

WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES 223

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 28th March 2024

The meeting started at 7.00 pm.

In attendance:

Cllrs Lucy Quinn (Chair), Wade Nash, Rob Woods, Neil McKay and Gina McKay.

Also in attendance were Ian Philo Clerk, Ashford Borough Councillors Aline Hicks, David Ledger, and 1 member of the public. Police Constable Darren Laker arrived later at 7:40pm.

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Julian West sent his apologies, and the absence was approved.

Councillor Catherine Sales

County Councillor David Robey had sent his apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

2.2. Other Significant Interests

None

2.3. Other Interests

Councillors Lucy Quinn and Wade Nash declared their interest in item 12 as trustees of the Woodchurch Village Green Charity.

Councillor Neil McKay declared an interest in item 4.1.

Councillor Rob Woods declared an interest in items 4.2 and 4.4.

3. Acceptance of Minutes:

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on the 22nd February 2024 were agreed as a true record.

Proposed by Councillor Wade Nash, seconded by Councillor Neil McKay. Motion carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned for public participation 7.08 pm.

Ashford Borough Councillor Aline Hicks read out a letter from a KCC conservation officer with regard to the Woodchurch windmill. His view at his last visit that it was watertight and remains highly graded in terms of its listed status. He felt that if groups costed the work needed in manageable stages then this would be looked on favourably in attracting grants. If the mill were added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, then it would become eligible for emergency funding. Ashford Borough Council would like the Parish Council to raise the windmill profile and consider taking on its management. Before anything is considered The Parish Council wanted a decision from Ashford Borough Council over what they plan to do regarding the ownership.

Ashford Borough Councillor David Ledger will be pushing for a timeline to be issued with regards to the stages as a result of the response to the Call for Sites. Expects some serious early culling of some sites. As soon as anything is entered for consultation the parish councils will be informed.

Meeting reconvened at 7:10 pm.

4. Planning applications

4.1. PA/2023/1776

Scout And Guide Headquarters, Lower Road, Woodchurch, TN26 3SQ.
Construction of a self-contained 6m x 4m shed.

The council voted 3-0 to support with no comments. Proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn seconded by Councillor Rob Woods.

4.2. PA/2023/2051

Land south-east of Bridge Close, Appledore Road, Woodchurch.
Amended plan.

Hybrid planning application comprising a full application for the erection of 22 dwellings, new access from Bridge Close, parking, and associated landscaping, together with outline permission for one self/custom-build dwelling (with all matters reserved for future consideration except access).

The council continued to object to the application on the grounds of the housing mix, not matching up with recent village survey, and no material changes as a result of the objections stated on the previous application of 1st December 2023.

The council voted 4-0 to object to the application. Proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

4.3. PA/2024/0467

Oaks Farm, Hornbrook Lane, Woodchurch, TN26 3TH.
Conversion of existing outbuilding into residential space and single storey link to main dwelling; new front dormer and rear solar panels.

The council voted 5-0 to support this application with no comments. Proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

4.4. PA/2024/0521.

22 Kirkwood Avenue, Woodchurch, Ashford, TN26 3SE.
Single-storey rear extension.
There were no comments to be made.

The council voted 4-0 to support this application. Proposed by Councillor Wade Nash and seconded by Councillor Neil McKay.

4.5. PA/2024/0442. Application Withdrawn.

4.6. Highways Act 1980 – S119.

The Council noted Kent County Council has made an order to divert part of Public Footpath AT204 in the Parish of Woodchurch. Kent County Council has also made an order to create a new length of Public Footpath AT205 in the Parish of Woodchurch.

5. Planting Fruit Trees on The Village Green Extension.

The council considered this a good idea, however what are the long-term proposals for the Village Green Extension, based on the feedback from the Village Survey. It was decided that Councillor Lucy Quinn and The Clerk would attend a webinar in April on the subject to ascertain further information before any final decision is made.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm for comment from police representative.

An Introduction from Police Constable Darren Laker who will be present at the Woodchurch Carnival, as a police presence and to meet residents. There was a recent targeted burglary on Brook Street in which a car was stolen.

There is a possibility of a police presence at the hub once a month for maybe 2 hours. This is to be confirmed.

Meeting reconvened at 7:47 pm.

6. Grants and Donations Policy.

The Council agreed to have a combined grants and donations policy. A revised draft policy with an attached application form to be presented at the next meeting in April, to allow for comments and amendments to be made to the current iteration.

7. Review The Updated Habitual and Vexatious Complainants Policy.

The council Agreed to adopt the Updated Habitual and Vexatious Complainants policy.

The council voted 5-0 in favour of the proposal.

Proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Rob Woods.

8. Noticeboard Policy.

The Council agreed that an open noticeboard policy was better suited to the community managed by the Parish Council and review a revised draft at the next council meeting in April.

9. Employment and Appeals Committee.

The Council agreed to form an Employment Committee and an Appeals Committee. The Employment Committee to have delegated powers to carry out appraisals, deal with area of concerns, consider salary changes and report back to the full Council for approval.

Councillors appointed to the Employment Committee: Lucy Quinn, Neil McKay and Rob Woods.

Councillors appointed to the Appeals Committee: Wade Nash, Gina McKay and one other councillor.

