

**HIGH HALDEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting**  
**held on Thursday 18 May 2023 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall**

**18/23 Election of Chairman and to receive a signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

Cllr. Robinson was proposed by Cllr. Sargent and seconded by Cllr. Wheeler. Cllr. Robinson accepted the nomination and there were no other nominations.

**Resolved: Cllr. Robinson was elected as Chairman following a unanimous vote. Cllr. Robinson read out and signed a declaration of acceptance of office.**

**19/23 Present and Apologies**

**Present:** Cllr. Robinson (Chairman), Cllrs: Ms. Dawes, Mr. Drury, Mr. Sargent and Mrs. Wheeler

**In Attendance:** Mrs L Goldsmith (Clerk), 3 members of the public.

**Apologies:** An apology for absence was received from Ward Member Alan Pickering and Cllrs. Mrs Pickering and Amsler and the reasons for absence were accepted.

**20/23 Election of Vice Chairman and to receive a signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

Cllr. Sargent was proposed by Cllr. Robinson and seconded by Cllr. Wheeler. Cllr. Sargent accepted the nomination and there were no other nominations.

**Resolved: Cllr. Sargent was elected as Vice Chairman following a unanimous vote. Cllr. Sargent read out and signed a declaration of acceptance of office.**

**21/23 Co-Option**

Ms. Joanne Dawes, previous Councillor, applied to be co-opted back on to the Parish Council between meetings.

**Resolved: To co-opt Ms. Joanne Dawes on to the Parish Council.**

**22/23 To receive Declaration of Acceptance of Office Forms**

The Clerk as Proper Officer of the Council reported the receipt, prior to the meeting, of signed copies of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Undertaking to observe the Code of Conduct forms from Cllrs. Robinson, Sargent, Mrs. Pickering, Drury, Amsler and Wheeler and at the meeting from Cllr. Dawes in accordance with the LGA 1972 section 83 (3).

**23/23 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**24/23 Election of representatives to other bodies**

**Resolved: That the following be elected.**

/23/1 Memorial Hall Management Committee: Cllrs. Sargent, Dawes and Wheeler.

/23/2 High Halden Village Events Committee: Cllrs. Robinson and Sargent.

/23/3 KALC: Cllrs. Robinson

/23/4 Planning Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Mrs. Pickering

**25/23 To appoint an internal auditor**

The Clerk advised that the internal audit function must be sufficiently independent from the management of financial controls and procedures of the Parish Council. The person carrying out internal audit must be competent to carry out the role in a way that meets the business needs of the Parish Council. The internal auditor must not have any involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Parish Council, or with the Council's financial controls and procedures. The Clerk advised that Mr Lionel Robbins is willing to continue to act as the Internal Auditor for the Parish Council

**Resolved: To appoint Mr. Lionel Robbins as the internal auditor.**

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## **26/23 Annual Review of Policies**

**Resolved: No changes required and to adopt the following policies:**

- *Grants Policy and Application Form*
- *Complaints Policy*
- *Community Engagement Policy*
- *Equality & Diversity Policy*
- *Data Protection & Document Retention Policy*
- *Publication Scheme*
- *Health & Safety Policy*

## **27/23 General Power of Competence**

### **/23/1 To confirm eligibility**

The Clerk advised that this is a Power of First Resort and gives the Council the Power to do anything that an individual can do; it is not subject to the same financial constraints as S137 expenditure. To adopt the Power the Parish Council must meet the following three criteria:

- The number of councillors elected at the last ordinary election, or at a subsequent by-election, must equal or exceed two thirds of its total number of councillors.
- The Clerk must hold at least one of the sector-specific qualifications and should have completed the relevant training designed as part of the National Training Strategy for local councils.
- A local council must decide, at a full meeting of the council, that it meets the criteria for eligibility at that particular point in time.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council meets the eligibility criteria.

**Resolved: The Parish Council meet the eligibility criteria.**

### **/23/2 To agree to adopt the General Power of Competence**

**Resolved: That having satisfied itself that it meets the eligibility criteria, High Halden Parish Council adopts the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) 2012. The resolution to use this power lasts until the annual meeting after the next election.**

## **28/23 Minutes of the meeting of the 17 April 2023**

**Resolved: That the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 17 April 2023 be approved and confirmed as a true record.**

## **29/23 Report from the Clerk (information purposes only)**

The Clerk advised Members that a FOI request has been received from a member of the public. The Clerk will respond to the request within 20 working days.

## **30/23 Open Session:**

*The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow members of the public to raise items with the Council.*  
A member of the public suggested planting a wildflower meadow by the BT Box on the village green.  
A member of the public raised their concerns about the continued enforcement of the bus layby.  
A member of the expressed concerns over the effect on drainage of the proposals in planning application 2023/0679.

## **31/23 Highways**

### **a) Highways Improvement Plan**

Cllrs. Sargent, Robinson, Drury and the Clerk conducted a site visit on the 3 May 2023 and selected various locations in the 30mph zone on the A28 that may be suitable for the SID scheme. KCC Highways has now requested that the Clerk submits an assessment report for each location. An engineer has inspected and repaired the 40mph Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) on the A28.

