

# **NETTLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024 IN NETTLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL at 19:45**

**PRESENT:**        **Cllr Alison Green - Chair**  
Cllr Anita van Hensbergen – Vice Chair  
Cllr David Meredith  
Cllr Martyn Evans  
Suzanne Seal - Parish Clerk  
Mrs Jean Schofield - Trustee, Nettlestead Village Hall

### **1.        APOLOGIES AND ABSENCE**

Cllr Emily Corfe  
Cllr Jackie Bennett  
County Cllr Simon Webb  
Borough Cllr Claudine Russell

### **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 these discussions.

### **3.        MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

The minutes of the previous meeting were duly signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

### **4.        EXTERNAL REPORTS**

#### **4.1       COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

Cllr Webb was not in attendance.

#### **4.2       BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT**

Cllr Russell was not in attendance but had circulated her report in advance of the meeting:

#### **MBC Members Report from Cllr Claudine Russell**

**Dated: January 2024**

#### **Rural England Prosperity Fund**

A gentle reminder that the second phase of funding is now open and grants of £50,000+ are available for groups to apply for and I would encourage as many rural communities as possible to come forward and apply for an REPF grant which could make a difference to their communities to upgrade a facility and improve their local environment and sustainability, supporting the rural economy into the future. For help to apply contact [climateandbiodiversity@Maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:climateandbiodiversity@Maidstone.gov.uk) . The application window closes on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

#### **Events**

There is a full programme of events planned for 2024 and we look forward to the herd of Shaun the Sheep that will be flocking to the town this summer. More details to follow.

## **Boundary Changes**

Just a reminder that as we move into 2024, this will be the time that the new borough ward boundaries and MP constituency boundaries alter for the first time, and Maidstone Borough Council run all out elections for a 4 year term. Our ward remains Marden and Yalding and now will include the village of Hunton, whilst our MP constituency is now called "The Weald" and no longer includes the urban areas of Maidstone, instead covering rural villages and including 3 borough councils. On the borough ballot paper this year, you will be selecting 3 rather than the usual 1 candidate as our ward continues to remain a 3 member ward.

## **Out of Hours Emergency Contact**

There have been a couple of things throughout the ward that people have asked for the out of hours MBC contact for so I thought it was worth a reminder. The phone no: 01622 602000

The message is below that gets played:

### **OPENING IVR MENU (1)**

Thank you for calling Maidstone Borough Council. Our offices are now closed. Opening hours are Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm and Friday 9am - 4.30pm.

- If you are homeless tonight and have nowhere else to stay, please press 1 now
- For matters where public safety is at risk, then please press 2
- If you are living in a property owned or managed by Maidstone Borough Council and you have an emergency situation, please press 3
- If you are calling regarding unauthorised encampments, then please press 4
- For everything else please listen to the following messages.

## **Budget**

Shortly we will be finalising our MBC budget. Through prudent financial management we are predicting a balance budget position for 2024/25 but the following years get more difficult as KCC cuts to services that have to be met by districts, distinct national grant funding cuts and the increasing pressures on our temporary accommodation budget make for difficult future financial conditions.

As always, if you need my help, please do not hesitate to email me at [claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk)

## **5. COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

### **5.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT**

Cllr Corfe was not in attendance but had circulated the following Crime Reports ahead of the meeting:

Crime Report No. 46/217730/23 - On Sunday 10th of December between 03:00 and 04:00. Somebody smashed a window of a residential property on Maidstone Road, Nettlestead.

Crime Report No. 46/2836/24 between 19:00 on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January and 15:20 on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January. Somebody stole a blue Renault Clio, Y623\*\*\* from the road in Bryant Close, Nettlestead.

## **5.2 PARISH MAGAZINE**

Cllr Van Hensbergen reported that the next issue of the magazine will be the February edition. One advertising invoice is still outstanding, Parish Clerk to chase the outstanding payment. Cllr Van Hensbergen stated that she is approaching local companies to see if they would like to advertise in the magazine, having noticed a decline in the number of companies coming forward, which is likely linked to the current financial climate. Parish Clerk to provide Cllr Van Hensbergen with the new online bank account details for the payment of adverts.

Cllr Green suggested that the 'Out of Hours Emergency Contact' information detailed in Borough Cllr Russell's report, could be added to the Parish Magazine to be more visible for the Nettlestead community. This was agreed by all Councillors. Cllr Van Hensbergen to add the details to Parish Magazine.

## **5.3 CHATTERBOX AND WARMSPACE**

Cllr Bennett was not in attendance but provided an update ahead of the meeting:

Chatterbox: There was a good attendance when Santa's sleigh came through the village and a lot of fun was had by all. A lovely Christmas meal was provided by The Hop Pole.

Warmspace: Nettlestead Parish Council have been awarded £2,000 to enable the continuation of Warmspace, which will now be held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 2pm – 6pm.

