

**MINUTES OF EASTRY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT EASTRY VILLAGE HALL
ON TUESDAY 17th MAY 2016 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors N Kenton (Chairman) M Pemble P Bailey B Read
 Andrew Wiles Annie Wiles A Barwick M Jones
 M Kemp

S Wells Clerk to the Parish Council 9 Members of the Public Dist Cllr Manion

County Cllr Leyland Ridings PCSO Amy Youden and PCSO Ian Norton (part)

Cllr Kenton opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending, he explained that the PCSO's would like to get away so had asked to me moved up the agenda, this was agreed.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllrs S Hooper & L Bevin-Powell

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The minutes of the last Annual meeting were available in the Annual Meeting report pack; copies were available for all present.

3. MATTERS ARISING

A question ref litter by the road side – The poor street cleaning by DDC contractors was reported to DDC and rectification notices had been issued to Veolia

Concern about the number of potholes in the roads was raised - Kent Highways Fault reporting information was published in the Jun/Jul 2015 issue of the Village News. There was still concern about the appalling state of the local roads, Cllr Ridings reported that KCC would be spending £4 million on pot hole repairs over the next few months.

A question was asked about speeding in Felderland Lane, the Chairman reported that members of the Council would be meeting with KCC Member Leyland Riding and an officer from KHS to discuss the latest traffic count and possible introduction of a Speed Indicator Device in Felderland Lane.

4. POLICE ISSUES

PCSO Youden reported that there are no major issues in the village at the moment, there had been issues with drug use in Gun Park and on the land behind Gun Park, the Police were currently working with the land owner to try and address this problem.

PCSO Norton reported that speed checks had been undertaken in Felderland Lane on a number of occasions, however no speeding issues had been identified.

PCSO's Northon and Youden left the meeting.

5. SPEEDING IN THE VILLAGE

Last year the Council tried to launch a Community Speed Watch Scheme, unfortunately there were insufficient local volunteers to make it viable. We are now in communication with Kent highways services with a view to providing a semi-permanent Speed Indicator Device in the Parish that will be moved between 5 or 6 permanent posts that will be situated around the village in known trouble spots. (like the ones in Staple and Nonington)

In addition to this the Council would like to try once more to introduce a community speed watch scheme that will use this SID unit.

Cllr Terry Madgwick from Great Mongeham Parish Council is here to speak about their very successful Speed Watch Scheme which was launched last year.

Cllr Madgwick explained that following a public meeting were 40 members of the public came to discuss speed watch, a core of 16 people have been trained and are operating the scheme. They have been split into 4 teams of 3/4. To start with equipment was borrowed from Nonington Parish Council, however this was quite old and not very sensitive. In March Great Mongeham PC brought their own Speed Indicator Device and are now operating regular sessions. 17%-18% of vehicles are travelling over 35mph and there details have been passed to the Kent Police Speed Watch team for processing. If a cars details are reported more than twice Kent Police send letter to them asking them to slow down.

Speedwatch is about education, not enforcement, however the data collected by Community Speed Watch can be used by Police enforcement to ensure there limited resources are sent to areas with an actual speeding problem.

The Chairman thank Cllr Madgwick

6. PRESENTATION OF THE KALC 2016 COMMUNITY AWARDS

The Kent Association of Local Councils introduced this award in 2014 to acknowledge and give recognition to those that have made a significant contribution to their local community. The Scheme is supported by the High Sheriff of Kent, Chairman of Kent County Council and Mayor of Medway Council.

This year the Parish Council had made this award to one of the unsung heroes of the Parish. He has been involved with many village activities over the years but this award goes to him for the his time and expertise given over many years to help maintain Buttsole Pond, his long and sustained service to the local community is very much appreciated. Mr Richard Swain.

Unfortunately Mr Swain was not at the meeting so the award was accepted on his behalf by Cllr Barwick.

