. The aim was to walk around the village, be a presence and to chat to young people to see what they wanted out of the Youth Service. A meeting was taking place on 12th March to show the youth worker around the areas of open space in the village.

2nd March – Operation London Bridge Webinar – The Clerk and Deputy Clerk attended and the policy/procedure would be updated.

4th March – HR Sub-Committee meeting – Minutes had been circulated. Return to office working would be no earlier than 21st June. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk were in discussions as to what was required prior to return. Appraisals of all employees were due to be held over the next few weeks.

8th March – KALC Parish Liaison Meeting – Cllr Tippen had attended and items raised included forthcoming elections; Local Government Boundary Review looking at ward boundaries; MBC's response to the pandemic; Call for Sites was due to go to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Meeting in June with recommendations to go to Regulation 19 in late June.

9th March – SLCC Election webinar – The Clerk attended and details discussed at item 456/21.

9th March – SLCC Ordnance Survey Mapping – The Clerk attended but unfortunately this was more about what was available rather than the use of data/maps.

Conferences/Meetings/Webinars forthcoming

15th March – Communications Sub-Committee

16th March – Planning Committee

22nd March – KALC Area Committee Meeting

23rd March – Amenities Committee

29th March – Memorial Hall AGM

30th March – Planning Committee

458/21 CORRESPONDENCE

Cllr Boswell was removed to the Waiting Room during the discussion for this item.

The Clerk briefed the meeting on the email received. A request had been received for the hire of Southons Field on 2nd July 2022 for a wedding reception. Details included erection of marquee, provision of toilets and music. As the hirer was a relation of Cllr Boswell the Clerk had made the decision to bring this to Full Council for agreement rather than Amenities. The Clerk reported that, if Cllrs agreed, an extension to the music/alcohol licence would need to be made via a Temporary Events Notice as the Parish Council licence only went to 10pm. Cllrs agreed to the hire and the Clerk would send a booking form and details of the required fee.

Cllr Boswell returned to the meeting.

459/21 FINANCE**Bank Statements:**Revenue Accounts

Nat West (as at 3rd February 2021) £23,935.60

Unity (as at 9th March 2021) £61,151.63

Capital Account

Santander (as at 18th January 2021) £47,088.33

Payments for Approval

Electronic Payments

Digital Nomads – Domain/Email annual subscription - £143.98

Marden Memorial Hall – Office Rent - £255.00

Alison Hooker – Mobile Top Ups/Postage (home working), PPE - £328.84

Rams Hill Mowers – Servicing of machinery - £763.20

Rams Hill Mowers – Purchase of Leaf blower £260.00

TOTAL: £1,751.02

Cllrs agreed all payments. Cllrs Mannington and Turner would authorise payments on Unity.

460/21 HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Highways

Outstanding Highways Issues from Planning Approvals

The list of outstanding issues had been circulated to Cllrs and these would be forwarded to Kent Highways for updates.

Grit Bins

This item had been deferred from Amenities Committee. According to the Kent Highways website the grit bin outside the Chemist was missing from the database. The Clerk was asked to speak with Kent Highways regarding this and to see whether additional grit bins could be installed in the vicinity of The Parsonage/Highwood Green. Cllr Adam reported that there was one in Station Approach, but Cllr Barker was under the impression that this was under railway ownership. The one at the Memorial Hall was also privately owned by the Hall.

Maidstone Road/High Street Junction Bollards

This item was deferred from Amenities Committee. Cllr Boswell asked if the bell bollards outside “Cornerways” could be added to the list for the Community Payback Team to paint when they were able to work in Marden. Bollards on the opposite side of the Maidstone Road junction would be added to the Highways Improvement Plan as vehicles were jumping the kerb and damaging the planter on the corner.

Highways Improvement Plan

This was last updated in July 2020 when several Cllrs met with Kent Highways’ representative. The Clerk was asked to contact Kent Highways for updates and Cllrs would look at locations for drop kerbs on footways to allow easier access for crossing the roads. As this was an annual review Cllrs were asked to consider what else needed to be added before resubmitting to Kent Highways later in the year.

Cllr Tippen asked that this item be placed on every Full Council agenda – Cllrs supported this.

Fingerposts

Cllr Turner had contacted East Peckham Parish Council regarding contacts of who they used to refurbish their fingerposts. Cllr Turner would then provide a report for the next Full Council meeting.

Cllr Adam asked that this item be placed on every Full Council agenda – Cllrs supported this.

Public Transport

Schools had now returned so there were a larger number of people using the trains. At the moment the restrictions to the number of trains were still in place but additional carriages had been added. Cllr Adam would continue to monitor and it was envisaged that a new timetable would be published shortly.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.33pm

Date:

Signed:

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