Cllr Van Hensbergen advised that she attended the Santa's sleigh event which was a great success, with lots of donations collected for the charity. A warm welcome was given to Santa with his sleigh at both The Hop Pole and The Railway Pub.

## **6. VILLAGE HALL**

Mrs J Schofield, the Sole Trustee for the Village Hall, was in attendance to continue discussions regarding the halls financial situation and also the ongoing management issues.

The Parish Council restated their commitment to offering assistance by arranging a Village/Community Meeting to seek volunteers to help re-establish the Village Hall as a viable facility that is well used and maintained. The meeting will be held at the Village Hall with teas/coffees and biscuits being available for those attending. Date to be confirmed. Parish Clerk to make final amendments to the poster for the February Parish Magazine and the Facebook page. Copies of the poster to be delivered to the residents.

Mrs J Schofield was previously unaware that deposits had not been returned to residents and is now ensuring they are rightfully returned, with apologies, to those affected. Mrs Schofield will be monitoring the bookings going forward to ensure that this situation doesn't happen again.

## **7. KGV FIELD**

### **7.1 TREE GRANT SCHEME**

Parish Clerk to contact Cllr Webb to provide an update.

### **7.2 KGV FIELD – PUBLIC CONSULTATION SURVEY RESULTS**

The results of the public survey were discussed and the Parish Councillors were pleased that the KGV Field is enjoyed by local residents. It was noted that the majority of comments made were in favour of goal posts on the top half of the field. It was agreed to continue this

discussion at the next meeting and Cllr Meredith was asked to confirm funds available in the budget.

### **7.3 KGV FIELD – UPDATE ON WORKS**

The Clerk reported that the fence repair work had been carried out and a reply was awaited as to the BMX weedkilling.

Parish Clerk to contact Capel Groundcare to find out when the bins will next be emptied.

### **7.4 TENDERS FOR GROUND MAINTENANCE WORKS COMMENCING FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024**

The tenders were discussed and it was **RESOLVED by all members present** to continue to work with Capel Groundcare for the next 3 year term, Councillors were happy with the good service they provide and flexibility they have shown, building a good working relationship between them and the Parish Council. Parish Clerk to contact all companies who provided a tender for the works.

### **8. CHURCHYARD**

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

### **9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS**

#### **9.1 SPEEDING**

The Clerk advised that an email had been received that day from KCC with regard to painting SLOWs on the road. It was **RESOLVED by all members** for the Clerk to ascertain whether KCC are able to provide funds within their budget for this and to wait until KCCs budget for April 2024 has been confirmed.

#### **9.2 TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY ISSUES AT HAMPSTEAD LANE AND STATION ROAD JUNCTION WITH THE B2015**

Cllr Green, Cllr Bennett and the Parish Clerk attended a site meeting on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January which was arranged by Yalding Parish Council, with KCC and MBC drainage engineers in attendance, to discuss the floodwater on Maidstone Road and Hampstead Lane.

With regard to Maidstone Road, it was agreed that the 'pond' adjacent to Diamond Works on the Industrial Estate requires unblocking and clearing to prevent Maidstone Road from flooding. The Clerk will write to MBC Land Drainage to request a risk assessment be made and the site considered for works from the MBC Land Drainage budget in September 2024, due to this being a dedicated Ambulance route to/from Maidstone and Pembury Hospitals.

With regard to Hampstead Lane; several drainage covers were lifted and a blockage was found near to the Station Road junction. The engineers in attendance used rods to clear the blockage and advised it would take a few hours to clear completely. The engineers confirmed they would return to the site later that day to check the progress.

It was advised that the Clerk and local residents are to use the MBC Online Portal to report flooding, especially in this area, and Yalding Parish Council kindly agreed to continue to put out the 'Road Closure' signs at Hampstead Lane.

The MBC Land Drainage person in attendance, advised that the ditches which are full by Orchard Cottages and Hampstead Cottages are being emptied on 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> January. These are cleared every year if there has been a high volume of rainfall, or every other year, if it has been a drier year.

**9.3 PROGRESS REPORT OF FAULTS & ISSUES REPORTED TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

The Parish Clerk had circulated a report ahead of the meeting which will now be used to record all reports of potholes, flooding, damaged bus stops/shelters, overgrown weeds and any other similar issues to enable the Parish Councillors to track the progress of all repairs and the history of flooding at Hampstead Lane.

**10. OLD SCHOOL HOUSE CLOCK**

The Parish Clerk advised that the annual service was due in December 2023 and would only be carried out upon request. Parish Clerk to advise of the cost of the service for the budget.

