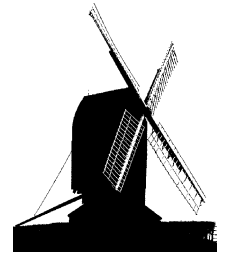


Rolvenden Parish Council



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Minutes of a meeting of Rolvenden Parish Council held in Rolvenden Village Hall on **Thursday 15 August 2024 at 7.30pm.**

Present: Cllr A Hinge (Chairman), Cllr S Bryant (Vice Chairman), Cllr C Balch (arrived 7.37pm), Cllr E Barham, Cllr M Geerts and Cllr H Toni-Back

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith, Parish Clerk

18 Members of the public were also in attendance

Administration:

Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones.

1083. Intention to record the meeting

There were no intentions to record the meeting.

1084. Apologies for Absence:

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Green, Gilchrist and Walker and the reasons for absence were accepted

1085. Declarations of interest:

Cllr Barham declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 and 16 (e).

Cllr. Bryant declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 11b.

Cllr Bryant noted an interest in the War Memorial Trust.

Cllr Hinge noted an interest in the War Memorial Trust.

1086. Minutes of the meeting of the 18 July 2024

Resolved: That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 18 July 2024 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

1087. Borough Councillor's Report:

Borough Councillor Kate Walder sent her apologies.

1088. Chairman's report:

In the past month we have gained full operational control of our bank account, and with that we have started to settle outstanding invoices. It has allowed a full reconciliation of the outstanding invoices against the account and payments made alongside those paid on our behalf by ABC and ensure an accurate list of payments to be authorised by Full Council. This has taken a considerable amount of the Clerk's time due to the disparate nature of the records. This has also allowed us to establish a complete and up to date account of all S106 funds and determine where, if any, funds remain for future disbursement. We have also ensured as good as permitted diligence on the S106 expenditure to ensure compliance with any audit. The Clerk and I have met with representatives from the Police and members of the parish to improve Police engagement with local vandalism and crime. I will leave Sian Reeves to report further. I attended the ABC Planning Committee meeting regarding the Working men club application for change of use to residential accommodation. I spoke on behalf of the Parish Council and took the views expressed to me by members of the parish. The application was granted subject to conditions regarding landscaping and the appearance of the building. It remains to be seen how these conditions will be applied. The Planning Committee was equally divided on the application and it was decided by the chair with a casting vote. The matter of covenants was determined to not affect any planning decision but was a matter for legal negotiation between the vendor and the holders of the covenants (namely the PC via the Thoburn Trust). I have walked the Trust land to make an assessment of the fencing, trees, boundaries and any hazards. It will need some fencing replacement in the not so distant future, and some boundary maintenance (removal of fallen trees and damaging branches). There is some level of litter and dumped material requiring removal. The footpath gate to the Maytham tunnel has collapsed and needs replacing and this has been reported to the footpath maintenance team at KCC. The community fruit tree project has been researched and potential sites evaluated, the allotments are keen with a number of tree sponsors on board from across the parish. Finer points such as tree species and size yet to be determined. The village tree assessment with Sylvia Kellet has been postponed until later in the Autumn.

Chairmans signature.....

I consider that great progress has been made this month, all thanks to our new clerk for her efforts in getting to grips with everything, and we will continue to bring the Parish Council and its affairs into a full and compliant manner consistent with the requirements of 2024.

1089. Clerk's report:

The Clerk reported that the Locum Clerk stopped working for the Parish Council on the 31 July 2024. The Clerk has spent the last few weeks reviewing the files and meeting various representatives in the parish.

1090. Open Session:

Agenda items other than planning applications:

Allotments: A member of the public reported on the letting of the newly available plots and asked about the Arrangements in place in terms of letting the plots to tenants. It was noted that the Clerk is meeting with representatives from the Allotment Association next week.

Parish Records: A request was made that the Parish Council collates historic records of the village.

July Minutes: A further correction to the minutes of the meeting held on the 18 July 2024 was suggested.

Proposed Meeting with the CSU Inspector: A request was made for the CSU Inspector to attend a public meeting and not to just meet with the Parish Council.

New Issues:

A member of the public reported that repairs are required to the bench in the playground at Rolvenden Layne.

Village Sign/Pump: A member of the public offered to carry out some remedial works.

