

Goudhurst Parish Council



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF GOUDHURST PARISH COUNCIL

on Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 7.00pm in the Church Rooms

Before the meeting was convened, there was public participation but no requests to speak had been received.

PARTICIPANTS

Councillors present: Cllrs Craig Broom, Antony Harris (Chairman), Edward Hodgskin, Suzie Kember, Phil Kirkby, David Knight, Geoff Mason, Ed Read-Cutting, Caroline Richards, Paul Wareham.

Officers present: Claire Reed, Clerk; Kat Hoyle, Assistant Clerk and Panetta Horn, RFO.

Others present: None.

APOLOGIES

526/23 Apologies were received from Cllrs Julia Kiggell (away) and Alison Webster (family illness).

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

527/23 Cllrs Edward Hodgskin and Phil Kirkby declared an interest in the item relating to the awarding of grants.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

528/23 It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14 November 2023, copies of which had been previously distributed to Members via Board Intelligence, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY & BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

529/23 **County Councillor Sean Holden briefed council on:**

- Representatives from GTAG, Sissinghurst and Biddenden Parish Councils have met with the cabinet member for Transport and KCC Highways Officers to discuss the potential downgrading of the A262 to a b road. KCC officers will investigate the proposal and report back although it is unlikely the proposal will be progressed. This is because there is no alternative route; traffic cannot be rerouted via the M20 as it is not suitable for all traffic and adds 25 minutes driving time. KCC Highways are carrying out a signage review.
- KCC budget deficit has been reduced to £8 million owing to savings on non-statutory services, including the closure of many Children's Centres. If the County Council are unable to balance the budget they may need to give notice to the government under Section 114. If this happens, elected members will cease to control spending.
- As part of spending cuts there is a proposal to sell off Windmills.
- The council are debating the use of all female facilities by trans women.

530/23 **Borough Cllr David Knight briefed council on:**

- The reduction in the budget deficit from £943k to 200k.
- TWBC finalised the annual accounts on time and are therefore in the top 1% in the country.
- There is free parking at Royal Victoria Place on Sundays in December to encourage shoppers to visit, this will result in £36k in lost revenue.

- Works to create the shared working spaces in the Town Hall have started.
- 531/23 It was **resolved** to close the meeting to members of the public and press in accordance with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s2 owing to the commercial sensitivity of the business to be transacted.

COUNCIL OFFICES

- 532/23 It was **resolved** to proceed with the purchase of a new Council Office subject to contract.
- 533/23 It was **resolved** to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a Public Works Loan Board loan of £120,000, over the borrowing term of 20 years, for the purpose of purchasing a council office. **Action: Clerk/ RFO**
- 534/23 It was **resolved** to approve the expenditure of up to £5,500 for professional fees relating to the purchase of a Council Office. The Clerk was asked to source an additional quote for conveyancing. **Action: Clerk**

The meeting was reopened to members of the public and press.

The meeting was adjourned until 9.00pm for a comfort break.

ACCOUNTS

- 535/23 It was **resolved** to approve the budget for 2024-25 as recommended by the Finance Committee and to set the precept for 2024-25 at £227,800 which is a rise of 4.9% on 2023-24. This equates to £168.14 a year for a Band D property, an increase of £7.80. The budget detail can be found at Appendix 5. **Action: RFO to submit precept request to TWBC.**
- 536/23 Council **noted** the summary of receipts and payments in November 2023:

Receipts UTB in October 2023

Amenities	£0
Burial Authority	£3,975.00
Rental – Mary Days garages	£0

Receipts CCLA in September 2023

	£401.00
Total Receipts	£4,376.00

Payments in October 2023

UTB	£11,792.00
CCLA	£0.00
Total	£11,792.00

Cash Balances at Bank

UTB at 30 th November 2023	£133,956.00
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CCLA at 30th September 2023

£98,448.00

Total

£232,404.00

- 537/23 Council **resolved** to approve the payments for December 2023 as presented at the meeting and detailed in Appendix 3.
- 538/23 It was **resolved** that Cllrs Craig Broom and Geoff Mason would approve the electronic payments on UTB. **Action: RFO**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 539/23 The Chairman briefed council, the report can be found at Appendix 1.
- The Chairman thanked councillors and Officers for their work during the past year.

