

## **Minutes of the Meeting of Penshurst Parish Council held on 4 March 2024 at 7 pm in Penshurst Village Hall.**

**1. PRESENT:** Cllrs A Campbell (Chairman); Mrs D Broad, N Furnell, R Gerard-Sharp, J Horsford, S Jolly, B Townsend

**2. APOLOGIES:** Cllrs R Rees, D Howard, KCCLlr Mrs Margot McArthur - PS Kevin Saville

**In attendance:** PC Harry Kemp, Cllr Kerry Outlaw – Chiddingstone PC – 5 Parishioners

**3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting** held on 5 February 2024, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Declarations of interests in agenda items:** None

### **OPEN SESSION:**

The problem of waste materials from hedge cutting in Chafford Lane, Fordcombe was raised. It was noted that debris from the last KCC cut had been left on the ground under the hedge and recent further cutting of the hedge had increased the problem. Clerk to report to Highways

**PC Harry Kemp:** PC Kemp discussed the current issues facing the police service with lack of cover across the area as well as parishioners in view of the lack of manpower and subsequent impact on the public with regard to attendance at incidents. A recent event involving a member of the community was raised which had angered some councillors aware of the outcome, they felt issues with the arrival of the closest and available patrol meant the time taken to reach the incident was unacceptable with the final action taken considered to be unacceptable. Understaffing was a national issue in relation to policing levels. Members understood the problems of recruiting suitable candidates for vacancies and queried whether it was worth reporting crimes currently; members were encouraged to report events in order that the force had a true reflection of the situation. The problem for the Penshurst/Fordcombe villages was they were sited at the extreme ends of all surrounding police forces and it therefore took considerable time for police to attend call outs. Current rules/policies in place dictated the way the police were required to act which could be frustrating for parishioners.

**Emergency Plan:** Chairman invited Kerry Outlaw, Chiddingstone Councillor, to provide information for members relating to councils working together to act in the event of local emergencies ie flooding, loss of broadband, removal of local bus services or other environmental; economical or personal events impacting on the area. Chiddingstone and Leigh were interested in this project which would enable parishes to share resources to deal with such problems. It was hoped that members of the community from the young to the older generation would become involved to ensure maximum knowledge and experience from the community. A meeting was scheduled for the 21 March at 7pm in the Chiddingstone Village Hall, The Chairman and Cllr Gerard-Sharp would attend. SDC had indicated an interest in engage with the proposal.

**5.KCCLlr Mrs Margot McArthur:** Cllr McArthur had provided the clerk with an update on the proposed new waste/recycling collection system.

- (i) black bags would be discontinued at the end of March
- (ii) clear bags to be discontinued from end of August, with any left possibly being donated to food banks.
- (iii) bag for life will replace clear sacks, design not finalised but will have space for address, be weighted, have Velcro closures and will fit inside standard kitchen bin. Free initially, possible small charge later to replace. Still under discussion
- (iv) different rules for flats or where communal bins are used
- (v) assisted collection is available for elderly and disabled:  
[https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20000/rubbish\\_and\\_recycling/167/assisted\\_rubbish\\_collection](https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20000/rubbish_and_recycling/167/assisted_rubbish_collection)
- (vi) information will be provided to ensure residents remove the bags and place them within the curtilage of their property by 7am – not in public spaces –
- (vii) Bins are no longer viable as there are no grab and lift lorries which cost £280K each to

purchase, and, as this collection method is slower so would change to every 2 weeks with bins

## 6. SDClr R Streatfeild:

Clr Streatfeild confirmed that the Becket Trust had been approved by SDC as a provider of Affordable Housing, the PC would therefore be able to work with them on future projects.

Funding via external grant money for the Edenbridge CAB facility had been found, this meant it would be reinstated for this year which was welcomed.

## 7. Matters Arising:

### (i) Churchyard Trees:

**Fordcombe Church:** A member of the church team had contact ED to advise they had been unable to get someone to carry out a survey and they asked for the PC contact details in order that they could arrange one themselves. ED to provide.