7. CHAIRMANS REPORT

Finances – 2015/16 although the accounts have been completed, a change in the Accounts and Audit regulation means they have to be examined by the Independent Auditor before the accounts and the Audit form can be adopted and agreed by the Council. Once they have been signed off they will be available to view on the Parish Council web site.

New Councillors – Following the election in May 2015 one new Councillor Mark Jones joined the Council and following the resignation of Nicki Wickham in November 2015, Cllr Andrew Wiles joined the Council earlier this month. Welcome to them both.

New Bowling Pavilion / Parish Room / Community Building

The Parish Council in still working to provide a new building in Church Street to replace the existing Parish Room.

Public Access Defibrillator

The PAD now situated outside the Village Hall was purchased by the Council and installed in September last year. Although the unit and cabinet cost £1500 the members felt this is a small price to pay should it be used to save a life.

New Benches – Two new benches were provided in the Children's play area in Gun Park.

New Bins - Six old tulip style bins have been replaced with new covered top bins.

Parade Parking restriction – The Council continue to pursue the introductions of parking limits in the layby by the parade. In consultation with local shop owners the following restrictions have been requested. 1 hour parking, no return for 2 hours and 6am to 10pm hours of operation. This should be advertised next week.

Grants - Last year grants were given to Eastry Village Hall, Eastry Village News, 1st Eastry Brownies, Deal Community Responders, Eastry Football Club for youth football and 10th Deal Eastry Scouts.

The 2016 grant invitation will be published in the Village News later in the year.

Christmas Trees – The Parish Council provided Christmas trees outside the Five Bells and The Village Hall again this year. The Annual Carol singing round the tree was again sponsored by Mary at the Five Bells, thanks for her and her staff. Thanks to Mark Jones for getting the trees this year.

Allotments Management Committee – Continue to undertake the day to day management of the allotments. I would like to thank the members of the committee for their tireless work in make the allotments run smoothly. I would also like Richard Swain for his continued hard work at the toilets and Pond, Shelia and Malcolm Broster for keeping the Village looking clean and tidy, the helpers at Coffee Break, my fellow Councilors and of course our Clerk Sarah Wells.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions, someone asked if it would be possible to get the listing of the old hospital building lifted so it could be demolished. The view of the meeting was that the building was ugly and did not deserve to be preserved. The Chairman said the Council would try and get the listing lifted, however he was not very optimistic as Historic England had visited the building following the fire and still classed it as having special architectural interest. **Action Parish Council**

8. REPORTS

DDC – Cllr Steve Manion and Cllr Nick Kenton

Cllr Manion reported on the St James development in Dover. The work is now underway, Cllr Kenton reported that the archeologically work had been signed off and the units are selling well. Cllr Manion said that the expansion work at Aylsham was continuing and that more houses were being built at Whitfield as part of the Dover District plan. He also reported that £4 million of grant funding had been allocated to the district.

Cllr Kenton reported that work to pick up litter of the main arterial routes the A20 and A2 was being carried out when possible, unfortunately the cost incurred in closing or part closing these roads made it impossible to undertake this work very often. 2.5 tonnes of rubbish had been collected over a few night recently. DDC are trying to get Highways England to take on the responsibility for these roads as they are responsible for arterial routes throughout the rest of the Country. This will free up funds for other routes.

Cllr Kenton also reported that a major consultation was currently running to find a sight for a new sports centre, Dover Leisure centre is very old and no longer viable. A number of sites are being considered.

KCC Cllr Leyland Ridings

Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen

This is my 19th Annual Report, in it I cover a number of areas; Education, Finance and Street Lighting.

Finance and Street Lighting

Kent County Council continues to face unprecedented financial challenges.

- a reduction of over 30% (£58m) in our revenue support grant from central government as part of the efforts to balance the nation's finances
- an increase in costs of £80m from increases in demand for services (particularly adult social care)
- KCC members approved a 1.99% council tax increase raising £11m towards all council services.
- KCC members agreed an extra 2% for the National Social Care Levy which will raise an additional £11m specifically for social care.
- The remaining £94m budget gap will be met through savings including staff reductions and the one off use of reserves.