Local Plan Consultation: A member of the public attended the session held in Tenterden on the 6 August 2024 and reported that the Government is considering a different method for calculating the required provision and if adopted this could reduce the housing target for Ashford by 5% but would result in an increase in housing for the whole of the South East. An Officer suggested that this could result in ABC being pressurised to co-operate with neighbouring boroughs to provide more housing. Cllr. Hinge agreed that the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan will need to be reviewed in line with any new guidance.

1091. Planning:

a) **To consider any planning applications received prior to the meeting.**

PA/2024/1138: Pookwell, Sandhurst Lane, Rolvenden

Proposed ground floor infill extension and alteration to rear fenestration.

Resolved: Support.

b) **To consider any approvals:**

NOT/2024/1157: St Mary the Church, Maytham Road, Rolvenden

T1 - veteran Yew - showing stress cracks in trunk due to elongated limb - propose using 8 tonne bracing to support this. T2 - yew - by war memorial that has low overhanging branches over the path - impeded pedestrian access - propose to lift these to 2.4m from the ground. T3 - Holly - to SE of Church - sustained winter damage - shows little sign of recovery in the crown - proposed to pollard to 3.5m from ground level. T4 - Hawthorn - proposed removal as unsightly now.

PA/2024/0946 - 34 High Street, Rolvenden

Erection of summer house.

c) **To consider any refusals:**

None to consider.

d) **ABC Planning Committee 14 August 2024:**

PA/2024/0587: The Rolvenden Club, Maytham Road, Rolvenden

Cllr. Hinge and the Clerk attended the ABC Planning Committee meeting held on the 14 August 2024. The Planning Officer was minded to approve the application and there was a considerable and lengthy debate. Cllr. Hinge spoke against the application at the meeting and reminded Members of the Planning Committee that the car parking area has a restrictive covenant giving it the right to be used as a community parking asset. The Planning Committee subsequently resolved to approve the application subject to a number of conditions with delegated authority given to the Strategic Development and Delivery Manager at ABC to make or approve changes. At the suggestion of Cllr. Barham it was agreed that the Clerk should seek some legal advice regarding the ancient statutes and the implications of these regarding any sale and transfer of the club building. The Clerk will discuss the statutes with the legal advisor at KALC and obtain some quotes from solicitors recommended by KALC. The Clerk was also asked to check on the status of the Asset of Community Value listing of the building in respect to a possible community purchase. It was agreed that an Extraordinary Meeting may be required in between meetings.

e) **Other Planning Matters**

1] Local Plan Consultation Update

ABC is holding a series of in person events throughout the summer to provide communities with the opportunity to find out more about how the new Ashford Local Plan will be prepared, what it will cover, what stage ABC are at, and when ABC will go out to formal public consultation. There will be eight in person events across the borough and a further two virtual sessions in late August and early September. The nearest event was held in Tenterden on the 6 August 2024. The session was well attended and feedback

suggests residents welcome being consulted at such an early stage.

2] ABC/KALC Planning Training for Parish Councillors:

Cllrs. Hinge, Green and Gilchrist attended the ABC/KALC planning training held on the 22 July 2024 at ABC. Simon Cole, Assistant Director Planning and Development, gave a presentation on how to respond to planning applications. Cllr. Hinge reported that the training had been helpful.

1092. S106 Projects

Cllr. Barham declared a pecuniary interest and left the meeting

a) **S106 Works to the Allotments:**

Members noted that the works to the allotments have been completed and inspected by Cllr. Bryant. Cllr. Bryant advised that some general ongoing maintenance will be required. The works have created 11 new plots and it was noted that these are steadily been let out. The Clerk reported that the Parish Council submitted a S106 application for funding for the works last year and received the sum of £11,000.00 in October 2023.

Resolved: To approve the payment of £11,000.00 to the contractor that carried out the S106 approved works to the allotments.

Cllr. Bryant declared a pecuniary interest and left the meeting

8.21pm: It was agreed to lower standing orders and allow a member of the public to speak

8.26pm: The meeting resumed

b) **S106 request from Rolvenden Football Club**

Members considered a request from Rolvenden Football Club Ltd. to submit a S106 application form to ABC for reimbursement for the new toilet facilities, waste tank, lighting and security and legal fees for a lease. ABC has advised the Clerk that a S106 application to cover the cost of the legal fees for the new lease may be considered. The total amount to be requested is £9,416.32.

Resolved: To submit a S106 application form to ABC for the cost of the new toilet facilities, waste tank, lighting, security and legal fees for a lease.

