

HIGH HALDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 11 November 2024 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall

146/24 Administration: Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. The Clerk confirmed that there has been no requests to record the meeting.

147/24 Present and Apologies

Present: Cllr. Drury (Chairman), Cllrs: Mrs. Amsler and Mrs. Wheeler

In Attendance: Mrs L Goldsmith (Clerk), Ward Member Alan Pickering, 4 members of the public.

Apologies: There was none received.

148/24 Co-Option

It was noted that ABC has advised that in respect of two of the casual vacancies that they have not received requests from ten electors for an election to take place meaning the Parish Council can go ahead and co-opt replacement Members.

149/24 Declarations of Interest:

There was none.

150/24 Minutes of meetings

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 11 October 2024 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 30 October 2024 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

151/24 Report from the Clerk (information purposes only):

The Clerk reported that, as agreed at the last meeting, two metal detectorists had inspected the village green last week and had found nothing of great value but had found a few coins dating from George II. The Clerk advised that speedwatch continues but that more volunteers are needed.

152/24 Open Session:

A member of the public reported that the damaged sign at the Junction of A28 and Biddenden is now in a precarious position and needs to be removed and suggested that any replacement sign should have an Armco barrier installed in front of it.

A member of the public spoke in favour of planning proposal PA/2024/1942.

Ward Member Alan Pickering asked if the Parish Council intend to appoint a new Planning Portfolio Holder.

153/24 Highways Improvement Plan

The Community Engagement Officer has advised that the scheme to create one or two parking spaces and an area for the buses will be covered by KCC and that an order for the works has been handed over to the contractor. Hopefully works will commence shortly.

154/24 .gov.uk website domain and email addresses

The Clerk advised that HugoFox has now registered the Parish Council domain on the Nominet account and are in the process of making some adjustments to the system to allow them to redirect all the old domain traffic to the new gov.uk domain. As soon as this is done the new website will go live and .gov.uk email addresses will be issued.

155/24 Ransley Field/Sage Homes

The Clerk reported that Sage Homes has held a further meeting with Southern Homes and have agreed a maintenance strategy to reinstate the landscaping. The Community Safety Officer at Sage Homes recently conducted a further door knock on the estate and spoke to residents regarding any issues they might have been experiencing and how best to report them. Attendees at the Policy Surgery reported that the landscaping is looking much better.

Initials:

156/24 Police Surgery/Anti-Social Behaviour

Cllr. Dury reported that the Police Surgery held on the 30 October 2024 in the village hall was very well attended. Over 40 residents attended and gave details about their concerns to the local Beat Officer Darren Laker and Peter New the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for Ashford. Cllr. Drury advised that it was imperative that residents continue to report any issues. The Clerk will place a copy of a questionnaire on Anti-Social behaviour on the website and Facebook for residents to complete as part of a national awareness week to encourage people to report incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour.

157/24 Community Warden Service for High Halden

The Clerk reminded Members about the public consultation that took place last year. The Community Warden service was asked to reduce its annual budget by £1 million by 2024-25 due to the challenging financial circumstances KCC is facing. The Clerk recently met with Adam McKinley, Kent Community Warden Service Team Leader, who advised that the findings from this consultation were reviewed by KCC who took the decision to implement a new service model and geographical allocation policy for the Kent Community Warden Service. Work was undertaken in Spring 2024 to implement the new team sizes for the service. KCC is retaining a presence in each Borough and have reviewed their internal data to help them to identify the communities where the need for the service is highest and where they feel they have the potential to make the greatest difference. The Parish Council was pleased to be advised that a new community warden will be allocated to High Halden in January 2025. It was noted that the Clerk has posted information about this appointment and the services a community warden can offer on social media.

158/24 Communicating and attracting new Members

Members discussed how to encourage parishioners to apply to become a Parish Councillor. The Clerk will now place posters on social media, the website and noticeboards asking parishioners to come forward to be co-opted on to the Parish Council. In between meetings it was agreed to change the layout of the tables and chairs for meetings so that attendees can engage more easily with Councillors whilst ensuring that all procedures and in particular standing orders are adhered to. The Clerk will prepare a flyer to be placed on chairs at meetings explaining the format to attendees. It was noted that Cllr. Wheeler will continue to attend the coffee mornings in the hall and represent the Parish Council. It was also agreed to change the format of the Annual Parish Meeting and encourage local organisations to attend with stands and hold informal chats with attendees rather than present reports. Cllr. Amsler suggested that the Parish Council could hold informal surgeries.

