

NETTLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 7TH MARCH 2024 IN NETTLESTEAD VILLAGE HALL at 19:45

PRESENT: **Cllr Alison Green – Chair**
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
PC Chad Maskell & PC Meg Smith
One member of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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 8TH FEBRUARY 2024

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

The meeting was adjourned to hear from PC Chad Maskell who has recently taken over from PC Carl Johnson as the new local police contact for Nettlestead, along with his colleague PC Charlotte Bingham who was unable to attend the meeting. PC Maskell stated that other areas they are responsible for are Marden, Staplehurst, Headcorn, Yalding and they will shortly be responsible for Sutton Valence as well. He advised that the best way for the public to contact them with any concerns is via the 'My Community Voice' APP.

PC Maskell had previously suggested to the Parish Council that he and his colleagues would like to carry out speed check sessions on an ad hoc but regular basis in Nettlestead, along the Maidstone Road, especially near to the zebra crossing, provided the car park was available to do this. The Clerk advised that an email had been received from the preschool to confirm the car park would be available outside of drop off and pick up times and coned off when the children are outside. Clerk to arrange for a car park gate key to be cut for PC Maskell. Discussions took place as to PC Maskell and PC Bingham visiting the preschool to meet with the children and they were very happy to plan a visit. Clerk to contact preschool to notify them.

A member of the public, Mike Summersgill, attended the meeting on behalf of a Nettlestead Green resident, to discuss the Yalding Enterprise Park, formerly the Syngenta site and the

concerns that digging the ditch for the “flood conveyance” cuts below the treated topsoil and risks allowing contamination to enter the watercourse. Mr Summersgill would like to investigate who is monitoring and analysing the data and asked if Nettlestead Councillors had received any information. It was noted that Nettlestead Parish Council were not aware of any issues or monitoring in relation to this matter. Mr Summersgill will make further investigations and will advise the council of any updates.

4. EXTERNAL REPORTS

4.1 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Webb was not in attendance.

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

Events

The Heart of Kent Walking Festival is on from the 15th to the 24th March – tickets (free and some nominal price tickets are available on the visit Maidstone website). The medieval fayre is once again on at Easter. It’s held in Brenchley Gardens and takes place on Saturday 6th April from 11am-4pm. The beautiful owls are back and volunteers are wanted for the knight and princess training! Don’t forget about the 6 weeks of the summer series of events again providing free entertainment in the town centre.

Museum Gallery

We are on course to open the new Archaeology gallery at the start of June and are happy to report that the museum had its busiest ever day for visitors over the last half term.

Fly Tipping and Waste Crime

Despite some recent reports to the contrary the waste crime team have investigated 103 offences of waste crime since January 2021 and have issued fixed penalty notices generating £26,000. The team have dealt with 40 abandoned vehicles since 1 January 2024 and a notable recent success was the seizure of a 32-tonne tipper truck. The vehicle was being used to illegally dump waste and using ANPR technology, the team were able to identify the vehicle and impound it subject to the driver being prosecuted.

Community Resilience Fund

The fourth phase of the Community Resilience Fund will be open for applications from 4th March to 24th March. Organisations can apply for one off funding of between £500 and £5,000 for projects that benefit the physical and mental wellbeing of residents.

Budget

The budget passed through full council with no amendments being tabled to it. We are pleased with the stable financial position that the council has been left in following our term in office and given the difficulties facing the council with regard to temporary accommodation and with the wider context of other councils, Maidstone is in a strong position going forward. The capital budget has some large items in it, notable the continuing 1,000 affordable house programme and it is imperative that councillors realise the revenue implications for some of the bigger capital spend plans and plan spends accordingly going forward.

Local Plan

The timeline is now extremely close to the election and there are indications that not all groups are supportive of the plan. It is important to realise, there are not enough brownfield sites to accommodate the numbers that the plan is required to deliver and to step away from the plan at this stage means a “timing out” of the evidence base, requiring a start again from Regulation 18 and an approximately 2 year period. Within that time, we will be without a plan, and without our 5-year land supply, allowing a developers charter in any area that they wish to submit a planning application for.

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

5. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

5.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

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

5.2 PARISH MAGAZINE

Cllr Van Hensbergen advised that 18 companies had placed adverts in the Parish Magazine, with just two of those companies still to pay. One other tradesman had also commented that he would like to place an advert which is awaited.

5.3 CHATTERBOX AND WARMSPACE

Cllr Bennett reported that both Warmspace and Chatterbox are running well, with 2 new members at Chatterbox and new posters advertising the events. There are now approx. 21 people attending.