**Penshurst Church:** Report provided by Estate, PC obtaining quotations for work.

#### Contractor A:

**2 Tulip Trees:** Crown reductions: £1300 per tree cleared £2,600

**3 Lime Trees:** Pollarding: £650 per tree cleared £1,950

Yew Branches overhanging Penshurst Place fence: Raise by 12 – 15 feet  
to clear line: £475

**Total: £5,025 plus VAT £1005: £6,030.**

#### Contractor B:

##### 2 Tulip Trees

Reduce the 2 large trees by 20%,

Remove dead wood, inspect main crown.

All rising to be chipped and spread between bases of trees and wall. £3,200.00

##### 3 Lime Trees

Reduce 3 lime trees by approximately 30%

Remove all dead wood and epicormic growth.

All rising to be chipped and spread between bases of trees and wall £1,800.00

##### Yew Trees

Crown lift the avenue of yew trees resting on boundary

Fence to give a minimal clearance of 1 m from fence.

Rising to be chipped and spread around base of trees £700.00

**Total £5,700 plus VAT £1140: £6840**

Members noted both prices were competitive but concerns were expressed regarding the chipping and spreading of cuttings due to the proximity of the graves. **It was therefore proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that Contractor A be appointed.**

**(ii) Local Affordable Housing:** Information relating to preferred sites forwarded to both village magazines for inclusion, also available on the PC Website under the Affordable Housing area.

**(iii) CCTV:** Clerk reported that the CCTV quotation Ref: 3529 had increased slightly due a change in the type of camera for the play area, this was offered as a vandal resistant dome camera with galvanised steel tube protection for the cable. The green and bus shelter would be covered with a PTZ Zoom camera.

The original price had been £1838.46, the updated cost offered was £1911.01 this being a £72.55 increase. The prices were subject to VAT which the PC reclaims.

Blackhawk Security has been nominated as the supplier as the company has installed partial CCTV at the Fordcombe Village Hall who had agreed to the PC adding/increasing the system to cover parish property.

Strict control would be exercised with regard to access to any film which would only be available should an incident occur, anything recorded was automatically deleted if not accessed within a designated time.

Members noted a supply was required to facilitate the connection at the play area, a site meeting would be arranged to consider options to provide same. Members were of a mind to accept the revised quotation

and type of equipment, final decision to be made after site visit.

**(iv) Play Area Posts:** Work to be carried out when weather conditions permit, two further posts to be included as result of further inspection.

## **8. PLANNING: Planning Applications:**

**SE/24/00277: Gardeners Annexe, Little Chart, Smarts Hill, Penshurst:** Single storey extensions and alterations roof including creation of habitable space and insertion of 3no. dormer windows with associated works

**SE/24/00180/LDCPR: Land South West of Bacchus Barn, Grove Road, Penshurst:** Improvement of existing private way

**24/00208/LDCPR: 4 Pioneer Cottages, Smarts Hill, Penshurst:** Erection of 3m single storey extension to project solely beyond original rear wall of house, removal of two existing outbuildings and erection of two outbuildings comprising a potting shed/garden store and home office with garden room.

**24/00173/LBCALT: Hill Corner Cottage, The Lane, Fordcombe:** Front door replacement.

**Application no longer considered valid:** No existing and proposed plans provided. Two drawings are on file but these are identical and there is no label to say if they are existing or proposed. No block plan proposed showing which external door this application relates to. **Application re-validated.**

**23/03470/LBCALT: Springs Cottage, Bullingstone Lane, Penshurst:** Replacement of softwood windows and two softwood external doors to the principal building at Springs Cottage. The proposed work does not involve any extension, demolition or alteration of the historic or architectural features of the building.