**11. PLANNING MATTERS**

**11.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

<b>23/505551/SUB</b>	<b>Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ</b> Submission of details to discharge conditions 4 - Soft Landscaping and 5 - Noise Assessment, Subject to 23/502118/REM Expiry Date: 3 January 2024 Determination Deadline: 2 February 2024  <b>IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS, BY EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE AHEAD OF THE MEETING, TO MAKE NO COMMENT</b>
<b>23/505555/SUB</b>	<b>Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ</b> Submission of details to discharge conditions 2 (external materials), 4 (ragstone details) and 5 (landscape details) of planning application 22/504426/REM. Expiry Date: 3 January 2024 Determination Deadline: 2 February 2024  <b>IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS, BY EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE AHEAD OF THE MEETING, TO MAKE NO COMMENT</b>

**11.2 DECISIONS MADE BY MBC**

None.

**11.3 PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**12. FINANCE**

**12.1 RESOLUTION TO RECEIVE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR JANUARY 2024**

Cllr Meredith signed the invoices and advised that the direct debits had been paid. **RESOLVED by all members** to approve the Budget Monitoring report for JANUARY 2024.

## 12.2 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY 2024

Cllr Meredith and Cllr Van Hensbergen signed the cheques. **RESOLVED by all members** to approve payments for JANUARY 2024.

It was **RESOLVED by all members** to approve the Bank Reconciliation and this was signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

NPC CHEQUE LIST - JANUARY 2024					
Cheque No	Gross	VAT	Nett	Details	
<b>TO BE APPROVED</b>					
622365	£441.42	£73.57	£367.85	CAPEL GROUND CARE	GM CONTRACT - DEC
622366	£731.30	£0.00	£731.30	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S SALARY - DEC
622367	£73.17	£0.00	£73.17	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S EXPENSES - DEC
622368	£204.00	£34.00	£170.00	A & F SERVICES	KGV FIELD - FENCE REPAIRS
	£1,449.89	£107.57	£1,342.32		
DD 151223	£9.60	£1.60	£8.00	SAGE PAYROLL	PAYROLL FEE - DEC
DD 271223	£209.04	£9.95	£199.09	NPOWER BUSINESS	STREET LIGHTING ENERGY - DEC
	<b>£1,668.53</b>	<b>£119.12</b>	<b>£1,549.41</b>		
<b>UNCLEARED B/F</b>					
622358	£98.40	£16.40	£82.00	PLAYSAFETY LIMITED	ROSPA AUG INV - NOV
622362	£636.61	£0.00	£636.61	JACKIE BENNETT	JACKIE BENNETT - SUMMER SPACE - NOV
622364	£38.00	£0.00	£38.00	HMRC	HMRC TAX PAYMENT FOR MICHELLE RUMBLE
	£773.01	£16.40	£756.61		
<b>INCOME</b>					
TRANSFER RECEIVED	£75.00	£0.00	£75.00	MOVE IT OR LOSE IT	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - DEC

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

Cllr Meredith advised that Santander had now closed the deposit account and transferred the money to the current account and the contact address had now been changed from the previous Parish Clerk, to his address, in order for the transfer to Unity Bank to take place. Cllr Meredith to confirm this change once a bank statement has been printed.

## 12.4 INTERNET BANKING

Parish Clerk to arrange the transfer to Unity Bank once Cllr Meredith has confirmed the address details for Nettlestead Parish Council have been updated on the Santander account.

## 12.5 UPDATE ON THE BUDGET FOR 2024

Cllr Meredith circulated an updated draft of the budget for discussion and it was **RESOLVED by all members present** to increase the Precept by 5% to take into account the current cost of living increases. Parish Clerk to apply for the precept budget money.

## 12.6 SCRIBE SOFTWARE PACKAGE

The Parish Clerk reported that the Scribe Lite software package which would enable all of the current Nettlestead Parish Councils financial spreadsheet information to be calculated by online tools, would be a cost of £12 per month. This would reduce time spent by Cllr Meredith and the Clerk in preparing the spreadsheets and in turn, reduce the Clerk's hours, enabling the software to be paid for.

Parish Clerk to arrange a free month's trial of Scribe Lite at a suitable time for Cllr Meredith and the Clerk.

**13. SOCIAL MEDIA**

Parish Clerk to contact Becky Pullen to arrange for the 'Save Our Village Hall' poster and the Emergency Contact details for Maidstone Borough Council to be added to the website.

Cllr Green and the Clerk to look into the current package used for the Parish Council website and whether this can be reduced from the 'Gold Package' to the 'Silver Package' and the possibility of adding a page for the Village Hall.

**14. CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**15. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Village Hall

KGV Field – Tree Grant Scheme

KGV Field – Goal Posts

KGV Field – Update on works

Traffic and Highways Issues – Speeding

Traffic and Highways Issues – Update on flooding at Maidstone Road & Hampstead Lane

Traffic and Highways Issues - Progress Report

Old School House Clock

Scribe Software Package

Internet Banking

Update on the Budget for 2024

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that due to likely time constraints when producing the financial papers for the meeting next month, with the first Thursday falling on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, the meeting will be moved to the second Thursday of the month, Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7:45pm at Nettlestead Village Hall.

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.43pm**