Cllr. Barham and Bryant returned to the meeting

1093. Parish Matters

a) **Community Orchard**

The Clerk had posted a survey on social media asking residents for their views on a proposal for a community orchard. Although the response was low a high percentage of respondents were in favour of the scheme and 13 residents have actually expressed an interest in adopting a tree. The Clerk had investigated the possibility of a site for a community orchard and had been advised by the Tenterden Wildlife group that the school were not interested in the scheme. The Clerk has approached the Allotment Association who seem open to the idea and have advised that they could accommodate 7-10 trees. They Allotment Association have suggested that they would be happy to give access to non-allotment holders to tend to the trees. The Clerk has arranged to meet with the Allotment Association on the 22 August 2024 to discuss the proposal further and to ensure that all the conditions set by ABC for the scheme are adhered to. ABC has confirmed that they can agree to an allocation of 7-10 trees.

b) **Rolvenden landing craft:**

It was noted that a site meeting to discuss a possible listing of the Rolvenden landing craft was postponed and is to be re-arranged. Cllr. Hinge advised that the owner seems amenable to a possible listing. Cllr. Bryant suggested that it would be timely to have the listing in place for a possible community celebration to mark the 80th Anniversary of VE Day next year.

c) **Strete Phone Box**

The Clerk reported that the local handyman has obtained the glass to replace the broken panes. The handyman has estimated the cost of the works to gain access, replace the broken panes, remove any debris and to install a lock to be in the region of £400.00. The quote is estimated as it is possible further works may be required to repair any damage that may occur in trying to break open the seal on the door.

Resolved: To accept the estimated quote and to authorise the works.

d) **Defibrillators**

It was noted that the Clerk has been in touch with the resident who kindly checks all of the defibrillators in the village. The resident has agreed for the Clerk to act as a back-up and to check the defibrillators when required. The Clerk will be registered as a joint co-ordinator on The Circuit.

e) **Playground**

As a result of recent inspections remedial works and quotes were considered.

Resolved: To approve a quote of £382.50 (excluding VAT) for replacement ropes for the basket swing at the Layne playground.

To approve a quote of £790.00 (excluding VAT) from Thompsetts to replenish the woodchip.

It was noted that the RoSPA inspection will be taking place very soon.

f) **Neighbourhood Watch/Kent Police**

8.36pm: *Standing Orders were lowered to allow Sian Reeves, Rolvenden Neighbourhood Watch and Peter New, Police Volunteer with Kent Police, to speak.*

Police Surgeries/Reporting Crime/Neighbourhood Watch

Sian Reeves reported that parishioners remain concerned about the recent incidents of criminal damage, arson and anti-social behaviour in the parish. Attendees at the two Police Surgeries held on the 18 July and 1 August 2023 expressed their frustration with the perceived lack of action from Kent Police. Sian Reeves has reached out to Peter New, Police Volunteer with Kent Police (Ashford Neighbourhood Watch), for some advice. Sian Reeves advised that it has been reported that two youths have now been named, interviewed and have admitted to some of the crimes. The case has been sent for a review by the Kent Police Youth Offending Team to decide on the best advice. Sian Reeves reported that the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Watch feels the situation now needs escalating and has asked the Parish Council to arrange a meeting with the CSU Inspector to discuss the recent incidents. Sian Reeves advised that anyone previously receiving Rolvenden Neighbourhood Watch messages via the *Rolvenden Update* e-mail address (any time from 24 July 2020), to now register on <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/> to become a member and to receive important crime prevention information and alerts. The Clerk has placed this information on the Parish Council website.

Peter New, Police Volunteer with Kent Police, introduced himself and gave a brief description of his background. Peter New advised Members that Borough Councillor Kate Walder had invited him to attend a meeting in the village hall to discuss a number of concerns in the area on the same day as the Police Surgery held on the 1 August 2024. Peter sat in on the Police Surgery as the Beat Officer, Darren Laker, had to attend virtually. Peter New listened to residents' concerns about recent incidents of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage and reported these to Kent Police. This intelligence included information about witnesses and holders of CCTV footage. Peter New stressed the importance of reporting incidents, including attempts and foiled crimes, to Kent Police every time they occur and that this should not be just one caller on behalf of residents but each resident making a call. Peter New suggested that a high number of calls can attract a police response. Peter New has since posted information on social media to give updates to residents but also to demonstrate to the criminals possibly reading the posts that the community is pushing back. Peter New advised that many rural areas have suffered from a lack of a Police presence but that the new Police Beat Officer Model, when fully up to strength by a target date of the 24 September 2024, will address this. Peter New stressed again the importance of reporting crime and obtaining a crime number that can be used to request an update.