**23/03475/HOUSE: Silver Birch, The Lane, Fordcombe:** Erection of playhouse and decking. New fence/screening.

**23/03727/HOUSE: Coppers, Fordcombe Road, Penshurst:** Construction of detached car port.

### **GRANTED**

**23/03652: Land West Of Drummond Hall, Penshurst Road, Penshurst:** Variation of Condition 1 (land restoration timescale) of 23/01274/CONVAR related to 21/00195/FUL (Erection of a temporary access road off the B2176 into the curtilage of Drummond Hall, including a temporary compound area.) for the date for the restoration of the land to be amended to 30 June 2024.

### **Appeals:**

**APP/G2245/D/23/3329958: Palmers Cottage, The Lane, Fordcombe:** Proposed single storey rear extension with rooflight. Appeal to Secretary of State against SDC refusal: **23/00073/RFPLN:** Proposed single storey rear extension with rooflight.

**SE/24/00025/CHGADD STREET NAMING & NUMBERING - SECTION 64 TOWN IMPROVEMENTS ACT 1847** **Site:** Penshurst Off Road Cycling Club, Grove Road, Penshurst **New Address** Treetops, Grove Road, Penshurst, TN11 8DU. **UPRN: 050002019006**

## **9. HIGHWAYS**

**779936: New Road** – Drains blocked with polystyrene and grids covered with growing grass and mud: inspected 9 February 2024.

**734351: Rogues Hill:** Gully scheduled for cleaning under timed programmed time.

**754951: Silcocks-Cleve House:** Drains blocked and overflowing – previously reported. Issue investigated as of 3 November, passed to Tunbridge Wells.

**755185: Finches, Fordcombe Road:** Flooding due to blocked Drain/Gulley. Issue under investigation.

**756211: The Lane, Fordcombe:** Sinking length of road adjacent to ditch reported plus water leak – marked as not Highways and past to others; further report submitted under reference 759381 providing more detailed information after site visit. Listed as not highways and passed to others for action. Investigated 7.11.23.

**Request submitted for update on timing and department dealing with the issue. Ref. 779993, further email request submitted 22.2.24**

**756214: Colliersland Bridge Approach:** Overgrown trees reported preventing visual access for drivers using the single land priority bridge. Work planned as part of Highways regular schedule to be undertaken shortly.

**753905/754869/758601: Coopers Lane:** Flooding from adjacent fields affecting properties along the lane. Issue investigated 3 October, 2, 11, 15 November. Update provided on issue raised.

**759849: Hedge Barton, Chafford Lane:** Overgrown hedge adjacent to road. KCC Officer reported landowner aware and work will be completed when ground conditions permit, customer updated 20.11.23.

**759848: Little Barton, Chafford Lane:** Overhanging holly hedge. Work completed.

**759841: Hedge Opposite Chafford Arms:** Overgrown, narrowing pedestrian access to church. Works completed 20.11.23

**746512/762493 : Chafford Lane:** Overgrown hedges restricting width for pedestrians using route:

**Please Note:** KCC Officer advised that landowners in Chafford Lane had been contacted, one hedge area has been cut back, another will be cut back when ground conditions permit, action on the other is currently awaited. Passed to enforcement for a S154 process

**761222: Overgrown Hedge:** Saints Hill Farmhouse from the B2188 junction towards Spotted Dog as far as Little Chart. Work completed 27.11.23

**761226: Oak Field, Smarts Hill:** Overgrown hedge. Investigated, updated 27.11.23

**762786: Blocked Drains:** Blocked with leaves along the corner from the Penshurst Road round the corner resulting in water running down into the High Street. Under Investigation 5.12.2023

**770746: Rogues Hill:** Drainage and Flooding, Blocked Drain/Gully: Under investigation as of 5.1.2024, drain clearance of run of drains downhill awaited.

**Accident B2188:** PC advised that accident had occurred approximately 100 yds past the hospital, issue of lack of central white line after road surfacing being checked.

**781732: Bridge – Gate House/Bottom Rogues Hill:** Damaged by car collisions. Confirmation received an inspection would be undertaken; photos appeared only to show superficial damage.

