

NETTLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 4TH APRIL 2024 IN NETTLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL at 19:45

PRESENT: Cllr Anita van Hensbergen – Vice Chair
Cllr David Meredith
Cllr Emily Corfe
Cllr Jackie Bennett
Cllr Martyn Evans
Borough Cllr Claudine Russell
Suzanne Seal - Parish Clerk
Mrs Jean Schofield - Trustee, Nettlestead Village Hall
One member of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Alison Green – Chair
County Cllr Simon Webb

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

Cllr Meredith declared interest in agenda item 6 - Village Hall and it was agreed by all Councillors present that he would not participate in any decisions that Councillors might make in relation to the Hall.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH MARCH 2024

It was noted that in the minutes of the last meeting under agenda item 7.3, Cllr Corfe and Mark Fisher of A&F Services had been incorrectly addressed and their names were corrected manually. There was also a typing error in the heading of agenda item 14.4. This was also corrected manually and the Vice-chair initialled the amendments and signed off the official copy.

4. EXTERNAL REPORTS

4.1 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Webb was not in attendance but had circulated his annual report in advance of the meeting.

4.2 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Russell was in attendance and had circulated her report in advance of the meeting:

MBC Members Report from Cllr Claudine Russell

Dated: March 2024

It has once again been a busy year, both in terms of the ward and Maidstone Borough as I continued to be in the Cabinet, adding Communities to my portfolio of Leisure and Arts.

During the year I have tried my best to help residents with various queries, from planning issues, waste collection issues, and housing problems. I have spoken at planning committee

on behalf of residents and have this year sat on Planning Committee to further assist in the correct determination of planning applications. I have furthered my campaign on rural crime by attending a meeting at the Ministry of Justice, campaigning to have catapults (apart from when used for fishing) to be classified as a dangerous weapon and to have the punishment for their use to reflect this. I was really pleased to see the return of rural crime to the police control strategy and this, combined with the return to “bobbies on the beat” will help enhance safety in our villages.

In my cabinet role, work on the new archaeology gallery at the Museum has continued at pace, it opens in June, and we have secured funds to continue to improve the offering with a revamp of the Modern History Gallery. The new leisure contract has been let and the capital budget now has an allocation for a new centre built to a sustainable concept. The café is going so well at Mote Park that the plans for the second smaller café at the other side of the lake continue at pace. Maidstone Town Centre has never had more events on offer, and I have strived to use the UK Share Prosperity money to make as many of them free to attend and family focussed as possible. As recently as last week I was pleased to be able to bring to committee a plan to create an Arts and Maker Space in the town centre. Finally, our community grants have helped lots of different groups and organisations and I would encourage anyone to watch this 2 minute video of how we have distributed some of the funds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8CwqsuVl1A>

Within the wider council you may have seen that we have awarded a new waste collection contract. It has experienced some teething problems as the crew learn the new routes and get to grips with the new different vehicles, but the crews are working overtime and weekends to catch up, the missed bin online link is working and once reported the person will be updated on progress.

The Local Plan was adopted at full council and will shape development (and importantly where shouldn't be developed) for the next 15 years. It is designed to deliver infrastructure along with housing and to provide a higher than national 20% net biodiversity gain on all new developments. Without a Local Plan our 5 year land housing supply would have slipped and speculative planning applications could have come in across the borough.

We continue to purchase land and houses for our affordable housing stock for local people. These are part of our housing numbers and not additional and we currently have sites for 400 of the 1,000 houses that our administration has set out an ambition to deliver.

As you may already know, we are about to all stand for the first “all-out” Maidstone Borough Council elections. This was something that we wanted, to save voter fatigue and lots of taxpayers money. It will mean that whoever is returned after May will have a 4 year term to run the council. I've really enjoyed my term since 2021 and if I'm lucky enough to be voted in again I would be proud to represent you to the best of my ability once again at Maidstone Borough Council.

As always, if you need my help, please do not hesitate to email me at claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk

Cllr Russell expanded on her report about the waste collection and advised that Biffa did not tender for the job, so the option to remain with them was not available. They have however Tupe'd over all staff from Biffa to SUEZ. Routes were changed to combine new housing developments within the existing routes for a more efficient process and Cllr Russell has a cabinet meeting at the depot next week to review the telemetry. Cllr Russell advised residents to use the MBC missed bin online link to assist the new crew with working through the initial teething problems.

5. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

5.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

Cllr Corfe was not aware of any Crime Reports for April 2024.