6. VILLAGE HALL

Mrs J Schofield provided an update following the recent ‘Save Our Village Hall’ meeting which was as follows:

- It was a positive meeting with a good turnout and a good Q & A session at the end. A WhatsApp and email group called ‘Friends of Nettlestead Village Hall’ has been created with those that had come forward to volunteer.
- A survey of the roof has been carried out by a local Roofer who attended the meeting and it was discovered that there is insulation missing. The Roofer has kindly agreed to replace this, along with removing the broken fascia and gutter which the trustee is grateful for.
- The Emergency Exit signs need replacing and these are being sourced.
- The Railway pub has kindly organised an Easter Egg hunt for the children with funds raised being put towards the Village Hall.
- A fundraiser has been organised for Friday 5th April with the local band, Pickled Joey, playing 60s and 70s style hits. Tickets for this evening event will be £5 per head and bring your own drinks and nibbles. The band will play 3x 45-minute sessions and in between this there will be a small quiz, heads and tails and coin rolling for a bottle of wine.
- Posters and tickets for the fundraiser will be circulated shortly. Any help with selling tickets and advertising the event would be greatly appreciated.

- The fire extinguishers have been replaced.
- Mrs Schofield is looking into adding a baby changing unit.
- Mrs Schofield and the Friends of Nettlestead Village Hall hope to approach builders' merchants for materials so that the local tradesmen who have offered their time for free can carry out the required repairs.
- A deep clean of the hall needs to be arranged before the new decoration can begin.
- The Handyman is going to paint the radiators to freshen those up.
- The broken sink in the Gents' toilet has been noted.
- The fence outside the Village Hall is broken. Clerk to send a photo to John Edwards at MBC.

If any residents were unable to attend the meeting but would like to be involved, Mrs Schofield can be contacted on jean.e.schofield@btinternet.com, or via the QR code on the Save Our Village Hall poster.

Cllr Meredith provided a financial update for the Village Hall and reported that the financial situation remains the same and the hall is currently just liquid to operate, but it is technically insolvent.

7. KGV FIELD

7.1 TREE GRANT SCHEME

Cllr Webb has been chasing the report. Clerk to contact Cllr Webb to provide an update.

7.2 KGV FIELD – DISCUSS ADDING ONE SHOOTING GOAL

The Cllrs continued discussions from the previous meeting on the pros and cons of installing one small shooting goal on the KGV field and the best position for the goal to ensure it is away from houses surrounding the field, the gym equipment and not near to the road. Clerk to obtain quotes for the cost of purchasing and installing a goal with a view to arranging a site visit for the Cllrs to see if an area can be agreed upon to put the goal.

7.3 KGV FIELD – PLAY AREA OPERATION INSPECTION REPORT & FULL SERVICE REPORT

Cllr Green provided a summary of the report which was as follows:

- The fence alongside the Cableway has one broken palling. **It was RESOLVED by all members present** to replace this palling. Emily to speak to Mark at A&F Services to carry out the works.
- The fallen trees have now been removed.
- The bearings of the rotating platforms are worn and will at some point need replacing. It was agreed to confirm previous decisions not to undertake this work at this time.
- The timber on one corner of the surfaced area around the 8 station fitness gym has rotted away leaving an exposed screw and trip hazard. The screw has been removed. **It was RESOLVED by all members present** for the Clerk to ask Capel Groundcare to provide a quote to repair the trip hazard.
- The Cableway Service Report was noted.

7.4 KGV FIELD – REMOVAL OF FALLEN TREE/BUSH UPDATE

The Clerk confirmed the works have been completed. The work schedule for the 2024 season provided by Capel Groundcare was noted.

8. CHURCHYARD

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

9. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

9.1 TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY ISSUES – REVIEW OF HIGHWAYS MEETING

The Councillors thought that the Highways meeting arranged by Simon Webb and attended by Neil Baker, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, was well attended and were pleased with how it went. Cabinet Member, Neil Baker had made copious notes and following the meeting, he was pleased to have received an image of two lorries stuck in Hampstead Lane, which the Clerk had forwarded to him from a resident. Cabinet Member, Neil Baker had responded to the Clerk to advise that he is in the process of arranging a meeting between himself, Simon Webb and the relevant officers at KCC to discuss the residents' concerns and ideas put forward at the Highways meeting.

The Clerk advised that Nikki Lewis from the Speedwatch group has some materials from the speeding toolkit leftover and has agreed that the Councillors can make use of these. Clerk to arrange to collect this from Nikki.

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

The report was reviewed and the Clerk advised that the streetlight in Station Road was now working and the broken fuse box was due to be replaced over the next few days.