**Southern Water - Temporary Road Closure - The Lane, Fordcombe - 26th February 2024 to 15th March 2024:** The road will be closed at the junction with B2188 Fordcombe Road. Up to date information available on works please visit: <https://one.network/?tm=136447341> For information regarding this closure please contact Southern Water, who will be able to assist with the scope of these works.

**Closure of The Lane:** ED asked to contact Highways to ask if facilities being used by the team working could be moved to the village hall area to facilitate opening of The Lane. Clerk asked to arrange a meeting with KCC Officer to discuss current issues in the parish.

### **B2176 PENSURST ROAD AND B2176 ROGUES HILL, PENSURST (Part Tunbridge Wells district and part Sevenoaks district)**

Speed restrictions (20mph) to be in force between a point 100m east of the junction with Poundsbridge Lane to 100m past the boundary with Sevenoaks district (at the entrance to the almshouses).

To support a program of carriageway preservation works traffic speeds will be restricted to 40mph on the approach to, and then 20mph through, working sites. The 20mph speed restrictions will remain in force during works and for up to 7 days after the completion of preservation activities for the safety of road users.

This Order takes effect on or after 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 for a period of up to 18 months or until the works have been completed. Planned dates will be published in advance of the works and indicated by signage displayed on site 14 days before they start.

**10. Accounts:** The following accounts were presented and unanimously approved for payment:

Penshurst Park Cricket Club:	New Training Facility	£5000.00
Friends of Penshurst Church	Website Donation:	£216.00
Sevenoaks District Council:	Bulk Freighter Service	£270.48
Clerk –	Annual Salary/Reimbursement of costs	
	Invoice Documentation with Chairman	£8754.03
HMRC	Clerk Inland Revenue Tax	£141.60
ICO	Data protection fee renewal	£40.00
Lucy Fuller-Rowell	Lengthsman	£65.00

**Note:** The Donations to Penshurst Park Cricket Club and Penshurst Archive Group were circulated and approved at the February meeting. The invoices and details relating to the Clerk's annual payment

request, including reimbursement of PC expenditure, had been provided for the Chairman and was tabled at the meeting, the statement relating to the payment had been circulated to members during the month.

**b: Banking Arrangements:** Clerk confirmed information had been circulated during the month showing details of the current arrangements for updating/changing signatories for the Council:

Names of councillors who had retired or were no longer on the council after the last election and therefore their removal as signatories was required.

Names of those previous councillors continuing plus the new councillor who would become a new signatory.

The PC's wish to register for Online Banking.

The councillors who would access the online facility to assist the clerk.

The facility for the clerk to set up the payments agreed at meetings on line, plus two councillors to access the account to authorise the payments listed for payment by the clerk.

Photocopy of Cllr N Furnell's passport, countersigned by three existing councillors/signatories as a true copy.

**Councillors retired or not re-elected at election – details at bank to be removed:**

**Mr Jeremy Broadhead:** Hammer Tower, Penshurst Road, Penshurst, Tonbridge TN11 8 HZ

**Mr. Ivan Carson:** Forge Cottage, Penshurst, Tonbridge TN11 8BT

**Mr John O'Shea:** Village House, High Street, Penshurst, Tonbridge

**Councillors continuing in position, existing signatories – details at bank to be retained:**

**Mr Andrew Campbell:** Moorings, Smarts Hill, Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8EE (Chairman)

**Mrs Dianne Broad:** 3 Burzes Cottage, Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8EL

**Ms Sally Jolly:** 5 The Paddock, Hedge Barton Park, Fordcombe, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 OSN

**Mr Jonathan R Horsford:** Fitchetts Farm, Broad Lane, Fordcombe, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 OSR

**Mr Robert Rees:** Leicester House, High Street, Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8BT (Vice Chairman)

**Mr Bruce Townsend:** Stubbs Wood Farm, Fordcombe Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 ORT

**New Councillor elected to be added as signatory – details enclosed countersigned by three existing signatories as true copy. Cllr Furnell to provide signature for confirmation.**

**Mr Norman G Furnell:** 18 Glebelands, Penshurst: TN119DN

**Councillors to be Authorised to action on line banking:**

**Mrs Dianne Broad, Ms. Sally Jolly, Mr Norman Furnell**

**Medical Centre/Village Hall - Garden seat by Surgery door:** Cllr Rees had advised the clerk that the Village Hall Committee would clean the garden seat and carry out any repairs found necessary.