Cllr. Barham gave some information on a recent arson attack and expressed his concern about the lack of joined up thinking by Kent Police in linking the recent incidents and a perceived lack of interest and action from the Police.

9.03pm: *The meeting resumed.*

Proposal to request a meeting with the CSU inspector.

Resolved: Given the increase in the number of anti-social behaviour incidents in the parish to request a public meeting with the CSU Inspector, Richard Batten, to discuss concerns and receive feedback.

1094. HIGHWAYS/PROW

a) Highways Improvement Plan

It was noted that the Clerk has obtained a copy of the most up to date version of the Highways Improvement Plan from the Community Engagement Officer, Kieran Doble. Kieran Doble has suggested having a virtual meeting to discuss any priorities for the current financial year and then to possibly have a walkabout. The Clerk has circulated a copy of the current version of the plan and has placed a copy on the website. The Clerk advised that last year KCC approved a scheme for gateways where vehicles entering Rolvenden Layne are not respecting the 30mph speed limited. KCC had quoted a figure of £1,068 for the gateways but this sum was not approved for inclusion in the budget for the current financial year.

Resolved: The Clerk to arrange a virtual meeting with the Community Engagement Officer to update the priorities in the Highways Improvement Plan,

b) KCC Highways Parish Seminar

The Clerk advised that KCC Highways hold a seminar each year for the parishes and that one will be taking place in person on Wednesday 2 October (9am – 1pm) and virtually on Wednesday 20 November.

Resolved: The Clerk and Cllr. Hinge to attend.

c) Reported Faults

Enquiry: 824913: New village sign. The Clerk has requested a new village sign to replace the tired sign on Tenterden Road. KCC has advised that the wording is visible and that the sign 'is doing its job' and does not need replacing.

Enquiry: 824912: Damaged Gateways Tenterden Road. The Highways Steward had advised that the gateway is the responsibility of the Parish Council to maintain. It was suggested and agreed that the Clerk obtains some quotes to repair the gateway.

PROW 240833641: The Clerk has reported a damaged gate on footpath to the Maytham tunnel and the fault is awaiting allocation to an Officer.

d) **New Faults**

Potholes near Maytham Farm

The bench in the bus stop on Tenterden Road needs remedial works.

1095. Policies

- a) To receive a report from the Clerk and approve the new Financial Regulations

A report from the Clerk explaining the key changes to the new Financial Regulations and the required changes to the Standing Orders was received.

Resolved: To adopt the revised Financial Regulations.

- b) To approve the Standing Orders amended to reflect the changes in the Financial Regulations

Resolved: To adopt the revised Standing Orders.

1096. Training:

Resolved: To approve the attendance of Cllrs. Back and Geerts on the KALC 'Nuts and Bolts of Parish Councils' course.

Resolved: To approve the attendance of Cllr. Geerts on the KALC introduction to Planning and Neighbourhood Planning courses.

Code of Conduct Training: The Monitoring Officer at ABC has advised that the Parish Council would need to pay for an external provider and that this is likely to cost over £1,000. Members agreed that this cost of this training is prohibitive. The Clerk advised that there has been an increase in the number of complaints and that ABC has asked KALC to assist with this issue. KALC has since appointed a new Deputy Chief Executive and the role will include offering a mediation service to offer practical alternatives to formal code of complaint procedures. KALC is also going to review the training for new Councillors and focus on courses to develop special skills such as chairing meetings, managing conflict, social media and promoting mediation. KALC is developing a mid-term Councillor training event on the Code of Conduct.

1097. Finances

- a) To receive the accounts

The accounts dated 31 July 2024 were noted.

- b) To receive the bank reconciliation as at 31 July 2024

A bank reconciliation as at 31 July 2024 was noted (appended to the minutes)

- c) Unity Bank:

Resolved: To ratify a decision in between meeting to approve an application to remove all ex-councillors as signatories.

Resolved: To approve an application to remove the previous Clerk as administrator and to make the current Clerk the administrator.

- d) **Locum Timesheets:**

Resolved: To approve the timesheets for the Locum Clerk for June (66 hours) and July (62 hours).

The Clerk was asked to circulate a copy of the signed contract for the Locum Clerk and confirm whether the signing of the contract was discussed and minuted at a Full Council meeting.