Cllr Bennet advised that a public footpath between Maidstone Road and Station Road has been blocked up by a border, Clerk to report online.

The Cllrs discussed the recent email from Geraldine Brown, Chair of Yalding Parish Council, advising that Cllr Gough had checked the ditches opposite Mousehole Lake and had found it to be full of plastic "car bits". The photos of his findings have been sent to KCC with a request to unblock the culvert and the ditch on Station Road.

The Nettlestead Parish Councillors were extremely grateful to Cllr Gough for his efforts in clearing the ditch. Clerk to send a thank you email to Cllr Gough to express their thanks.

9.3 REPAIR TO STREETLAMP JUNCTION AT STATION ROAD AND HAMPSTEAD LANE UPDATE

As per the above comments under agenda item 9.2, the Clerk advised that the streetlight in Station Road was now working and the broken fuse box was due to be replaced over the next few days.

Clerk to look into why the LED lamps in the streetlights in Nettlestead are turning purple and blue.

10. OLD SCHOOL HOUSE CLOCK

Cllr Corfe reported that the clock is currently running half an hour fast.

Whilst discussing this matter, Cllr Corfe reported that the owner of The Old School House has stated that he is prepared to pay for a bin to be located in the layby outside his house to help with the frequent littering which occurs outside his property at specific times. Cllr Russell advised that unfortunately each Parish has a limit as to the number of bins they can

provide and Nettlestead has reached their limit. Cllr Corfe and the Clerk to report the littering to PC Maskell.

11. PLANNING MATTERS

11.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

24/500425/LAWPRO	<p>Three Pines Gibbs Hill Nettlestead Kent ME18 5HS Lawful Development Certificate for proposed two storey rear extension.</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS PRESENT TO MAKE NO COMMENT.</p>
24/500003/FULL	<p>Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ Erection of a building for indoor and outdoor leisure and recreation uses with associated parking and access (revised scheme to Unit 1G approved under 23/502118/REM).</p> <p>IT WAS RESOLVED BY ALL MEMBERS PRESENT TO REQUEST AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC, ESPECIALLY AT DIFFERING TIMES OF USE COMPARED TO THE CURRENT WEEKDAY VOLUME OF TRAFFIC.</p>

11.2 DECISIONS MADE BY MBC

23/504486/SUB	<p>Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ Submission of details to discharge conditions 2 - External and Hard Surface Materials, 3 - Pointing and Mortar and 6 - Earth Batters Cross Sections for Phase B, Subject to 23/502118/REM.</p> <p>APPLICATION PERMITTED</p>
23/505555/SUB	<p>Former Syngenta Works Hampstead Lane Yalding Kent ME18 6HJ Submission of details to discharge conditions 2 (external materials), 4 (ragstone details) and 5 (landscape details) for Phase A of planning application 22/504426/REM.</p> <p>APPLICATION PERMITTED</p>

The decisions were noted.

11.3 PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE

None.

12. FINANCE

Cllr Meredith advised that it was traditional to decide which initiatives received the Parish Council donations' budget at the March Parish Council meeting and **it was RESOLVED by all members present** to provide Chatterbox with the donation money. It was also noted that the budget for the hire of the Hall had only been partially utilised by the cuts around the Village Sign, and it was therefore resolved by all present who were eligible to vote, that the balance of the budget be paid to the Village Hall. Cllr Meredith took no part in this decision. Cllr Meredith would request an invoice from the Village Hall Bookings Secretary. Clerk to arrange payment to The Hop Pole for Chatterbox and to the Village Hall via online transfer.

12.1 RESOLUTION TO RECEIVE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR MARCH 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 MARCH 2024.

12.2 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PAYMENTS FOR MARCH 2024

RESOLVED by all members to approve payments for MARCH 2024. Cllr Meredith and Cllr Corfe signed the cheques. The HMRC cheque in the sum of £38 which was sent by post in December 2023 has still not been cashed, Clerk to check with HMRC.

The Clerk advised that a cheque has been raised in settlement of the Council insurance through Zurich. It is the final year of the 3-year rolling agreement and in January next year, quotes will need to be obtained by the Clerk for the 2025/2026 policy.

