

Goudhurst Parish Council



MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF GOUDHURST PARISH COUNCIL

By Zoom Conference call on Monday 12 April 2021 at 7.30 pm

PARTICIPANTS

Councillors Antony Harris (Chairman), David Boniface, Craig Broom, Chris Ditton, Alan Foster, David Knight, Barry Noakes, Mrs Caroline Richards, Mrs Jayne Russell and Guy Sutton. Claire Reed, Clerk and Anthony Farnfield, Deputy Clerk. Two members of the public.

STATUS OF THE MEETING

001/21 Following Minute 001/20, on 04 April 2020 HM Government brought The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 into force to allow local authorities to conduct meetings remotely. This meeting was held under those Regulations.

APOLOGIES FOR NON PARTICIPATION IN THIS MEETING

002/21 Were received from Cllr Philip Kirkby (delayed on business) and Borough Cllr Dr Linda Hall.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

003/21 There were none.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

004/21 It was **resolved** that the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 08 March 2021, copies of which had been previously distributed to Members via Board Intelligence, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record. The actual signing will take place at a later date.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

005/21 There was none.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

006/21 Borough Cllr Barry Noakes reported that the Town Hall is in purdah pending the 06 May 2021 Borough Council elections. In her absence, Cllr Dr Linda Hall reported that TWBC had received £271,000 Culture Recovery Fund money from HM Government.

007/21 County Cllr Seán Holden reported that it is unlikely that the A262 will be downgraded to a B class road. In the meantime, there are plans to improve signage on the A21 near Lamberhurst and the A229 at Wilsley Pound to deter HGVs using the A262 through Goudhurst. Many HGVs parked at the roadside overnight in Kent have been clamped. When asking someone to take away their rubbish, everybody should ensure that they check that the contractor has the correct licence.

YOUTH and HOUSING COMMITTEE

008/21 *Garages at Mary Day's, Goudhurst.* Following Minute 456/20. It was **resolved** to bring this Agenda item forward so that an interested member of the public would not have to wait for long. It was **noted** that Council had agreed the price of £68,000 to purchase the 9 garages at Mary Days under powers granted to the Parish Council by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 S.57, power to provide parking spaces and the Local Government Act 1972 ss.124-127, power to acquire land. In response to a proposal put forward by Cllr Antony Harris it was **resolved** to provisionally proceed with the purchase of the garages from Town and Country Housing but only when Council has agreed the fund raising process. On this issue, it was **agreed** that Council should consider carefully the proposal to apply for a £68,000 loan through the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) repayable over 50-years. Other suggestions put forward were to pay £20k from Council's reserves and borrow £48k from PWLB. Alternatively, to repay the PWLB loan over a shorter period of say 25 years. The terms of the PWLB loans allow for early redemption. A suggestion that Council should pay the full £68k out of reserves was not accepted. A minority of Members expressed concern as to the wisdom of committing future Councils to a 50-year loan arrangement. This was countered by the view that with inflation the repayments would become less burdensome over time. A loan over a long period preserves Council's cash. One view put forward was that the project value is not only in the garages, but in the land. It was **noted** that interest rates are low; typically, 2.14% over 25 years or 2.38 over 50 years. The estimate for the project administration fees is £3.5k. Rental income from the 9 garages will be £5,400 per annum and it is suggested that £900 be put aside to cover the costs of management, insurance and maintenance. It was **noted** that 10 local residents have already expressed an interest in renting a garage and other local residents have shown support for the Parish Council's proposal to purchase the garages. It was **resolved** that Council will carefully consider the options that have been discussed on the terms of the proposed PWLB loan to reach a final decision at the next Council meeting on 04 May 2021.

Action: Chairman, Youth & Housing Committee Members and the Clerk.

CLERKS' REPORT

009/21 *E-newsletter update.* It was **noted** that the e-newsletter is now being sent to around 600 local residents. The plan is for each Parish Councillor to be interviewed in turn for future editions. A future edition will carry a spotlight article on The Star & Eagle. Cllr Craig Broom will draw up some standard questions to be put to interviewees. There will also be an edition focussing on Broadband with input from Mr Mike Clark of Curtisden Green and Cllr David Knight. **Action: Cllrs Craig Broom and David Knight.**

010/21 *Training.* It was **noted** that Cllr David Knight will be attending a KALC 'Getting started with Press and Media' course on 21 April 2021. The Clerk is cascading further training opportunities to Members from time to time.

