

NETTLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING and ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 12th MAY 2022 IN NETTLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL at 19:45

PRESENT: **Cllr David Meredith – Chairman**
Cllrs A. van Hensbergen - Vice-chairman
E Salter,
J Bennett,
R Pullen
The Parish Clerk Mrs M Rumble,
County Councillor S Webb,
Borough Councillor C Russell
Borough Councillor D Burton

1. Apologies

Cllr Alison Green (personal), PCSO Nicola Morris

2. Councillor Declarations

No interests declared

3. Election Chairman

Cllr Anita Van Hensbergen proposed Cllr Meredith, seconded by Cllr Bennett, this was **RESOLVED** by all members present and Cllr Meredith duly accepted Chairman for the coming year and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and the Proper office also signed.

4. Election Vice-chairman

Cllr Meredith proposed Cllr Anita Van Hensbergen, seconded by Cllr Bennett, this was **RESOLVED** by all members present and Cllr Van Hensbergen duly accepted the vice-chairman for the coming year.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7th of April 2022

Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th May 2021

The minutes of the meeting had been previously distributed, and Cllr Salter proposed that they were a true record. Cllr Bennett seconded this, with all in favour. The Chairman signed off the original copy.

6. Councillors Report

Chairmans Report

Cllr Meredith had circulated this prior to the meeting,

I have now completed nine years as Chairman of your Parish Council, and it has been a strange, and at times, difficult year. Whilst the impact of the pandemic has at last waned, and we are once again able to meet physically, meetings are socially distanced and the cloud of Covid still hangs over us. This was brought home to me and my family personally, when we contracted Covid last month, and whilst none of us were seriously ill, it does serve to remind me that the “bug” continues to circulate.

As always, we have a strong team of Councillors, and may I take this opportunity to thank them all for their hard work and diligence during the year. As I hope residents appreciate, all Councillors give up their time without financial reward, and we are fortunate as a parish to have such a range of expertise to look after the various responsibilities that the parish has.

Over the last year, we have been sorry to accept the resignation of David Thomas. David provided a very valuable resource to the Council, and his practical input will be greatly missed. However, we were delighted to welcome Rebecca Pullen as a co-opted councillor from September last year, and we are pleased that we again have a representative from Bryant Close.

That does still leave us with a vacancy, and if anyone is interested in becoming a Councillor, then please contact the Parish Clerk. We would be particularly interested in having another representative from the southern end of the village, either Nettlestead Green or Blumer Lock.

I would also like to recognise the support of our Borough Councillor, Claudine Russell, and our County Councillor, Simon Webb, for their active support and interest in our parish, and they have both been welcome and regular attendees at our Parish Council meetings.

Whilst Nettlestead is only a small parish, we do look after a number of local amenities, and where funds permit, we are pleased to support other Parish activities. Here is a brief review of our recent activities:

King George V field

Capel Groundcare continue their contract to maintain the field and were reappointed for another three-year term last year. The field has had some extra maintenance following the storm earlier this year, and it is in regular use.

Unfortunately, the re-positioning of the goal posts did not alleviate the long running issue of footballs ending up in residents' gardens. It also became clear that the goals were no longer safe, so they were removed last autumn. Whilst the Council did vote to replace the goals earlier this year with smaller goals in more central positions, we then agreed to defer the decision following further representations from the residents affected. This matter will be reviewed again at our June meeting, and if any other Nettlestead residents wish to let us know their views, please contact the Parish Clerk.

On a more positive note, we have been able to recognize the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with the planting of an oak tree on the field. We are grateful for the Member's grant from KCC Councillor Simon Webb, which made this possible.

May I thank Councillor Anita Van Hensbergen for undertaking regular inspections and maintenance, and Councillors David Thomas, Emily Salter and Alison Green for helping with other issues and minor repairs, including the erections of notices during periods of government-imposed restrictions.

Nettlestead Church

We have continued to help the Church with the maintenance of the churchyard, and this work continues to be undertaken by Capel Groundcare. Whilst the Council must remain a secular organisation, we feel it is important to help maintain one of the focal points of the village.

Village Hall

I would like to stress that the Village Hall is a separately managed charity, which is not the responsibility of the Parish Council. However, we are pleased that the Hall is now open again and available for use. We were also pleased to be able to support the Hall in a small way by arranging for some mowing and strimming work to be undertaken earlier this year.

The Village Hall Committee does need to recruit new members to join the Committee, and in particular a new permanent Chairman is needed. If any resident or Hall user would be interested in joining the Committee, please let the bookings secretary know, and she can be reached on 07984 433299 or by e-mail on NVHbookings@gmail.com.