**PC Members' Emails:** Cllrs Campbell and Howard and the Clerk already listed. ED to provide her email address on the PC website, PC member emails to be via the clerk.

**Verge Mowing:** Cllr Mrs McArthur had been approached regarding visibility splays and financial support for parishes, no information available at time of meeting.

**Insurance:** Clerk checking current charges and cover. ED had contacted existing insurers – Gallagher for an estimate of the renewal premium; after consultation with other local clerks Zurich were recommended by a number for service and value. Comparison premium to be requested.

## **11. Any Other Business:**

**Thefts:** Cllr Furnell tabled a report of a break in at a property in Chafford Lane, Fordcombe between 15.15 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 06.50 on 26<sup>th</sup> February. A Ford Ranger and a garage were broken into with fishing equipment being stolen. Crime Report:46/31502/24

**Map:** Cllr Furnell asked if there was a map available showing the parish boundary accurately. SDC Electoral Boundary map was suggested.

**Potholes:** Cllr Furnell had reported some dangerous pot holes on the road through Leigh.

**Rural Crime Week:** It was noted by members that it was this week.

**Glebelands:** Damaged pavements had been reported to KCC Highways, information regarding subsequent visits by eight operatives during five visits from KCC were provided.

**KCC Winter Energy Support Scheme:** This had been extended to the 21 March. Any scheme specific queries can be sent direct to the team at [householdsupportfund@kent.gov.uk](mailto:householdsupportfund@kent.gov.uk). More information and how to apply and eligibility information can be found here [Household Support Fund - Kent County Council](#)

**EA Meeting: Flood Barrier:** Cllr Mrs Broad reported that it had been confirmed at a recent meeting that the water level in the parish would rise no higher than currently during use of the flood barrier.

**Sevenoaks District Council protects waste collection service:** Sevenoaks District Council is taking action to help the environment while protecting its waste collection service. Like many authorities, the Council is keen to reduce its carbon footprint as well as tackling rising costs.

Since the pandemic, the volume of household waste and recycling collected has increased significantly with more people working from home and greater reliance on home deliveries. This has meant the cost of providing the service has rocketed in the past four years with more staff and vehicles needed and increased visits to the waste transfer station.

Residents value weekly waste collections and the Council is determined to continue to offer this service for as long as it can. That is why the Council has taken the decision that, from 1 April, it will no longer supply residents with black waste sacks.

During the autumn, the Council will also provide every household with a 'sack for life' for their recycling. These will replace clear recycling sacks and will cut down on single use plastics. The Council will continue to supply residents with black sacks until 31 March and clear sacks until everyone has their recycling sack for life.

Removing free waste sacks has been shown to increase recycling rates as residents make the best use of their recycling facilities. Once fully implemented, the changes will also save 30,000 miles of driving every year to deliver sacks, further cutting carbon emissions.

From 1 April, residents are being asked to put their household rubbish in sacks made for waste. These could be the black or grey sacks available from most supermarkets and hardware stores.

Note from Cllr Margot McArthur: Sevenoaks District Council's Cabinet Member for Cleaner & Greener, says: "As far as we are aware, we are just one of a handful of councils to still provide weekly waste collections and the last in the country to supply residents with waste sacks. We hope that residents will support these changes to deliver both cost reductions as well as helping the environment.

"We are confident that the changes will deliver environmental benefits by encouraging residents to make the best use of our recycling facilities, decreasing our use of disposable plastics and reducing travel - cutting the District's carbon footprint."

**Meeting concluded at 9.20 pm**

**Next Meeting: Annual Parish Assembly  
15 April 2024**