CLERK'S REPORT

- 540/23 The Clerk updated council on current projects. The report can be found at Appendix 2.

RESOLUTIONS

- 541/23 It was **resolved** to adopt the new Memorial Management Policy as recommended by the Burial Authority.
- 542/23 It was **resolved** to approve the following grant requests for 2023-24:
- We Are Beams - £1,000.00
 - Goudhurst Dynamos Football Club - £589.00
 - 1st Goudhurst Scout Group - £921.08
- 543/23 It was **resolved** to sign a new 3-year contract with Flotek for fibre broadband and telecoms. The Clerk was asked to see if the speed could be increased to 500mbps for the same price. **Action: Clerk**
- 544/23 It was **noted** that there will be a meeting with stakeholders in January to discuss the proposal to introduce a village events calendar. It was **agreed** to add the item to the agenda for the January council meeting. **Action: Clerk**
- 545/23 Cllr Suzie Kember updated members on plans for D-Day 80. It was **agreed** to add the item to the agenda for January. **Action: Clerk**

BURIAL AUTHORITY

- 546/23 It was **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Burial Authority meetings held on 21 November 2023 and 28 November 2023. The following decisions were noted:
- Clerk to draft an action plan for Memorial Safety Testing.
 - The adoption of the new Grass Management Plan for a trial period of 12 months beginning in March 2024.
 - To trial No Glyphosate Roundup in the cemeteries for a period of 12 months to be reviewed in December 2024.
 - To hold all future Burial Authority meetings in the council offices, starting at 1pm.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 547/23 It was **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 21 November 2023. The following decisions were noted:
- Grants were approved for the Millennium Green.
 - To award three-year contracts, payable by standing order, to all the existing maintenance contractors with the exception of the St. Mary's contract which should remain as a one-year contract payable against invoice.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

548/23 It was **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 28 November 2023. The following decisions were noted:

- To purchase a new PROW map for Balcombes Hill.
- To launch Goudhurst Parish in Bloom 2024.
- To purchase 50 hedgehog highways for distribution to residents.
- To add the pétanque pitch to the residents' survey.
- To replace the 'Do not feed the ducks' signs on The Plain.
- To repaint the red phone kiosk on The Plain.
- To replace the dead trees on the Village Green.
- To renew the Legionella Control contract.
- To switch the street light on The Plain back on.
- Edited schedules of works for the maintenance contracts were approved.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

549/23 **Recent planning Applications**; Please see Appendix 4.

CORRESPONDENCE

550/23 It was **noted** that correspondence had been received relating to Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024-2034 Consultation and the Community Transport Grant Scheme (KCC) but this was not discussed.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

551/23 It was **noted** that due diligence relating to the potential purchase of a community asset had been completed. It was **agreed** that the item should be added to the agenda for January in a closed session due to the commercial sensitivity of the business to be transacted. **Action: Clerk**

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

552/23 Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 09 January 2024 at 7.00pm in the Church Rooms.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

Claire Reed, Clerk

Appendix 1 to Minutes of a Council Meeting held on 12 December 2023

Chairman's Report – December 23

Purpose: Items for information, discussion, and if for decision then future agenda.

Part A. Current matters

The past year. A special **thank you** to our office; Claire, Katrina, Panetta (not forgetting Rebecca) and all our parish and borough councillors for their commitment to our parish over the last year, for the enormous amount of time, thought and effort they give, on committees and elsewhere, working to make our parish a better place.

Christmas Fair.

Thank you also to all those who helped make it a successful event and Councillors: Edward Hodgskin, Caroline Richards, , Phil Kirkby and Craig Broom, and Chris Reed, who stood for much of a very cold day, in yellow jackets, to provide advice and take care of the traffic.

KALC TW Area Committee Thursday Nov 23rd at The Club Goudhurst.

Parts of agenda were very interesting and relevant to us for next year. Possibly a TW area Planning & NDP workshop Hosted by xxx from KALC.

KALC AGM 18 Nov. A better-balanced event with interesting keynote speakers, see "Parish Scope" below. Some councillors might find worth attending next year.

Traveller site.