5.2 PARISH MAGAZINE

Cllr Van Hensbergen advised that another advert had been received making the total now 19 company adverts having been placed in the Parish Magazine, with just one company still to settle their invoice. The Clerk provided Cllr Van Hensbergen with the receipt to hand deliver to Wood Cottage Nursery. Clerk to chase the outstanding payment and send Cllr Van Hensbergen the receipt for G I Carpets to be hand delivered.

5.3 CHATTERBOX AND WARMSPACE

Cllr Bennett reported that both Warmspace and Chatterbox continue to run well with Chatterbox being held once a month on a Tuesday at The Hop Pole and on the first Thursday of every other month at The Railway. Warmspace held an Easter activity for children at The Hop Pole which was well attended by approximately 20 children and was enjoyed by all.

Cllr Bennett to request an invoice from The Hop Pole to enable the recent Warmspace grant monies to be transferred to them and to liaise with Rebecca Pullen to advertise the D-Day 80 event planned for the 29th June, being held at The Hop Pole.

6. VILLAGE HALL

Mrs J Schofield had circulated a report in advance of the meeting:

To date the hall has been going forward from strength to strength, our first fundraiser was the Easter Egg Hunt organised by Donna and the team from The Railway – they did a marvellous job and over 30 children participated on the day - no tickets could be sold on the day due to planning.

At the end of a busy two hours of fun, games, tea and cake the team made over £418 which is a tremendous effort – well done!

Works on the hall are almost finished now with the body of the hall sound and watertight and the team are now at the decorating stage – we have decided to paint the hall a pale grey and the new stage curtains will be Electric Blue to warm the space. We have 2 new streams of possible grant money in the pipeline being explored at present.

Our fundraising efforts are now pointing towards doing something with the existing toilets and my A-team have secured the services of a local friendly builder who is willing to be involved. Our recent hirer who left the hall in a state has been fined £50 for extra work required.

At present the Music night on 5th April has sold almost 100 tickets and with raffle monies it is hoped to raise around £900.

To date the hall has had the roof made watertight, double glazing repaired along with fire doors, new gutters, new fascia's, completely new lighting throughout the hall and spotlights repaired with new bulbs – a baby changing station installed and ground works outside tidied.

A sign has been sought for the bottom of the drive to say Hall for Hire and the website address on it. Deposits for parties is being increased to £300 to deter lack of cleaning and

damage control – we will also be impressing on hirers old and new to look after and respect our hall after all the effort that has gone into renovating it.

Future events include a Swing Night on the 25th May and an indoor Boot Fair, another music night plus a Fashion Swop day with people paying £5-£10 pounds to come in and bring 3 items and swop them for another 3 items all with tea, coffee and cake.

We have 4 people now wishing to be Trustees for the hall. The Booking Secretary has resigned and finishes at the end of April.

Jean Schofield NVH

Mrs Schofield continued to report that the Friends of Nettlestead Village Hall are in the process of making a Welcome Pack/Terms & Conditions to provide to every hall booker with all the information they need for their booking, to advise of instances when deposits won't be returned and to impress that adult supervision will be required for parties held by teenagers/young adults. Clerk to advise Cllr Green to increase the deposit on the website to £300 and to arrange the return of Cllr Russell's deposit.

Cllr Meredith provided a financial update for the Village Hall and reported that both the Preschool and Parish Council are due to pay their annual fee to the hall which will assist with money to pay the bills. Cllr Meredith has taken the meter readings to send to the utility providers to ensure the hall is being billed the correct amount for its usage and is continuing his enquiries with the Performing Rights company to ascertain whether the invoices raised during lockdown were correct.

The Clerk advised that prior to the meeting, Cllr Evans had replaced the old battery and pad in the defibrillator located at the Village Hall with new ones, carried out the check to ensure it is in good working order and cleaned the defibrillator casing. **It was RESOLVED by all members present** that Cllr Evans and the Clerk would carry out the required monthly check of the defibrillator prior to the start of each Parish Council meeting and the Clerk would maintain a record of the checks. Clerk to note when the new battery and pads expire.

7. KGV FIELD

7.1 TREE GRANT SCHEME

Cllr Webb was not present at the meeting to provide an update. Clerk to contact Cllr Webb to request an update.

7.2 QUOTES FOR A SHOOTING GOAL

The Clerk provided quotes for the cost of purchasing a goal and it was noted that goals had to be purchased in pairs which increased the cost. This agenda item will be rolled over to next month for the Clerk to obtain quotes for installing a goal, as it would be necessary to concrete it to fix it into the ground.

7.3 UPDATE ON WORKS REQUESTED FOLLOWING THE REPORT ON THE PLAY EQUIPMENT

Cllr Van Hensbergen confirmed that A&F Services had replaced the broken paling.