How much will my council tax bill be going up?

For a Band C property (the most common band in Kent) the rise would be £21.36 to £988.24p. The extra 2% for the National Social Care Levy would increase this further to £1,007.60p. The total rise would be £40.72 (78p a week).

NB KCC accounts for the largest share of council tax (about 70%) but the total council tax bill includes district/borough councils, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and town/parish council who all set their own rate.

Don't you have to hold a referendum if the rise is 2% or more?

The government accepts that councils with social care responsibilities need to raise more funding to meet the increase in demand for social care and an extra 2% levy is now allowed provided this is spent entirely on social care. (The chancellor announced this on 25 November last year).

Why are your costs going up when inflation is low/non-existent?

We have more people living longer (a good thing) and more becoming very frail and in need of care either in their own home, residential care or nursing care. The new National Living Wage will also increase the cost of social care services, our National Insurance tax has risen, other taxes such as carbon tax, landfill tax and insurance tax and some contractual costs have also risen where they are linked to a specific index.

Where will you make savings?

We are continuing our work to help people live independently at home to delay or avoid the need for more costly residential or nursing care. We are making more of our services available online which both saves money and allows people to contact us 24/7. We are making savings through better procurement from both the private and voluntary sector. Around 150 jobs will be cut (we have already taken out over 2,200 over the last five years).

What about the Young Persons Travel Pass (successor to the Freedom Pass)?

Apart from London, Kent is the only area in England with a bus pass for children 11 – 16 years old (in school years 7 – 11). Each pass (depending on usage) costs KCC around £600 but is sold to parents for just £250. (The charge to parents is reviewed each year and will change in line with bus fares).

The Young Person's Travel Pass allows free use of scheduled bus routes in Kent from the start of the school year in September to 31 July, from 06 00 – 19 00 Monday to Friday. Around 23,000 children hold a Young Persons Travel Pass.

The Young Persons Travel Pass is a discretionary service i.e. it is an optional service as opposed to concessionary bus passes for older people which is statutory.

The government says your spending power is the same and you say you have had a reduction.

The government actually acknowledges there will be a dip in funding 2016-17 and 2017-18, before it starts to rise in 2018-19 and fully recovers to current levels in 2019-20. The government's "spending power" assumes we will continue to raise council tax to the referendum limit and add a further 2% social care levy and that the number of houses paying council tax continues to rise. It takes no account of demographic changes such as the rise in the number of elderly and increase in school children or any increase in prices.

Why are you using reserves?

The Government announced the local government finance settlement just before Christmas and used a new distribution formula which has greatly disadvantaged county councils. There was no way we could have anticipated this change as the government is only now consulting on the new formula.

We had to publish our budget in early January to allow time for councillors to scrutinise and debate it. We had to set our budget by mid-February to give time for the district/borough councils to send out council tax bills in time for the new financial year. With so little time available we will be using some of our reserves to bridge our budget gap. These are our earmarked reserves such as the money set aside for PFI school building contracts, replacement of vehicles and equipment etc.

Using reserves can only be done once so simply postpones the need to make long term savings.

KCC holds a low level of reserves relative to its size compared with our peer group authorities.

What about the money that was with the Icelandic Banks?

KCC had £50m on deposit in various Icelandic Banks and has now recovered this in full plus around £1.3m in interest payments. KCC is the only council that made a full recovery as other councils sold their rights at less than 100% of value. KCC had always said that the Icelandic Banks had good assets and that we would work for full recovery. This has paid off handsomely. The £50m is not new money so cannot bridge our budget gap but the £1.3m of interest is very welcome.

Are you outsourcing/privatising services?

We looked at outsourcing our back office services last year but the bidders could not match the level of savings our in house team could achieve. We will however continue to use the private and voluntary sector to deliver services where appropriate e.g. our youth services, domiciliary care, residential care, nursing care etc.

What's happening about streetlighting?