Clerk is responding and replying to the vague response received from TW planning. TW Enforcement seems unfamiliar with the idea of being proactive to achieve timely results.

Cranbrook High Weald Closure and local educational options. Suggest Julia updates us in new year.

2024 Staff Holidays Clerk will be providing Council with a provisional **Plan** in January, so that as far as possible, the office is manned year-round.

Goudhurst in Bloom.

Good news, Gill Wallis Hoskins has offered to resume her judging role if someone can be found to take administrative responsibility!.

Bad news: Where are the cups, who won them last time?

Part B. Longer term.

What are the lessons learned from this year "**events**" for next year?

Should we be more proactive taking the initiative to steer things in the right way.

How? Annual events plan – Who? How/ When? Jan?

Planning and the TW Agreement. KALC group reforming to agree priorities.

Parish Council – Scope of interest.

Appendix 1 to Minutes of a Council Meeting held on 12 December 2023

What role will Parishes play in the future? Do we shape our future or just ride with it?
“Do we stick just to our limited brief or also try to voice and represent the opinion of the community where we can”.

KCC and county feedback on cooperation with local Parishes. the apparent realisation, at County level, that everything good cannot be controlled, managed, and delivered by the centre and that **the parishes** are “key communities for improving health and wellbeing” with a unique role to play. Dial that forwards a bit (no money at the centre) and it is clear where that will be going – parishes may have an increasingly important role in future and a wider one. We will follow this with interest.

Q. How does GPC want to play this? Lead, follow, interest? Agenda for Q1 24?

ADH

7 Dec 23

Appendix 2 to Minutes of a Council Meeting held on 12 December 2023

Clerks Report to Council 12 December 2023

Project Updates

We are still awaiting a quote for the combination of all CCTV systems with remote access. Clerk has chased. We continue to have requests for footage, the Clerk will add a note to the website detailing on what grounds footage can be released i.e. to the police and, if deemed appropriate, insurance companies.

The new defibrillator and cabinet for Goudhurst has been delivered and is awaiting installation – Mrs Read-Cutting is kindly managing this on behalf of the council. A decision was made by the Amenities Committee to redirected power supply to the red phone box so that the heated cabinet can be installed and to remove the modern box. However, BT have confirmed that the modern box would need to remain if the council wish to spur the supply. The Amenities Committee will discuss this further at their next meeting.

Following an alert that the charity managing the government match funding for AEDs may be subject to fraud proceeding, Clerks are seeking to source alternative funding.

Council has received the first instalment of the FA grant for the grass pitch at the Chequer Field, the funding will allow council to spend £19k on pitch improvements over the next 6 years.

A new 'shared' memorial bench has been installed in the the south west corner of the Burial Ground and a further bench will be installed in the Play Area on Back Lane to replace the rusting picnic bench. The Clerk is currently investigating the best, and most cost effective, way to have uniform plaques produced for the benches.

The major works to the hedges in the Burial Ground have been booked for January/ February 2024. A new hedge management plan for the Lower Glebe Field has been agreed by the Amenities Committee.

New maintenance contracts have been drafted in line with the newly approved grass and hedge maintenance plans. They will be sent to contractors in the New Year for costings.

Following the dismissal of the Planning Appeal for application 22/01066, The Mobile Home at Crowbourne Orchard Smiths Lane (and associated enforcement notice), Clerk has again written to Planning Enforcement to request information regarding the timetable for enforcement to ensure the site is returned to green belt by the March 2024 deadline.

A further quotation for a new ventilation system at the Chequer Pavilion has been requested by the Youth & Housing Committee before a decision on the way forward can be made and a contractor appointed.

The Christmas Shopping event on Saturday 02 December seems to have been a success. The Clerk is awaiting details of a 'mop up' meeting.

The policy update timetable is still slightly behind schedule but it is anticipated that this will be caught up by the new year.