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

NPC CHEQUE LIST - MARCH 2024					
Cheque No	Gross	VAT	Nett		Details
TO BE APPROVED					
622375	£215.00	£0.00	£215.00	HADLUM DESIGN & PRINT	PARISH MAGAZINE PRINTING - FEB
622376	£258.00	£43.00	£215.00	CAPEL GROUNDCARE	REMOVAL OF FALLEN TREE ON KGV FIELD - FEB
622377	£601.16	£100.19	£500.97	CAPEL GROUNDCARE	GM CONTRACT - FEB PLAY EQUIPMENT INSPECTION & SERVICING
622378	£770.69	£0.00	£770.69	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S SALARY - FEB
622379	£67.15	£0.00	£67.15	SUZANNE SEAL	CLERK'S EXPENSES - FEB
622380	£919.29	£0.00	£919.29	ZURICH MUNICIPAL	COUNCIL INSURANCE
	£2,831.29	£143.19	£2,688.10		
DD150224	£9.60	£1.60	£8.00	SAGE PAYROLL	PAYROLL FEE - FEB
DD 250124	£27.60	£1.31	£26.29	NPOWER BUSINESS	STREET LIGHTING ENERGY - FEB
	£2,868.49	£146.10	£2,722.39		
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					
TFR 010224	£70.00	£0.00	£70.00	STEPHEN MCGLYNN	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - FEB
TFR 010224	£40.00	£0.00	£40.00	ANITA VANHENSBERGEN	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - FEB
TFR 010224	£140.00	£0.00	£140.00	ANITA VANHENSBERGEN	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - FEB
TFR 010224	£40.00	£0.00	£40.00	ANITA VANHENSBERGEN	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - FEB
TFR 010224	£70.00	£0.00	£70.00	G I CARPETS KENT LTD	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - FEB
TFR 020224	£2,000.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL	WARMSPACE GRANT - FEB
TFR 050224	£45.00	£0.00	£45.00	KENT HAIR	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - FEB
TFR 280224	£70.00	£0.00	£70.00	D C JENNER	ADVERT FOR PARISH MAGAZINE - FEB
TOTAL UNITY BANK INCOME	£2,475.00	£0.00	£2,475.00		
DEDUCTIONS UNITY BANK					
	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00		

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

Cllr Meredith to meet with the Clerk this month to begin the free trial of Scribelite and to begin making online payments. Standing order to pay the Clerk to also be set up.

12.4 INTERNET BANKING

As noted above under agenda item 12.3.

13. SOCIAL MEDIA

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

14. CORRESPONDENCE

14.1 EMAIL FROM A HAMPSTEAD LANE RESIDENT

The correspondence was noted. Clerk to forward information to the new PC, Chad Maskell and to respond to resident.

14.2 EMAIL FROM A RESIDENT – THE CAMPERVAN PARKED ON GIBBS HILL

The email was noted and Cllr Russell confirmed a 15-day notice had been placed on the campervan on the 28th February 2024 and if it was not removed by the 14th March 2024, Maidstone Borough Council would arrange for its removal. Clerk to update resident.

14.3 UPDATE ON PARKING AT BISHOPS/BRYANT CLOSE

The Clerk advised the matter would be chased in the coming weeks and an update provided to the Councillors and the resident who had raised the issue.

14.4 UPDATE ON D-DAY 80 – 6TH JUNE 2024E

Cllr Bennett advised that the D-Day 80 event had been planned for Saturday 29th June to tie in with the remembrance of the pilot, Anthony Blumer and this is being held at The Hop Pole.

14.5 ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

An email had been received by the Clerk from a resident at Bow Hill, who previously presented issues to the Parish Council regarding safety at the level crossing on Bow Hill to Junction B2015 and traffic travelling too fast. The Clerk to check with Cllr Webb as to the outcome of the issues raised and to chase up the possibility of a 'Bow Hill' sign being placed at the road.

The resident also advised in his email that he had reported 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. The resident stated that they were knocked down several years ago but were not replaced and these bollards were there to protect pedestrians from vehicles cutting the sharp corner and mounting the pavement. Clerk to also look into this matter.

The Clerk advised that Lee from KCT Timber and Fencing had also been in contact with regard to the works being carried out on the green at Wateringbury Station, outside his business premises. Cllr Green advised that Railtrack own this land. Clerk to advise Lee at KCT to contact Railtrack.

15. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Village Hall

KGV Field – Tree Grant Scheme

KGV Field – Quotes for Shooting Goal

Traffic and Highways Issues – Speeding/Update following KCC Highways meeting

Traffic and Highways Issues - Progress Report

Streetlight LED bulbs

Old School House Clock

Internet Banking

Update on D-Day 80 – 6th June 2024

Update on correspondence from residents reviewed at this meeting

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday 4th April 2024 at 7:45pm at Nettlestead Village Hall.

Cllr Green advised that she will not be present at the next meeting and Cllr Van Hensbergen will Chair the meeting in her absence.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.20pm