- e) To receive a list of payments for approval

Cllr. Hinge checked the invoices against the payment schedule, (appended to the minutes), and it was **resolved** for Cllr. Hinge to set up the payments and for Cllrs. Green and Balch to authorise the payments online. The authorised schedule was initialled immediately below the last item by the Chair in accordance with the financial regulations.

1098. External Meetings

KALC Area Committee: The minutes of the KALC Area Committee meeting held on the 31 July 2024 have been circulated.

9.30pm: In accordance with the Standing Orders the Chair checked with Members and It was agreed to continue with the meeting.

1099. Correspondence/Consultations

KCC Local Transport Plan Consultation. Noted.

1100. Any Confidential Items

See below.

1101. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 19 September 2024 at 7.30pm.

Part 2 Exclusion of Public and Press – In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings Act 1960), the public and press be excluded from the meeting by the reason of its confidential nature.

The meeting closed to the public at 9.32pm

Confidential Item

The Clerk reported on a Confidential Item.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm

BACS Payments for Approval August 2024

| Reference | Payee | Invoice | Description of Transaction | Gross |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| PREVIOUS | | | | |
| 01/24 | Rolvenden War Memorial Trust | 8 | Rent for play areas | 30.00 |
| 02/24 | St Mary The Virgin | N/A | Meeting hire | 30.00 |
| 03/24 | KALC | 8977 | Annual Subscription | 716.32 |
| 04/24 | Sharky Sparky | 258 | Electricity supply to the Xmas Tree | 160.32 |
| 05/24 | Hole Park | SI26229 | Litter picking | 114.00 |
| 06/24 | The Star | STR-WHUB-01/24 | Warm hub expenses | 227.20 |
| 07/24 | KALC | 9315196509 | 3 x training course | 180.00 |
| 08/24 | HMRC | | Clerks Tax & NI | 420.02 |
| 09/24 | Rolvenden Village Hall | | Annual Insurance 2023 | 952.13 |
| 10/24 | D Ward | 1485 | Tennis Club Electrics | 193.81 |
| 11/24 | H J Hoad | 741 | Internal Audit | 190.00 |
| 12/24 | Hole Park | SI26500 | APM Refreshments | 73.20 |
| 13/24 | Star Inn | PC-STR05.24 | APM Refreshments | 200.00 |
| 14/24 | Thompsett Landscaping | 2295 | Grounds Maintenance | 1988.02 |
| 15/24 | Maureen Brooks | N/A | Litter Picking | 120.00 |
| 16/24 | SLCC | 756 | Locum Fees April 2024 | 950.68 |
| 17/24 | Hole Park | SI26515 | Supply of Christmas Tree 2023 | 192.00 |
| 18/24 | Maureen Brooks | N/A | Litter Picking | 120.00 |
| 19/24 | SLCC | 765 | Locum Fees May 2024 | 5465.68 |
| 20/24 | A Gray | 741 | Allotment works | 11000.00 |
| 21/24 | Rolvenden Football Club | 1037 | S106 Roofworks | 5100.00 |
| | | Sub total | | 28423.38 |
| NEW | | | | |
| 22/24 | Thompsett Landscaping | 3013 | Grounds Maintenance | 1988.02 |
| 23/24 | Louise Goldsmith | | Clerks Expenses August | 168.32 |
| 24/24 | Louise Goldsmith | | Salary (15/07/2024-19/08/2024) | 1117.08 |
| 25/24 | HMRC | | Tax & NI | 869.20 |
| 26/24 | Maureen Brooks | | Litter Picking | 150.00 |
| 27/24 | Louise Goldsmith | | Reimburse Microsoft Office | 79.98 |
| 28/24 | Ashford Borough Council | | Refund of payments made | 49178.66 |
| 29/24 | Thompsett Landscaping | 3047 | Grounds Maintenance | 1988.02 |
| 30/24 | Fiona May | | Reimburse Defibrillator pads | 317.98 |
| | | Sub total | | 55857.26 |
| Total | | | | 84280.64 |

Receipts August 2024

| Date | Creditor | Amount |
|------|----------|--------|
| None | | |
| | | |

Chairmans signature.....

Rolvenden Parish Council

Bank reconciliation as at 31 July 2024

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Opening balance | £ 81,535.03 |
| add receipts | <u>£21,439.95</u> |
| | £102,974.98 |
| less payments | <u>£377.34</u> |
| Balance | <u><u>£102,597.64</u></u> |

Chairmans signature.....