The terms of reference for each committee to be drafted for approval at the next meeting in April.

The Council voted 5-0 in favour of the proposal. Proposed Councillor Lucy Quinn seconded Councillor Neil McKay.

10. Finances.

10.1. Agree Internal Auditor.

The Clerk has only had a response from one internal auditor (Mulberry & Co.) to date with a quote of £65.00 plus VAT per hour with an estimate of 4 to 6 hours work required.

The council agreed to approve Mulberry & Co with power delegated to the Chair and Clerk to see if a lower quote would be available from last year's internal auditor.

The Council voted 5-0 in favour of the proposal. Proposed by Councillor Wade Nash and seconded by Councillor Rob Woods.

10.2. Items for Payment and Bank Reconciliation for February.

Castle Water account is in £39.40 Credit.

The Clerk pointed out that the balance on the current account that will be carried forward will be £1298 and recommends a transfer of £5000 from the reserve account as a safety net until the precept from Ashford Borough Council has been received.

Bank Reconciliation.

Bank Reconciliation	February 2023
Opening Balance	£9553.72
Salaries	1071.12
HMRC	72.20
Running Costs	1712.59
Pavilion Utilities	66.00
Total	2921.91
Income	901.17
Expenditure	2921.91
Cashbook Closing Balance	£7532.98
Bank Statement Balance	£13258.49
Income	901.17
Expenditure	2921.91
Bank Closing Balance	£9553.72
Difference	0.00

Reserve Account

Opening Balance	70479.21
<u>Interest</u>	<u>77.82</u>
Balance	£70557.03

Items for Payment.

Items for Payment	March 2024
Notice Board Company (Paid as agreed at Feb Meeting)	2134.80
Salaries & HMRC	1330.88
EDF	66.00
NALC Cllr Training (Engaging with communities)	39.22
AMJ IT (6 month anti spam x 8 and PC support x 1)	702.00
Ashford Borough Council (Play area part payment)	1895.56
Total	£6168.46

The Council voted 5-0 to approve the transfer of £5000, the items for payment and agreed the bank reconciliation. Proposed by Councillor Lucy Quinn and seconded by Councillor Wade Nash.

11. Annual Parish Meeting and Review Draft Village Plan.

The council agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on the 18th April 2024 at 7:00 pm.

The Council agreed to add March 2025 as a target date for the completion of the work to village pump on the draft Village Plan.

12. Maintenance Agreement of Village Green Charity Assets.

The Council agreed to approve the draft Maintenance Agreement, provided that the assets were listed as an appendix.

As the gang mow contractor needs instruction very soon, the Council agreed to delegate the power to the Clerk in communication with Councillor Rob Woods to instruct the contractor (Landscape Services) to carry out the gang mow of the village green.

The Council agreed to the letter from the Parish Council to the Woodchurch Village Green Charity requesting permission to place and maintain Parish Council Assets on to Village Green.

The Council voted 3-0 in favour of the proposals. Proposed by Councillor Neil McKay and seconded by Councillor Rob Woods.

13. Correspondence and Information.

Correspondence.

The Clerk received correspondence from a resident, in response to the Parish Council article in the newsletter, interested in becoming a Councillor.

Traffic monitoring along Redbrook Street has been deferred to a later date due to necessary roadworks being carried out on the planned dates. The Clerk is waiting for the revised schedule from KCC.

Ashford Borough Council provided information on designating land as a Local Green Space, which has been circulated to Councillors. However, they have not responded to the process if it is private property. The Clerk has requested more information regarding the latter and awaits a response.

UKPN has requested a "KVA load" figure so that they may carry out a network test for the upgrade of the power supply to The Hub. This information has been submitted to UKPN.

14. Items for information and items to be included on the next agenda.

Information:

The Parish Council position regarding the Village Green and Village Green Charity.

Following the loss of the deeds prior to Land Registry registration of the Village Green in the name of the Charity in November 2018 it is impossible to say with any certainty the Parish Council's position as Trustees. Having sought advice and viewed documents, it can be concluded that if it had not already occurred, the Parish Council ceased to be Corporate Trustee/Sole Trustee from the 4th of August 2022, following a meeting of the charity trustees. It is the disclosure within a document that led to the external auditor insisting on a separation between the Parish Council and the Village Green Charity.

Since that date the Village Green Charity has become incorporated - a Charitable Interest Organisation (CIO).

Woodchurch Remembers is the new name for The Big Thin Red Line.

Confirmation that the carnival will be using the village green and will be taking power from the pavilion which will be funded by the parish council.

D-Day Beacon Lighting. Woodchurch Remembers has requested a lighting of the beacon, however the Carnival Committee have noted a potential fire hazard for marquees sited nearby and have requested a "search light" to be mounted in the beacon basket as an alternative.

It was noted that the National Living Wage rises to £11.44 per hour from 1st April 2024

Items for the next meeting agenda.

Review the revised draft Grants and Donations policy.

Review the revised draft Noticeboard Policy.

To agree the terms of reference for Employment Committee and Appeals Committee.

15. Date and venue of next meeting.

Thursday 25th April 2024 starting at 7.00 pm in the Memorial Hall Annexe

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9:28pm.

Signed _____
Chair

Dated _____