It was RESOLVED by all members present to agree to the quote provided by Capel Groundcare to repair the rotten wood and trip hazard around the 8 station fitness gym.

The Councillors agreed that the field looked in good condition and noted on the work schedule provided by Capel Groundcare, that only one cut had been carried out so far, due to the inclement weather. Discussions were had as to whether the litter pick had taken

place prior to the strimming at the lay-by adjacent to the Old School House. Clerk to follow up with Capel Groundcare.

8. CHURCHYARD

Cllr Bennett reported that everything was looking good at the Churchyard.

9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

9.1 TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY ISSUES – SPEEDING/UPDATE FOLLOWING KCC HIGHWAYS MEETING

Following the Highways meeting at Nettlestead Village Hall on 29th February, Cllr Webb and Kent County Council have put forward the following proposal:

- Cllr Webb to fund the extra £2,500 to upgrade the Zebra Crossing lights. In addition to paying for a complete refresh of the Zebra Crossing itself (White Lines etc).
- Two large 40mph painted signs on the Maidstone Road where it reduces speed from 50 to 40 to reinforce the speed change.

Various other points were discussed at their meeting, but it was felt the safety across the road and reemphasising the speed limit would be the best options. The total costs of the above works is £3,000. Cllr Webb has kindly agreed to fund this using his £3,000 budget for 24/25. **It was RESOLVED by all members present** to agree to the works above following the Clerk ascertaining that the upgrade to the Zebra Crossing lights is the previously discussed new LED lights.

9.2 PROGRESS REPORT OF FAULTS & ISSUES REPORTED TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The report was reviewed and the Clerk advised that MBC had visited the leaning bus shelter outside the Trade-in-Tackle shop and would be removing it, replacing it and making good the area surrounding it.

Clerk to report the broken 'Gibbs Hill' sign.

Cllr Bennett advised she had reported the damage to the 'Silent Soldier' by the daffodils at the entrance to Gibbs Hill to the Royal British Legion and will provide an update in due course.

Discussions were had as to the works taking place on the triangle of land at Watringbury Station following an enquiry from a resident. Clerk to look up the cost of mowing this area in the tender for grounds maintenance works and Cllr Green and the Clerk to continue the email correspondence with Network Rail in this regard.

9.3 STREETLIGHT LED BULBS

Cllr Webb had advised via email that the 'purple lights' are a fault with the bulbs and they will be replaced. Clerk to follow up with Cllr Webb in this regard.

10. OLD SCHOOL HOUSE CLOCK

Clerk to request the annual service of the clock.

11. PLANNING MATTERS

11.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There were no new planning applications prior to this meeting.

11.2 DECISIONS MADE BY MBC

None.

11.3 PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had circulated an email prior to the meeting regarding a free Community Resilience Planning Workshop being held in Ashford on Tuesday 21 May 2024 which gives practical advice to assist in developing a local community resilience plan for Nettlestead. **It was RESOLVED by all members present** to approve the mileage and time for the Clerk to attend this workshop.

Cllr Bennett stated that she would like to attend the free Chatty Café online workshop in line with her Chatterbox work. Clerk to book this for Cllr Bennett.

12. FINANCE

Following the donation from the Parish Council to The Hop Pole for Chatterbox discussed at last month's meeting, Cllr Bennett advised she would request a formal invoice from The Hop Pole in order for funds to be transferred.

12.1 RESOLUTION TO RECEIVE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR APRIL 2024

Cllr Meredith signed the invoices and advised that the direct debit had been paid. Cllr Meredith provided two Budget Monitoring Reports for this meeting which detailed the position at the end of the financial year 23/24 and the position at the start of the new financial year 24/25. **RESOLVED by all members** to approve the Budget Monitoring reports for APRIL 2024.

12.2 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PAYMENTS FOR APRIL 2024

RESOLVED by all members to approve payments for APRIL 2024. Cllr Meredith and Cllr Corfe signed the cheques. **It was RESOLVED by all members present** to retrospectively agree the sum of £342 in the Clerk's expenses for the battery and pad for the defibrillator at the Village Hall. The HMRC cheque in the sum of £38 which was sent by post in December 2023 has still not been cashed, Clerk to continue to chase with HMRC.

It was **RESOLVED by all members** to approve the two Bank Reconciliations, one for the end of the financial year 23/24 and one for the start of the new financial year 24/25 and this was signed by the Vice Chair and the Clerk.