Claire Reed
Clerk

Appendix 3 to Minutes of a Council Meeting held on 12 December 2023

Accounts Payable December 2023

Payment Ref	Invoice Number	Supplier	Description	Gross	Net	VAT Code	Authorisation Ref
23254		Parish Council Websites	Domain renewal for goudhurst-pc.gov.uk domain name for 2 years from 19/11/23	105.60	88.00	z	Clerk
23255		Ann Millward	October and November Burial Digitisation	390.00	390.00	z	Burial Authority
23257		F&C	October Cleaning of Toilets £674 and Pavilion £190	1,036.80	864.00	s	Contract
23258		Surrey Hills	Legal Fees relating to possible Judicial Review	1,500.00	1,250.00	S	286/23
23259		Millennium Green	Grant for playground Inspections £550 and Grant for mowing £2500	3,050.00	3,050.00	Z	485/23
23260		Envirocure	L8 Testing Chq Field and Balcombe Toilets	61.50	51.25	S	Contract
23261		Millennium Hall	Grant for film club	550.00	550.00	z	485/23
23262		Georgina	Reimbursement for Fire extinguisher hire for Coronation service	48.00	40.00	s	030/23
23263		Envirocure	Annual Maintenance	119.10	99.25	S	Contract
23264		Richard Greenaway	Maintenance at Toilets	110.00	110.00	s	Clerk
23265		Jacqui Clark	Supper for 25 for KALC meeting	275.00	275.00	z	Clerk
23266		Jacqui Clark	Lunch for 10 for Memorial Testing Course. Fee to be reimbursed by Course Organiser	160.00	160.00	z	Clerk

Appendix 3 to Minutes of a Council Meeting held on 12 December 2023

Accounts Payable December 2023

23267		Pinders	Buildings survey	1,500.00	1,250.00	s	534/23
23268		Pam Boniface	Reimbursement of Christmas fair advertising	42.78	42.78	z	Clerk
23269		Community Heartbeat Trust	Battery for Goudhurst Defib	267.00	222.50	s	Clerk
23270		Viking	Office stationery supplies	370.62	304.90	S	Clerk

Appendix 4 to Minutes of a Council Meeting held on 12 December 2023

Recommendations and Decisions November 2023

Application	Address	Proposal	GPC	TWBC
23/00505	The Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church Beresford Road Goudhurst	Demolition of the sacristy, boiler room and outbuildings, Erection of single storey extension to provide meeting room, kitchen, sacristy and disabled toilet, Provision of improved pedestrian access, Resurfacing of and improved layout of car park	Approve	Permitted
23/02412	7 The Old School	Proposed alterations to conservatory to form garden room.	Approve	Permitted
23/02684	4 Priors Heath	Single storey infill of enclosed courtyard and changes to fenestration on east elevation	Approve	Permitted
23/02690	Old Peacock Cottage , Cranbrook Road	Erection of oak framed garden room to the side following removal of existing extension	Refuse in its current form - the proposed extension does not conserve what is an important building. GPC will support the decision of the conservation architect	Permitted
23/02691/LBC	Old Peacock Cottage , Cranbrook Road	Listed Building Consent - Erection of oak framed garden room to the side following removal of existing extension	Refuse in its current form - the proposed extension does not conserve what is an important building. GPC will support the decision of the conservation architect.	
23/02753	Beech House, North Road	Demolition of existing lean to and conservatory, internal alterations, new dormer to existing roof and the construction of a two storey side extension with 2 No. dormers	Approve The Council does not consider that the development will impact any neighbours.	

Appendix 4 to Minutes of a Council Meeting held on 12 December 2023

Recommendations and Decisions November 2023

23/02814/LBC	Iden House , Cranbrook Road	Listed Building Consent - Addition of one dormer window on the west mezzanine roof, Conversion of mezzanine space into shower room	Approve	
23/02813	Iden House , Cranbrook Road	Addition of one dormer window on the west mezzanine roof, Conversion of mezzanine space into shower room	Approve	
23/02845	Summerhill Farm, Summerhill	Erection of 2 No. outbuildings	Approve	
23/02855	Lower Ladysden Farm, Winchet Hill	Conversion, extension and partial demolition of an existing agricultural building into two residential dwellings with associated landscaping, amenity land and parking.	Approve GPC would like to see conditions around the thermal performance of the buildings and the primary heating source should not use fossil fuels as detailed in Goudhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy D3.	
23/02881	May Farm, Chicks Lane	Alterations to existing private access road including: new permeable surfacing, relocation of gates, planting of new trees, hedge and grass	Approve	