### **b) Parking restrictions in bus layby on the A28**

The Community Engagement Officer has advised the Clerk that KCC are not able to intervene as Ashford Borough Council instigated the restrictions following a request from Stagecoach that buses were not able to

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get close enough to the kerb to allow disabled passengers to safely get on and off. The Clerk has formally requested that Ward Member Alan Pickering negotiates with ABC about derestricting part of the layby.

### **32/23 Proposal to improve the drainage at Jubilee Park**

a) The Clerk reported that Bournes have scarified and spread sand and fertiliser on the main pitches and have vertidrain all the pitches. The arisings will be collected from the site next week. It was agreed that the Clerk should obtain a quote from Aspire to level and re-seed the area around the goalposts now that the season has finished.

b) Cllr. Sargent and the Clerk met with Aspire on the 19 May 2023 to discuss the condition of the ditches around the recreation ground and possible clearance works. Aspire has provided a quote to remove all the trees blocking the ditch on the northern side and to dredge the whole run of ditches from the south east corner to the north east corner. It was suggested and agreed that the Clerk tries to obtain at least one more quote.

### **33/23 Allotments**

The Clerk advised Members that the planning application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a parking area for the allotments has not yet been determined by ABC (planning reference PA/2023/0357). The solicitor has advised that the landlord was expecting to receive all of the allotment rents. The lease has been drafted with a peppercorn rent with the idea that the parish council will issue tenancy agreements for each plot and keep any associated rent for maintenance. The landlord has also questioned the length of the lease. The solicitor has advised that the intention is to essentially transfer the allotment land to the Parish Council but a leasehold interest will need to be granted to ensure the relevant covenants can be dealt with. The landlord has provided a quote to hardcore the parking areas, the Clerk will try and obtain some alternative quotes.

**Resolved: That the solicitor offers to pay the landlord the equivalent of the rental income and offers a 49 year lease.**

### **34/23 Memorial Bench**

Members considered a request from the widow of the late Mr. Robert Taylor for a memorial bench. Mrs. Taylor has offered to either purchase a bench or supply one from her garden. It was agreed that if Mrs. Taylor would like to supply a bench this would need to be installed at Hookstead Green and that any bench placed on the village green would need to be purchased from Glasdon so that all the benches to be placed on the village green match.

### **35/23 Defibrillator**

Members considered a request for a defibrillator on the outside of the village hall.

**Resolved: The Clerk to investigate the cost of installing a defibrillator on the outside of the village hall.**

### **36/23 Welcome Meeting**

Members discussed holding an information event/welcome meeting for predominately new arrivals in the village to which all the local organisations would be invited.

**Resolved: Agreed in principle to hold an information event to be supported by the Parish Council. Cllr. Sargent to discuss the arrangements with HHVEC.**

### **37/23 Section 106: Renewal of playground equipment and installation of a MUGA**

Members were in agreement that a project to install a MUGA and replace the playground equipment needs careful consideration. It was agreed to rethink the whole lower area of the recreation ground and not necessarily install any new playground equipment in the same place. It was agreed that some professional advice would be beneficial. It was agreed that the Clerk should speak to some playground providers for some advice on design. It was noted that planning permission may be required for the installation of the MUGA and that an exact location would need to be decided before submitting an application. It was also noted that the Parish Council will need to go through a formal tender process as the project is likely to cost over £25,000.

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### **38/23] Trees**

a) Members considered quotes to fell the moving northern stem and reduce the height of the southern stem of T61, a willow, on the recreation ground following a recommendation from Aspire.

**Resolved: To accept a quote from Aspire for £875.00 (excluding VAT) for the above works. Chippings and cordwood will be kept on site within the wooded area for eco habitat.**

### **b) Kent Tree Plan**

As part of 'Plan Tree', Kent County Councils Tree Establishment Strategy, KCC are bidding for funding through the Local Authority Treescape Fund for 2023 and 2024. The fund is focused on planting and natural colonisation of trees in areas outside of woodlands, including parklands, riparian zones, urban areas and beside roads. The UK needs millions of new trees to reach its 2050 carbon net-zero target. KCC is looking for areas of land from the size of a tennis court up to about half a football pitch and are asking Parish Councils to consider if they know of any sites that may be suitable for the scheme. The land does not need to be owned by the Parish Council, but the landowner must consent to the trees being planted. The Plan Tree team will assess the suitability of the suggested sites before adding them to the funding bid.

**Resolved: The Clerk to submit an expression of interest form for the land adjacent to the proposed allotments to be planted (It was noted that the landowner supports this request).**

### **39/23 Ransley Field**

#### **a) Proposal to improve the footpath from Ransley Field to the school:**

It was noted that the Clerk will investigate the possibility of improving the footpath from Ransley Field to the school for the residents.

#### **b) Proposal to create a wildflower area at Ransley Field:**

The Clerk has contacted Sage Homes and is waiting for a response to find out if they would be amenable to the Parish Council improving the area to the rear of the development adjacent to the ponds with wildflower planting.

