

# ALKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES - MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2017

---

1. Venue Alkham Village Hall, 7:30pm
2. Present Parish Councillors: Neil Burrows, Den Barnard, Anthony Barrier, Susan Lees, Geoff Hillier, Fiona MacAskill and Ruth Marczin-Bundy. Clerk: Janice Lambert.  
County Councillor: Geoff Lymer District Councillor: Pauline Beresford  
Members of the public: 21
3. Apologies and approval of absences  
District Councillor: Nick Dixon
4. To receive declarations of interest and dispensations  
None
5. Regular Business
  - 5.1 The minutes from the meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January were received, approved and signed as correct records.
6. Matters Arising
  - 6.1 Pimlico Way/Bull Run: It was reported to the meeting that the Councillors are to meet with Andrew Hutchinson on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March. They will walk the byways together to obtain an update of the condition through the winter, and to have discussions with him on the best way forward.
  - 6.2 Drainage Update – Cllr Barnard reported that he is still waiting for KCC to clear the Meggett Lane Culvert, the drain at the Alkham Vineyard and the repair to the Short Lane wall work. Unfortunately problems with KCC equipment meant this work has been delayed. Since the KCC visit Cllr Barnard has had no response to calls or emails, however he advised he will get through to them to get them to return. Cllr Barnard was pleased to report that the drainage trench cut alongside slip lane has now been completed and will hopefully help elevate future problems with surface water running of the fields. Cllr Barnard publically thanked John Huggins for taking up the work. A member of the public reported that KCC have installed whips/soak away around the area too. Cllr Barnard went on to mention the dyke through from the garden centre and Meggett Lane, which needs to be dug out. Cllr Barnard to meet with the new owners of the garden centre to arrange for work to be done and will report back at the next meeting. The Chalksole Farm drain is always blocked and Cllr Barnard will investigate the reasons for this and what can be done. Cllr Barnard inspected the dyke at Wolverton Woods prior to the recent work and found it to be flowing well, however he will visit the site again to check on the flow since recent works. It was reported to the Parish Council that KCC seem to have dropped the issues at Little Everden Lane and have simply installed a ‘road liable to flooding’ warning sign.
  - 6.3 Parish Clerk vacancy: Cllr Burrows thanked Angela for her 12 years’ service and introduced the newly appointed Parish Clerk, Janice Lambert into the role.
  - 6.4 Wolverton Woods: Cllr Burrows advised the meeting that prior to Christmas, a temporary TPO (Tree Preservation Order) and a Stop Notice was placed on the wood. The Council has asked for a permanent TPO to be placed on the woods and works to be reinstated to how they were. At the current time we are awaiting a response back from the Council.

- 6.5 Village Entrance Gates: Investigations have taken place as to the most economical way to install village entrance gates. A meeting took place recently with KCC to discuss the various options. Following the meeting, The Clerk had approached companies that could undertake work required, including installation of white gates, new signs at South Alkham, renewing paint on the road and the traffic management required. Prices have been received for part of the work but estimates for the remaining work is still awaited. Cllr Burrows advised the previous quote of around £5,000 for the four gates.

Cllr Hillier took the opportunity to mention the newly set up Traffic Action Group and shared some facts and figures from their investigations so far including the observation that peak hour traffic along the Alkham Valley Road appears to have increased by approximately 50% since the last survey in 2010. He went on to explain a questionnaire that will be sent out with the next newsletter and encouraged members of the public to respond.

Cllr Hillier reported a requirement for up to date traffic counts but KCC have reported there will be a charge for the surveys. Cllr Hillier is investigating alternative survey providers and he asked the Parish Council to consider funding the surveys themselves. Cllr Burrows suggested we ask KCC for the data collected to date and that a further meeting be held once we have a response. Cllr MacAskill suggested locating someone as KCC that only deals with TAP to see if a different response might be received. Cllr Barnard noted that there would be no budget for these surveys and it would need to come from contingency money.

- 6.6 Parish Plan: Questionnaire – Cllr Burrows advised we are currently approaching other parishes to get an understanding of their procedures. A request was made for The Clerk to continue to follow up.

- 6.7 Dropbox/Facebook/WhatsApp – The Clerk made some suggestions to ensure the Council was working as efficiently as possible. One idea is to utilise Dropbox as a back-up and also a means to communicate things like draft minutes around the Council. Another idea was to create a Facebook page where updates could be placed to encourage the younger generation to get involved. The Clerk also suggested that Council communicate via WhatsApp to make arranging meetings a lot simpler. It was however noted that not all Councillors had access to a mobile device and therefore this option would therefore not work. A general discussion took place and it was agreed that options should at least be tried. The Clerk expressed her availability to help with any problems arising.

## 7. Correspondence

- 7.1 Letter from Alkham Valley Society regarding roadside adjacent to Wolverton Woods  
The letter referred to land which was compulsory purchased, when the Alkham Valley Road was widened many years ago. The Clerk will investigate whether the land adjacent to Wolverton Woods was compulsory purchased.
- 7.2 Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Civic Service, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March at 11am 2 Reps can attend  
A general discussion took place, Cllr MacAskill, Cllr Marczin-Bundy and Cllr Lees showed interest and it was requested that The Clerk make the necessary arrangements after the meeting and confirm places.
- 7.3 Price increase for Harmer & Sons – The Clerk advised the meeting that in fact no increase this year and prices will remain the same as last year.
- 7.4 The Repair Shop – Are inviting communities or Parish Councils to put forward any items of value. It was highlighted the possibility of the rocking horse in the Alkham Park. The rocking horse was thought to have been there since the 1950s. A member of the public noted that the horse is not original horse. A general discussion took place and it was agreed it was not of interest.