NPC CHEQUE LIST - APRIL 2024					
Cheque No	Gross	VAT	Nett	Details	
TO BE APPROVED					
UNITY ONLINE	£225.00	£0.00	£225.00	NETTLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL	RENT - Y/E 31.03.24
UNITY ONLINE	£36.00	£0.00	£36.00	KALC	COURSE FOR CLERK
622381	£215.00	£0.00	£215.00	HADLUM DESIGN & PRINT	PARISH MAGAZINE PRINTING - MAR
622382	£475.14	£79.19	£395.95	CAPEL GROUND CARE	GM CONTRACT - MAR
622383	£687.64	£0.00	£687.64	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S SALARY - MAR
622384	£422.84	£59.26	£363.58	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S EXPENSES - MAR
	£2,061.62	£138.45	£1,923.17		
DD150224	£9.60	£1.60	£8.00	SAGE PAYROLL	PAYROLL FEE - MAR
UNITY ONLINE	£696.60	£0.00	£696.60	SUZANNE SEAL	APR SALARY (S/Order)
	£2,767.82	£140.05	£2,627.77		
UNCLEARED B/F					

622364	£38.00	£0.00	£38.00	HMRC	HMRC TAX PAYMENT FOR MICHELLE RUMBLE
	£38.00	£0.00	£38.00		
INCOME UNITY BANK					
TFR040324	£40.00	£0.00	£40.00	LES BLACKBURN	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - MAR
TFR 220324	£145.00	£0.00	£145.00	HSBC - PORTHAVEN CARE HOMES 3 LTD	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - MAR
TFR 250324	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00	CLAIRE'S DAYS OUT	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - MAR
TOTAL UNITY BANK INCOME	£205.00	£0.00	£205.00		
DEDUCTIONS UNITY BANK					
310324	£18.00	£0.00	£18.00	SERVICE CHARGE	
	£18.00	£0.00	£18.00		

12.3 RESOLUTION TO AUTHORISE SETTING UP A NEW STANDING ORDER TO PAY THE NEW CLERK

Cllr Meredith advised that a Standing Order had been set up as an online payment for the Clerk to receive the 45 hours per month salary on the 28th of every month, starting at the end of April and taking into account the SCP19 increase of 27 pence per hour.

12.4 INTERNET BANKING

Cllr Green, Cllr Van Hensbergen, Cllr Corfe and Cllr Bennett to log in to the online banking to ensure access and to authorise the rent payment to the Village Hall, the KALC invoice for the Clerk's recent course and the Standing Order for the Clerk, as noted above on the Cheque List.

13. SOCIAL MEDIA

The Cllrs agreed that the Facebook page was being kept up to date regularly by Rebecca Pullen and is working really well.

Cllr Russell forwarded the 'My Community Voice' link to the Clerk for onward forwarding to Cllr Corfe and Cllr Bennett. PC Chad Maskell had attended the previous parish meeting and suggested that residents use this to contact the local police about issues in their area. The link is: <https://www.kent.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/wsi/watch-schemes-initiatives/kent/my-community-voice/>

14. CORRESPONDENCE

14.1 PROGRESS REPORT OF ISSUES RAISED BY RESIDENTS

The report was discussed and the outcomes were as follows:

- Clerk to send Land Registry extract obtained from Golding Homes to Cllr Russell and the Parish Councillors in connection with the ownership of the grassed areas in Bishops Close/Bryant Close and the public footpath (KM177) behind Bishops Close.
- Clerk to follow up with Cllr Webb regarding the 'Bow Hill' sign.
- Clerk to look into the two missing metal bollards that used to be on the corner of the pavement by the Junction of the B2015 opposite the Railway Pub.
- Cllr Russell to continue her efforts requesting the removal of the campervan parked on Gibbs Hill.
- Clerk to continue to chase the request to remove the abandoned tent at the Village Hall.

15. POLICIES

15.1 SCHEME OF DELEGATION POLICY

The Clerk had circulated a draft Scheme of Delegation policy ahead of the meeting and although Cllr Meredith thought that this might be contained within another policy, **it was RESOLVED by all members present** to have a separate policy for this which will be formally approved at the June 2024 Parish Council meeting.

16. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Parish Council Elections

Village Hall

KGV Field – Tree Grant Scheme

KGV Field – Quotes for Shooting Goal & quote for works to fix it in

Traffic and Highways Issues – Speeding/Update on KCC suggested works at zebra crossing and speeding signs on the road

Traffic and Highways Issues - Progress Report

Streetlight LED bulbs

Old School House Clock – Annual Service

Internet Banking

Update on D-Day 80 Event - 29th June 2024

Update on correspondence from residents reviewed at this meeting

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday 9th May 2024 and will be the Annual Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish Council at 7:45pm at Nettlestead Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15pm.