Crime & Policing

PCSO Nicola Morris has continued as the police presence in Nettlestead, although she can no longer regularly attend our meetings. PCSO Morris can be contacted on 101 or by e-mail on 56202@kent.pnn.police.uk. We are pleased to see that the number of crimes in Nettlestead has again been relatively low, especially when compared to surrounding villages, although vehicles and outbuildings continue to be vulnerable to break-ins.

Emily Salter has continued her valuable role as Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for the Parish, and I would like to record my thanks to her for carrying out this work.

Chatterbox

The club naturally had to suspend meetings during the pandemic, but monthly lunches alternating between the Railway and the Hop Pole have recommenced recently. May I thank Jackie Bennett for all the hard work that she puts into this. If you are interested in joining or would like more details, please telephone Jackie on 01622 813322 – the only qualifications are that you are 70 or over and live in the Parish.

Parish Magazine

Berty & Anita Van Hensbergen have continued their excellent work on the magazine, and I should like to record my thanks for their efforts and expertise which results in the production of ten issues every year. I am also very grateful to the band of volunteers who have continued to distribute the magazine to every house in the village. We also thank those who support the magazine with their advertising.

Other services and activities

The website continues to provide much local information for residents and others. If you have any suggestions for additional content, please contact Michelle Rumble at nettlesteadpc@btinternet.com or call her on 01622 831018. The website address is <https://www.nettlesteadparishcouncil.co.uk>

We were also pleased to support the volunteers who have restarted the Speedwatch programme in the Village, and may I thank them for all of their hard work. If you feel that you could help with this important work, please contact the Clerk in the first instance.

We also report potholes, road flooding and litter, but these are managed by Maidstone Borough Council or Kent County Council. So, it is worth noting that the Parish Council is not responsible for road or footpath maintenance, although we regularly lobby for attention to be given to these matters. We were pleased to successfully persuade KCC Highways to install double yellow lines at the junction of Bishops Close and the Maidstone Road.

Parish Clerk

Last, but certainly not least, I would also like to thank Mrs Michelle Rumble, our Clerk, who provides such an efficient and cheerful service to our parish.

Neighbourhood Watch Report

Cllr Salter reported that on Monday the 2nd of May in Bryant Close between 18.15 and 23.00 somebody broke into a Ford Focus – Crime report 46/83210/22.

Chatterbox Report

Cllr Bennett reported that the first Chatterbox meeting had taken place at the Railway Pub, and it was great to be meeting again, there was a good turn out and the next meeting will be the Fourth Tuesday in May

Parish Magazine

Cllr Van Hensbergen gave her report

7. EXTERNAL REPORTS

County Councillor Report

Cllr Webb was in attendance and delivered his report at the meeting.

It has been my privilege to represent you at County Hall for the last 12 months. The learning curve has been high, however, meeting many residents and liaising regularly with Parish Councils has been extremely worthwhile. KCC is continuing to make Kent a great place to live, despite the financial challenges and rising demand for our services creating additional pressure.

The COVID pandemic has caused many people significant upheaval and sadly we have lost many relatives due to the virus and its variants. The government has given KCC additional monies to support the most vulnerable and also many of its residents. To this end KCC Members were given £6,000 to distribute as they saw fit to support people within their division. Below is a list of the projects I have supported. I am also allocated a members grant of £10,000 per year and I have been very careful to allocate some of the funds to support a wider range of projects.

Although receiving a better-than-expected settlement for the forthcoming year, pressures coming from a combination of factors, including rising prices, the rising demand to support both our elderly residents and the most vulnerable young children has given KCC a shortfall of many million pounds. The resulting cost cutting measures agreed for the budget to discretionary services has caused concerns, many of these service cuts and the respective details are currently out for consultation. Please ensure your voice is heard and respond.

I sit on four cabinet committees, which give me a broad section of work to complete, these:

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1. Adult Social Care (vice-chair of this committee)
2. Public Health
3. Audit and Governance
4. Growth and Economic Development

I would like to pay tribute to the Leader of KCC, Mr. Roger Gough, who leads by example and continues to fight for our residents at both a local, regional and national level.