The costs of LED lighting have now made it cost effective to switch all KCC's streetlighting to LED which will save energy & maintenance costs, carbon tax and allow more controllable dimming of lights at night and non peak times. The switchover has begun and will cover the whole of Kent within two years. We estimate the investment made to install LED will be repaid within 7 to 8 years from the energy and other savings. The Highways, Transportation and Waste directorate have confirmed that the street lighting upgrade in Dover will commence in June 2016.

What about broadband?

KCC has just completed a programme to bring access to broadband to 91% of households in Kent. A further investment of £11.6m has been made (jointly funded by KCC and the government) to extend coverage to 95.7% of households. This programme started in January 2016 and will last approximately 18 months. If you go to www.kent.gov.uk and search for 'broadband' you can use your postcode or phone number to check what broadband services are available in your area.

The Prime Minister has made a commitment to extend coverage to 100% and we await details of how this will be done.

I get nothing for my council tax (rural area – no streetlights, pavements etc.)

You get around 300 services for your council tax many of which you only need in an emergency or would only miss if they disappeared. Your rubbish is recycled or buried/incinerated, children are educated, the elderly and disabled cared for, children protected from harm, a library service either in a building, a mobile or on-line, roads maintained, kept open in bad weather, births, deaths and marriages are registered, coroners courts run, children are fostered or adopted, footpaths kept open and much, much more.

Education**Kent Schools**

The percentage of Kent schools achieving "Good" or "Outstanding" OFSTED ratings is now 84% (up from 66% in 2010) and is expected to increase this year to 86%.

GCSE

Kent students receiving GSCE 5A*-C in 2015 was 57% (3% above national). We expect this to increase to 60% this year.

Schools in category

We expect to reduce the number of Kent schools in category to no more than 6 this year.

Eastry C of E School Report - Head Teacher – Tim Halling

For the past 11 years our results have been above the national average, our position nationwide is in the top 17% for maths and reading. We support other schools who have had unsatisfactory OFSTED reports. The school role is nearly full, we have just one place in the school, and we are one of the most popular school in the local area. We continue to run charity events in school and the PTA run regular fund raisers. This year we have taken children on a wide variety of school trips and have had visitors from a

number of outside agencies. We have close ties with the local Church and hold child lead services regularly. The school has a number of clubs that run after school and at lunchtimes.

I would like to thank all my staff, children, governors and volunteers for another successful year.

The Chairman thank Mr Halling for attending.

Greville Almshouses – Chairman of the Trustees – Mr John Waring

The trustees meet 4-6 times a year, and are always looking to make improvements to the properties. Over the past year we have had double glazing installed in the Bungalows and new Porches for the cottages. We are now in the process of fitting next kitchens in the six cottages. The next improvement will be the replacement of the gutters, with UPVC to reduce maintenance costs. There are no vacancies at this time, any vacancy that do arise will be advertised locally.

The Chairman thanked Mr Waring for his report.

Eastry Church Report – Rev David Ridley

The Rev Ridley thanked everyone that helped with the running of the Church, he said that as he is responsible for 5 Churches his time is limited and he would not be able to cope without the volunteers that help with the day to day running. A new lighting scheme had been installed in the Church and the Church is now open daily for anyone to pop in. It is hoped that work to improve the disabled access can be undertaken however this is not easy due to the age of the building.

The Rev Ridley had information on the upcoming Eastry Festival, there will be an event to mark the Queens 90th birthday on the 12th June.

The Church are hoping to launch a scheme called Eastry Carers, that will help with short term help for people coming out of hospital or who become ill and can't cope at home. This help would be short term until care packages can be put in place or to help with a short term illness.

There were no question, The Chairman thanked Rev Ridley.

Allotment Committee – Cllr Peter Bailey

Cllr Bailey reported that there are several vacancies at the moment, Eastry has the cheapest allotments in the district and you don't have to live in the parish to rent one.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bailey and invited those present to stay for refreshments. The meeting at 8.40pm