*The Chair invited Cllr. Sargent to lead on the planning proposals.*

### **40/23 Planning**

#### **Planning applications:**

#### **PA/2023/0844 – 1 Woodcote, Ashford Road, High Halden**

Proposed conversion of garage to residential floor space.

**Resolved: No Comment**

#### **PA/2023/0577 – Church View, Church Hill, High Halden**

Proposal to erect new timber shed.

**Resolved: No comment**

#### **PA/2023/0679 – Rectory Barn, Greenside, High Halden**

Proposed minor engineering earthworks within an area of an existing pond and partial fill to create a reduced area of pond.

**Resolved: We would like to query the effect of the proposed pondworks on the drainage and would like further information.**

**Planning applications received after the distribution of the agenda:** None received.

#### **Approvals:**

#### **21/01882/AS – Land between Monarch House and Bourne Farm, High Halden**

Outline planning application to consider, access, landscaping, and layout for the erection of a single detached dwelling, garage and carport and associated landscaping.

#### **PA/2023/3044 – Beale Farm, Cripple Hill, High Halden**

Removal of condition 5 on planning permission 21/01891/AS to amend access.

#### **PA/2022/2330 – Belvedere Lodge, High Halden Lane, High Halden**

Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and mobile home, erection of one dwelling and re-align access track.

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**Refusal:** None to consider.

**Declined to Determine:**

**17/00832/AS - Land known as Oakleigh Field west of Oakleigh Farm, High Halden**

Retrospective application for the erection of a pole barn for agricultural livestock use. The land to remain agricultural.

**Withdrawn:** None to consider.

**Appeal:** None to consider.

#### **Other Planning Matters**

**Arcus Planning Portal:** Members noted that ABC is holding a training session on the new planning portal on Tuesday 23 May 2023.

**PA/2022/3071 – 1 Linden Business Centre, High Halden:** The Clerk is waiting for a response from the Planning Officer at ABC regarding the allocation of possible S106 funding.

#### **41/23 Financial Report**

##### **/23-1 Renewal of the Parish Council Insurance policy**

**Resolved:** To renew the Parish Council insurance with Zurich from the 1 June 2023 for £852.27. The Parish Council is in a long term agreement with Zurich until June 2024.

##### **/23-2 Data Processing Officer**

**Resolved:** To renew the contract for one year with Satswana at a fee of £180.00.

##### **/23-3 To consider a request for funding for the 'Life is not an X Box' Morocco Adventure**

**Resolved:** To make a donation of £500.00 to the 'Life is not an X Box' Morocco Adventure fund which supports young people in the village.

##### **/23-4 Cost of Living Grant:**

It was noted that funding has been ringfenced for Parish Councils to use for a project that provides support to Kent residents in the Parish that are experiencing financial hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crises. Kent County Council (KCC) has received emergency grant funding from central government and the scheme is being administered by KALC. Up to £1000.00 is available for smaller parishes that qualify.

**Resolved:** To submit an application to KALC for a Cost of Living Grant for £1000.00 to support the High Halden Helping Hand Group.

**/23-5 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget:** Cllr. Dawes checked the invoices against the payment schedule and it was **resolved** for Cllr. Robinson and Dawes to authorise the payments online.

#### **Payments**

<b>Cheque/Transfer</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>£</b>
Transfer	L Goldsmith (Expenses)	82.77
Transfer	L Goldsmith (Salary)	547.20
Transfer	HMRC (L Goldsmith)	136.80
Transfer	Mint Fresh (Bus stop cleaning)	71.82
Transfer	Npower (Electricity pavilion)	77.09
Transfer	Barrie Croucher (Caretaker services)	72.94
Transfer	Mr J Sargent (Reimbursement Perspex for noticeboard)	30.08
Transfer	SLCC (1/3 of Subscription)	139.06
Transfer	KALC Training Course	72.00
DD	Google Cloud	80.84

**Receipts:** Ashford Borough Council First Half of Precept - £16,527.00

**Balances as at 18 May 2023**

**Unity Trust Account: £70,717.39**

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**42/23 Reports**

**/23-1 Ward member:** There was no report

**/23-2 Highways:** See item 31/23.

**/23-3 Marketing/projects:** The Clerk will begin to draft the next newsletter.

**/23-4 KALC:** The meetings of the meeting held on the 3 May 2023 have been circulated.

**43/23 Information items:**

**/23-1 HHVEC Update:**

Cllr. Sargent reported that the Coronation event held on the village green on the 8 May 2023 was very well attended and had been a great success. The committee will be meeting on the 30 May 2023 to review the event and to programme some future events.

**a) Annual review of the terms of reference**

**Resolved: No changes to the terms of reference.**

**b) To receive the accounts for year ending 31 March 2023**

**Members received and noted the accounts for HHVEC for the year ending the 31 March 2023.**

**/23-2 High Halden Helping Hand Group:**

A free ploughmans lunch is now being served in the village hall every other Wednesday and will continue until the end of June.

**/23/3 Consultations:** None to consider.

**44/23 Items for the next Parish Council meeting:**

Nothing additional.

**45/23 Date of the next meeting**

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 12 June 2023 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall.**

The meeting closed at 8.08pm

Signed: .....

Date: .....

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