Examples of support provided in Maidstone Rural West:

2021/22 has seen a variety of projects being supported by the COVID RECOVERY Grant alongside the Combined Members Grants on behalf of the residents of Maidstone Rural West including:

Communities		
Applicant	Project	Amount
Nettlestead Parish Council	Additional sport equipment for use KGV Field, Nettlestead	£700.00
Hunton Bowls Club	Contribution to replacement mower	£650.00
21Together	Supporting vulnerable children for a Dinosaur Fun Day	£750.00
Yalding Pre-School	Replacing IT Laptop	£500.00
Dandelion Time, East Farleigh	Therapeutic Support Time for vulnerable young people	£2000.00
Linton Cricket Club	Replacement Nets for Youth Development	£1500.00
Covid Grant		£6000
Highways		
Area	Project	Amount
East Farleigh Primary School	To install a footpath adjacent to the front of the school to allow for parents, buggies and elderly people access to the school	£4320
West Farleigh Parish Council	Improve/support replacement of equipment on the sports field	£1000
Members Grant	There will be a roll forward of £4680 into the next financial year.	£5320

As a Member of the County Council, I welcome contact with residents, support groups and local business. The Member Grant will always be available to assist vulnerable groups, be they of any age and if I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to be in contact with me.

Borough Councillor Report

Cllr Russell was in attendance and delivered her report at the meeting.

It has been exactly one year since I was elected to serve the residents of Marden and Yalding Ward and in that time a lot has happened, both in the ward and in the council.

The Council has passed a new budget to deliver big improvements for the residents of Maidstone Borough as a whole, has implemented a new constitution that will take Maidstone back to a cabinet system of governance, and has voted to hold elections for councillors every four years instead of elections in thirds which will save money and allow for some stability in the council operations.

My work on the council has been within the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, and the Local Plan Review was delivered in a timely fashion and is now with the Inspector. We look forward to the forthcoming work on the Design and Sustainability DPD which will bring in some very real improvements in design, energy use and water use for new housing.

Within the ward I have been involved in planning matters and appeals, working with residents that have various issues with their housing providers and their homes, joining in village litter picks, working with our county councillor on various highways matters, liaising with parish councils and residents about the issues that they present to me and trying to make sure that their voices are heard at a borough level.

Within Nettlestead in particular I have raised important parish matters at the Ward Cluster meetings with the police, I have managed to get together enough volunteers to get the valuable speed watch scheme up and running for the village and I have raised my concerns about the Yalding Enterprise Park by speaking against the application at planning committee on the grounds of traffic/highways safety issues.

I've enjoyed my year in office and look forward to my work continuing and the borough improvements that we have set out for the coming year. I have a website www.claudinerussell.com where you can sign up to receive a quarterly newsletter about the work that I've been doing, or please feel free, as always to email me on any matter at claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk.

Borough Councillor Report

Cllr David Burton was in attendance and reported on Housing and Affordable rents and asked the Parish Council if they have any areas which would be acceptable for Housing in Nettlestead to please let him know.

8. KGV Field

Goal post

A site meeting had taken place between two Parish Councillors, the Clerk and residents who have been affected by the Goal posts, this will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

Plant a tree

The tree has now been planted and a plaque has been ordered, Cllr Van Hensbergen asked about the watering of the tree and the Clerk was asked to contact the GM Contractor about this.

Tree work

The Contractor had confirmed with the Clerk that this was taking place on the 12th of May,

Grounds maintenance

The Clerk had circulated the Grounds maintenance Schedule to all members

Maintenance Report

This was circulated to all members and will be discussed at the next meeting.

9. Churchyard

Nothing to report

10. Highways and Footpath Matters

Cllr Salter reported Potholes up Gibbs Hill

Speedwatch

This was continuing

Footpaths

The Clerk was asked to report KM176 which is overgrown, this is the footpath behind the KGV Field.

11. Platinum Jubilee

It was **RESOLVED** by all the members that there will be a Jubilee Picnic on the KGV Field on Sunday the 5th of June commencing at 12.30 for a 1pm start where the unveiling of the Jubilee Tree will take place and Councillor Russell will be present to do this. Cllr Webb offered the Parish Council a Grant of £1000 towards the Platinum Jubilee, and the Parish Council thanked him for this. It was also suggested to distribute some flyers for this event to Bishops and Bryant Close. Cllr Van Hensbergen will take this on.