8. Planning  
Plans to discuss:

8.1 **DOV 16/01450 Land adjacent to Fernfield Lane, Hawkinge**

Erection of 19 dwellings

The Parish Council had no objections subject to the following comments:

- A lack of permeable hard landscaping to deal with surface water flooding
- Confirmation that there is adequate sewerage arrangements
- Danger of contamination of land as it was previously a brickworks site
- Investigating a sound deadening scheme due to the close proximity of noisy businesses nearby

8.2 **DOV/17/00198 1 Catherine Cottages, Alkham Valley Road**

Erection of a two storey side extension

Previously granted permission in 2014 and this is for renewal

Council has no objection

8.3 **5 Meadow Hill Cottages, Hogbrook Hill Lane, Alkham**

Erection of a rear conservatory extension

Council has no objection

Outcome of previous planning applications/queries: -

- 8.4 **ENF/ALK/17/00002 Caravan Site Adjacent to Garden Centre** – A query had been raised regarding the additional mobile homes on site. The applicant was given 6 weeks to provide an official planning application. As the 6 week deadline has now passed an Enforcement Notice will be placed on the site.

9. Delegates Reports & PCSO

**County Councillor Geoff Lymer**

It was reported that we are coming to the end of year a request has been made to KCC for the renewing of white lining, and for the work on pot holes to be done again. A question has been asked about the materials that are used to fill the pot holes as they do not last long. A request has also been made for any necessary tree cutting.

When looking at speed limits KCC have to operate according to regulations. Transport guidelines give the reasons why we can or cannot have certain speed controls within any given area. County Cllr Lymer reported that he has also been working with two other parishes to get support but both have failed. It was noted that the Alkham Valley has a larger amount of Crash Remedies (the number of fatal crashes within a given timescale) than the other two parishes combined. It was also reported that if we are to do the traffic surveys ourselves we would need a Traffic Consultant. County Cllr Lymer advised the meeting of a current change to the road in Temple Ewell where the carriageway is being reduced to calm traffic. He will look at something similar for the Alkham Valley however he does not feel it will be successful. Some statistics were given for the results needed for survey respondents. A discussion took place about the new road layout at Temple Ewell and the proposed width of the carriageway.

County Cllr Lymer would like to approach Dover District Council with regard to the caravans adjacent to the garden centre as he feels they have not considered the people living there in relation to the issue of an Enforcement Notice. County Cllr Lymer believes that the owner of the site does not know the severity of not putting the correct planning application into the Council. Cllr MacAskill highlighted that it shows a general disregard for the planning process, the rules are put in place for a reason. County Cllr Lymer noted there is a Legislation to cover roamer travellers who want to settle in a certain location. Cllr MacAskill asked members of the public to write to County Cllr Lymer with their views. Cllr Burrows stated that everyone should use the correct planning process. Cllr Barnard advised that he believes there is a lot more we can do as a community and

offered his services to explain any queries the roamer travellers have. A heated discussion took place. A member of the public said the roamer travellers feel they are pushed out of society.

**District Councillor Pauline Beresford**

Pauline also advised that the budget includes a slight increase. Pauline advised that they have now purchased the leisure centre land. Pauline suggested The Clerk call Worth Parish to gain knowledge about the Parish Plan.

10. Interval

A member of the public made alternative suggestions for Facebook and Dropbox proposals.

A member of the public expressed a concern that it may now be harder to cross the road at Kearsney Abbey following the new road layout, as you now have to look both ways.

A member of the public suggested the Parish Council should consider laying a footpath along the Alkham Valley to include a cycle path. Cllr Hillier sympathised with the concerns raised.

A member of the public asked for a survey of the current signage in the village.

A member of the public suggested laying the footpath in order to connect to the byways.

The Parish Council have been made aware recent addition of a caravan at the bottom of Short Lane, the owner introduced himself and noted that planning permission was put in last week. Cllr Burrows noted it would take time for the application to be validated and for the Council to see sight of it.

11. Finance - The Parish Council resolved to pay the following: -

11.1	Clerks salary and expenses	£163.67 & £315.58
11.2	Harmer & Sons	£57.60
11.3	BT Payphones	£360.00
11.4	Village Hall Fees	£174.95

12. Any other business

12.1 Guest speaker for Annual Parish Meeting

Cllr Barnard confirmed that Mark Robson will be the guest speaker at the Annual Parish meeting, story of the Alkham heroes who were killed in the First World War.

Cllr Hillier noted members of the public can respond to the questionnaire electronically or alternatively they can be posted in the suggestion box.

Cllr Barnard asked whether planning and cheque signing can be done before the meeting, Cllr Burrows confirmed that for future meetings Councillors will discuss planning applications prior to the main meeting but the signing of cheques would stay as part of the main meeting.

Cllr Barnard noted the success of the Great Spring Clean initiative which took place on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March. A suggestion was made to do this again regularly.

Cllr MacAskill queried whether there is a set timescale for undertaking the cleaning.

Cllr Barnard questioned what will happen to the Valley Cottage Bridges handrails, Cllr Barrier said they should be lowered and will chase it up. Cllr Barrier reported that the footpath opposite the garden centre needs clearing.

13. Next meeting is the Annual Parish meeting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017 at 7:00pm

Meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed ..... Date .....