011/21 *Status of Future Parish Council meetings.* Following Minute 432/20. The Clerk updated Council. The existing legislation that permits Council to hold virtual meetings (by Zoom) expires on 06 May 2021. There has been no further guidance from Government on this. It was **noted** that, if necessary, the Clerk will draw up a Section 101 Agreement for Council to agree by Resolution at their meeting on 04 May 2021. This will allow Council's business to continue with delegated powers to The Clerks working in liaison with Members.

012/21 *The Hop Bine.* Following Minute 031/19. It was **noted** that Council's licence for office space at The Hop Bine, Risebridge Farm has passed from Mr and Mrs Richard Hillier to their son

Mr Robert Hillier. This has no effect on Council's occupation of the premises or the terms of the licence.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE with POLICE & NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH and FOOTPATHS

Chairman of the Amenities Committee, Cllr Chris Ditton, reported:

- 013/20 *Cess Pit on the Lower Glebe Field.* Following Minute 433/20. It was noted that the work contracted by the Diocese to erect fencing around the cesspit has been poorly done. The Clerk will raise the matter with the Diocese to seek improvements. **Action: The Clerk.**
- 014/21 *Management Plan for the lower Glebe field.* Following Minute 435/20. It was noted that the Clerks had obtained a number of quotes for 2021 enhanced maintenance of the Lower Glebe. These quotes are to be held in abeyance for the time being. Most of the basic maintenance work for 2021 will be carried out (grass and hedge cutting). The Amenities Committee plan to engage with the community to develop ideas for the use of both the lower Glebe and the top Glebe (Village Green) in their entirety. **Action: Amenities Committee.**
- 015/21 *Goudhurst Parish Hall.* It was reported that Cllr Chris Ditton had met with the Chairman of the Parish Hall Trust on site to assess various maintenance matters relating to the Parish Hall.
- 016/21 *Goudhurst War Memorial and the Water Trough at The Plain.* It was noted that Paul and Eileen Landon who have maintained these facilities to a high standard for many years have informed Council that they wish to retire. It was noted that Deputy Clerk is in touch with an experienced gardener who is willing to take on the role. **Action: Deputy Clerk to report.**
- 017/21 *CCTV in Bray's Alley, Goudhurst.* It was **resolved** to approve expenditure of £1,925.00 to establish a CCTV camera at an agreed position in Bray's Alley. This will supplement lighting from the adjoining Old School houses. It will increase the sense of safety for the many pedestrians from the Lurkins Rise, Bankfield Way, High Ridge and Mary Day's areas walking to and from Goudhurst Village.
- 018/21 *Recruitment of a part time Contractor for PROW maintenance work.* On a proposal from Cllr Mrs Caroline Richards, it was **resolved** to advertise for a contractor who would be willing to take on some basic PROW maintenance tasks e.g. clearing paths, mending stiles, replacing broken marker posts etc. It was **noted** that tasks that are too great for our local resources to tackle will continue to be passed to KCC PROW. **Action: The Clerks.**

BURIAL BOARD

The Chairman of the Burial Board, Cllr Caroline Richards, reported:

- 019/21 *Removal of the evergreen Cypress tree from the Victorian cemetery.* Following Minute 438/20. It was **noted** that Council is awaiting planning permission from TWBC and this is being processed by our tree contractor.
- 020/21 *Damage to the wall of the Victorian Cemetery.* Following Minute 441/20. It was **noted** that Council awaits advice from the TWBC Conservation Officer regarding the possible need for planning permission before the work can be carried out.

BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Business and Communications Committee, Cllr Craig Broom, reported:

- 021/21 *Parking in Goudhurst.* Following Minute 405/20. It was noted that there has been no response from the land agent of the Old Parsonage site to purchase a section of the land to extend the Balcombes Hill car park. **Action: Cllr Craig Broom will follow up.**

- 022/21 *Update on Broadband in Kilndown.* It was **noted** that Cllrs David Knight and Guy Sutton have signed a contract with Openreach on behalf of the Kilndown Community Interest Company for £182,000 for the Kilndown ultrafast broadband scheme. This will now move into delivery stage, and should be complete within 12 months. The scheme includes the Village Hall, Quarry Centre and Christ Church.
- 023/21 *Update on Broadband in Goudhurst.* Following Minute 444/20. Cllr David Knight, who is leading on this project for the Parish Council, reported that ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ can be seen at <https://goudhurst-pc.gov.uk/broadband-your-questions-answered/> with this information regularly updated. Those whose residences and businesses are in the Openreach Plan A need to return their vouchers as soon as possible so this project can move to the delivery stage.

HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

Chairman of the Highways Committee, Cllr David Boniface, reported:

- 024/21 *A21 Traffic.* Following minute 445/20, it was **noted** that the promised meeting with Greg Clark MP is now overdue. **Action: Cllr Boniface to follow up.**
- 025/21 *Goudhurst Parish Highways Improvement Plan (HIP).* It was **noted** that the Goudhurst HIP meeting with Kent Highways promised for end of March is now slipping into May. **Action: Clerk to follow up.**
- 026/21 *Electric Vehicle Charge Point at Balcombes Hill.* It was noted that in the event that Council wishes to cease providing free electricity it is possible to draw on the expertise being made available to all Parishes in Kent to add a charging mechanism to our existing units. Cllr Boniface is in touch with the relevant Kent Highways contact. **Action: Cllr David Boniface to obtain further details from KCC.**
- 027/21 *Traffic ‘Near Misses’.* It was **noted** that TWBC has introduced a web-based system for residents to report ‘near misses’ on the highways. This committee believes that it would be more useful for the scheme to be extended to include ‘non-injury crashes’.
- 028/21 *Traffic Survey.* It was noted that a Cranbrook School student has undertaken, as a school project, a survey of Goudhurst residents’ attitudes to traffic in and around Goudhurst. Council is assisting by providing speed and frequency data for traffic on A262.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

029/21 Council **noted** the following Representations from GPC and Decisions from TWBC:

App. No.	Address	Proposal	GPC	TWBC
20/02635	Barn, Nursery Farm	Conversion of barn to residential	Refuse - Access opp. Kilndown Rd	Granted
20/03452	The Old Parsonage, Balcombes Hill	Erection of two detached bungalows; excavation works to create separate community parking area	Approve	Granted
21/00058	Lime Trees Oast Cranbrook Road	Single storey side extension.	Approve	Granted
20/03801	High Views , Ballards Hill	Demolition and replacement of an agricultural building	Approve	Granted
21/00106	Mouseden Cottage, Hastings Road, Lamberhurst	Addition of a ground floor window	Approve	Granted
21/00107/ LBC	Mouseden Cottage, Hastings Road, Lamberhurst	Addition of a ground floor window	Approve - sub. Con Officer	Granted

21/00150	Dovecote Barn, Smiths Lane	Demolition of existing garage; proposed rear two storey extension; associated landscaping works.	Approve	
21/00065	Dovecote House, Smiths Lane	Proposed construction of carport and balcony, home office, swimming pool and associated pool house	Approve	
21/00487	High Views Ballards Hill	Demolition of existing bungalow and detached garage; proposed replacement two storey dwelling with associated landscaping enhancements and biodiversity gains.	Approve	
20/03330	Windy Ridge Lady Oak Lane Flimwell	Erection of a shepherd's hut in the garden of Windy Ridge for use as extra accommodation and as a holiday let.	Approve	
21/00431	Cedar Cottage, Clayhill	Demolition of an existing lean to element, replacement single storey extension, associated internal alterations and external material alterations; alterations to porch	Approve	
21/00596	Blossom House, 4 Market Place Close	Addition of three roof lights to the home office in the roof of the existing detached garage (Part-Retrospective)	Approve	
21/00427	Bethany School, Jarvis Lane	Construction of a Performing Arts Centre as an extension to an existing school building alongside associated landscaping works and infilling of the old swimming pool to provide additional car parking.	Approve	
20/03588	Brandfold Farm, North Road	Conversion of redundant barn to create one new dwelling with associated annex and change of use of land including landscape and biodiversity enhancement.	Refuse - Access onto the Highway, damage to trees with TPOs.	

POLICY COMMITTEE

030/21 *Asset Register*. The Clerks explained the anomalies of listing Benches that are installed across the Parish on the Asset Register. The great majority are owned by families as memorial benches. Some are on Council land and some are on land owned by others. In any event, damage to a bench is rarely worth claiming on insurance because our insurers argue that a bench 10 to 20 years has little value. Referring damaged family benches to the owners is usually difficult as they have often moved away and are not in contact or have lost interest. Current practice is to ask our local contractor to make repairs which are usually low cost, or remove the bench if it is beyond repair. Some benches of particular interest receive appropriate maintenance by Council. It was **resolved** that the benches will be removed from the Asset Register with immediate effect.