12. Planning matters

Planning Applications:

<i>22/501630/LAWPRO</i>	<i>1 OLD SCHOOL COTTAGES, MAIDSTONE ROAD, NETTLESTEAD Lawful development certificate (proposed) for erection of part single storey and part two storey rear extension FOR INFORMATION ONLY - NO COMMENTS REQUIRED FROM PARISH COUNCIL</i>
<i>22/501694/PNEXT</i>	<i>1 OLD SCHOOL COTTAGES, MAIDSTONE ROAD, NETTLESTEAD Prior notification for a proposed single storey rear extension which A) Extends by 6.00 metres beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling. B) Has a maximum height of 3.00 metres from the natural ground level. C) Has a height of 3.00 metres at the eaves from the natural ground level.</i>

	FOR INFORMATION ONLY - NO COMMENTS REQUIRED FROM PARISH COUNCIL
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Decisions made by MBC since last meeting

<i>21/505741/FULL</i>	<i>The Granary, Rock Farm, Gibbs Hill, Maidstone</i> <i>Conversion of existing hopper huts to two no residential dwellings with basements and associated parking amenity space and landscaping.</i> APPLICATION PERMITTED WITH CONDITIONS
<i>21/505742/LBC</i>	<i>Listed Building Consent for works associated with: -</i> <i>The Granary, Rock Farm, Gibbs Hill, Maidstone</i> <i>Conversion of existing hopper huts to two no residential dwellings with basements and associated parking amenity space and landscaping.</i> APPLICATION PERMITTED WITH CONDITIONS

13. FINANCE

13.1 To note Budget monitoring report to MAY 2022

The Budget monitoring report was **Noted**

13.2 To note Expenditure

Cllr Salter proposed to approve the following transactions, this was seconded by Cllr Van Hensbergen with all members in favour.

NPC CHEQUE LIST - MAY					
Supplier					
Cheque No	Gross	VAT	Nett	Details	
622244	£98.10	£0.00	£98.10	Mrs Michelle Rumble	Expenses - April/May
622245	£198.00	£0.00	£198.00	Hadlum Design	Parish magazine printing
622245	£198.00	£0.00	£198.00	Hadlum Design	Parish magazine printing - chq lost
622246	£428.54	£71.42	£357.12	Capel Groundcare	GM Contract
622246	£37.20	£6.20	£31.00	Capel Groundcare	Inspection
622247	£120.00	£0.00	£120.00	Lionel Robbins	Internal Audit fee
622248	£202.43	£33.74	£168.69	Streetlights	Contract 1 of 4
622249	£140.10	£0.00	£140.10	Mrs Michelle Rumble	Extra Hours
622250	£119.99	£0.00	£119.99	Royal British Legion	Platinum Jubilee Plaque
622251	£2,000.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	Community Storehouse	Household Support Grant donation
622252	£358.37	£59.73	£298.64	KALC	Membership 2022/23
622253	£40.00	£0.00	£40.00	ICO	Membership 2022/23

622254	£33.91	£0.00	£33.91	HMRC	PAYE/NIC
DD0501	£8.40	£1.40	£7.00	Sage Payroll	Payroll fee - May
S00501	£692.65	£0.00	£692.65	Mrs Michelle Rumble	Salary - May
	£4,675.69	£172.49	£4,503.20		

13.2 To note Income

Income received
£20,740.77 Precept
£880.38 VAT Refund

13.3 To note Clerks Extra hours

The Clerk had spoken with Cllr Meredith about the increase in workload and that most months she is exceeding her allocated hours and has not asked previously to be reimbursed for this, but has this month put in an overtime request. It was **RESOLVED** by all members present to accept this and pay the extra amount.

13.4 Bank Reconciliation

The Bank Reconciliations were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk, the Chairman asked for the Bank Rec for the period ending the 31st of March 2022, the Clerk will send this through.

13.5 Audit 2021/22

Internal Auditors Report and Supplementary Report to accompany AIAR 2021/22
Statement of Internal Control

This was reviewed and the comments by the Internal Auditor regarding the Supplementary Report was accepted and noted by all members present.

To review the effectiveness of the system of Internal Control. Councillors are asked to consider the statement of Internal Control in support of the Annual Governance Statement.

This was received and accepted by all members present.

Annual Governance Statement (SECTION 1) 2021-22

To approve the Annual Governance statement for the year ending 2021-22, section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2022

The Chairman and the Clerk both signed the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 2021/22, it was also **RESOLVED** by all members that the Parish Council did not provide proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of elector's rights in accordance with the requirements by one day, and the Parish Council resolved to answer NO to point 4 in the Statement.

Accounting Statements (SECTION 2) 2021-22

To approve the Account statements for the year ending 2021-22, section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2022.

It was **RESOLVED** by all members present that the Chairman and the Clerk as RFO sign the Accounting Statements for the year 2021/22.

13.6 Internet Banking

This was still proceeding.

14. Correspondence

None

15. Future agenda items

Social Media

Goal posts

16. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday the 9th of June 7.45pm at Nettlestead Village Hall.