YOUTH and HOUSING COMMITTEE

031/21 *Transfer in ownership of the Chequer Field*. It was **resolved** to approve the expenditure of £2,500 for legal fees for the transfer in ownership of the Chequer Field.

ACCOUNTS

The Deputy Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer reported.

032/21 It was **resolved** that these payments be made from Council's UTB account in April 21:

U701	Groundscare & General	Burial Grounds maint contract Mar 21	1325.28
U702	Capel Ground Care	Grounds maint contract Mar	£1,340.89
U703	John Fermor Landscapes	Grounds maint contract Mar	£200.00
U704	Tenterden Twilight	Cleaning contract Mar	£774.19
U705	Pearson's Landscapes	The Plain grounds maint Mar	£111.60
U706	Microshade Business Consultant	Citrix Inv 14348	£156.74
U707	Risebridge	Share of Utility costs 2020-21	£79.49
U708	Communicorp	Local Councils Update subscription	£100.00
U709	KALC	Membership subscription 2021	£1,199.47
U710	Mr & Mrs Robert Hillier	Hop Bine rent Apr	£400.00
U711	Balanced Audio Visual	CCTV Inv 2014717	£1,501.98
U712	Balanced Audio Visual	CCTV Inv 2014718	£482.87
U713	KALC	Inv 1661044681 Cllr Knight training	£42.00
U714	PHS Group	Toilet block services	£541.26
U715	AwCiRK	Membership Apr 2021 – Mar 2022	£80.00
U716	Buss Murton Law	Legal fees Chequer Field transfer	£3,021.00
U717	Wealden Group	NDP Regulation 16 Notices publication	£59.20
U718	Risebridge	Parish Council sign at Risebridge	£62.40
U719	Arron Services (reimburse AVBF)	Replacement monitor for office	£193.80
U720	AVB Farnfield	Salary April	£1,932.20
U721	CL Reed	Salary April	£1,642.94
U722	HM Revenue & Customs	PAYE & NI Apr 2021	£1,249.88
U723	Rialtas Business Solutions	End of Year Accounts and R&P to I&E	£420.00
U724	Complete Weed Control (Kent)	Weed control St Mary's & Christ Church	£612.00
U725	David J Bucket	Internal Audit check Apr 2021	£529.25
DD	TWBC	Village Green NNDR Apr 2021	£63.50
DD	TWBC	Public Toilets NNDR Apr 2021	£106.38
DD	BT	Broadband Par Hall VP85597370	£182.88
DD	NEST	Clerk's pension	£107.63
DD	EE	Clerk's GPC sim card	£13.09
DD	Lloyds Bank (UTB)	UTB credit card: minor purchases	£229.56
DD	Infinity Technology Solutions	Office phones and broadband Jan	£133.80
DD	Veolia	Burial Grounds bin	£156.44
DD	E-on	Energy Plain light + K'down kiosk	£23.49

There were no payments from Council's NatWest account in March 2021.

033/21 *Receipts in March 2021 were noted:*

Burial Board	£550.00
TWBC Business Support Grant	£1,334.00
Minor Refund – Glasdon	£59.07
CCLA PSDF	<u>0.57</u>
Total	£1,943.64

034/21 *Bank reconciliation.* It was **resolved** to accept the RFO’s explanation of the reconciled accounts at 31 March 2021 with account reconciliation statements and copies of the bank statements. It was **noted** that Council’s cash book balance was:

Unity Trust Current a/c	£43,697.90
Nat West Current a/c	£33,808.03
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	<u>£20,572.16</u>
Total	£98,078.09

035/21 *Annual Accounts procedures.* Deputy Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) briefed Council. Since Council’s turnover is now over £200,000.00 for 3 consecutive years we can expect that our External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn, will require our 2020-21 accounts to be presented as Income and Expenditure rather than Receipts and Payments. The Practitioners Guide March 2020 refers. RFO is researching with our Internal Auditor and Rialtas Business Systems (RBS accounts software) on how best to make this change. There will be some costs involved e.g. change of accounting software and training. **Action: RFO to report on progress**

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

036/21 Annual Parish Council meeting on Tuesday, 04 May 2021 at 7.30 pm. Members should expect that this will be a Virtual Meeting via Zoom conference call. **Action: The Clerk**

The meeting closed at 21.25 hrs.

Claire Reed, Clerk; Anthony Farnfield, Deputy Clerk and RFO

These Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting of Council