159/24 Update on funds available for a wildflower meadow

The Clerk advised that no progress has been made with finding any land to plant a wildflower meadow.

160/24 Planning

Planning applications

PA/2024/1942: Land North of Moat Farm House, Oak Grove Lane, High Halden

Proposed self-build dwelling following demolition of existing garage.

Resolved: Strongly support.

PA/2024/2010: Springbourne Barn, Springbourne Farm, Harris Lane, High Halden

Change of use of land to residential and extension to existing garage following demolition of existing barn.

Resolved: No comment.

PA/2024/1873: New Barn Farm, Ashford Road, High Halden

Proposed erection of first floor, including a two-storey side and rear extension with changes to fenestration and associated parking provision.

Resolved: We object to the size and bulk of the proposed dwelling given its proximity to a Listed Building.

Initials:

Planning applications received after the distribution of the agenda:

NOT/2024/2077 Lion House, Church Hill, High Halden:

Notification to remove dead pear tree in a conservation area under a 5 day notice.

Noted: To be determined by ABC without consultation.

Approvals:

OTH/2024/1524 & 1576: Duxbury, Church Hill, High Halden

Details submitted pursuant to condition 3 (materials) of planning permission PA/2024/0208 and Listed Building Consent PA/2024/0244.

NOT/2024/1654: Forge House, Ashford Road, High Halden

T1 semi mature Goat Willow. Tree has been badly pruned in the past on one side leaving one overextended limb over the boundary fence. Prune back overextended limb back to a previous pollard point.

Refusals:

PA/2024/1587: 1 Durrant Green, Ashford Road, High Halden

Proposed detached dwelling with detached garage.

Withdrawn:

PA/2024/1255: The White Cottage, Ashford Road, St Michaels

Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed - steel frame shed on concrete hardstanding.

Other Planning Matters

Decisions to be made by ABC Planning Committee

PA/2022/3073: 1 Linden Business Centre, Ashford Road, High Halden

Redevelopment of existing workshop and former garage buildings to create a mixed-use scheme comprising of a new purpose designed sustainable workshop for the Stevenson Brothers.

Resolved: To ratify a decision between meetings to submit the following response to the Area 2 Committee Meeting held on the 6 November 2024.

Unfortunately, a representative from the Parish Council is not able to attend the Area 2 Committee Meeting this week. However, we have resolved to reiterate our support for the above proposal. We echo the Officer's conclusion that special circumstances exist that justify the delivery of this scale of housing necessary to enable the consolidation of the two current Stevenson Brothers sites into a single site. We fully support the retention and growth of a locally-based but internationally recognised business. We are delighted that the proposal will provide more job opportunities for local people in terms of an increase in the overall commercial space and the opportunity of an increase in visitors and tourism for the area. We also acknowledge that the provision of 22 homes on the site would contribute to the government's target to boost the supply of homes. We also note the Head of Terms for Section 106

Agreement/Undertaking and are happy with the proposed allocations.

In response to concerns raised by a parishioner about drainage issues in the vicinity of the above site Ward Member Alan Pickering advised Members that these have been passed on to the Planning Officer at ABC to address with KCC.

Appeals:

AP-90668: Appeal Land known as Oakleigh Field west of Oakleigh Farm, PA/2024/0217

AP- 90688: Appeal Homestaff Farm, Ashford Road, PA2024/0799

161/24 Financial Report:

/24-1 To receive the update accounts for 2024/2025

Members received the updated accounts for 2024/2025

/24-2 To receive a bank reconciliation as at the 30 October 2024

Members received the bank reconciliation as at the 30 October 2024.

Resolved: Cllr. Drury, in the absence of any other signatory to the account, to sign the bank reconciliation.

/24-3 To receive an update on the bank mandate

The Clerk advised that a request, as agreed at the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 30 October 2024, to remove all previous Councillors from the account and to add Cllr. Wheeler had been submitted to Unity Trust. The Clerk advised that the ex-Councillors could not submit payments, only authorise. The Clerk advised that no payments can be made until Cllr. Wheeler has been added to the bank account.

/24-4 Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2024-2025

Members noted that a pay agreement has now been agreed and that the Clerk is due a backdated payment for the increase from the 1 April 2024.

Initials:

/24-5 Payroll Proposal

Members considered a request from the Clerk, in the interests of transparency, to engage a payroll company, MI Payroll and Bookkeeping Services. The Clerk explained that engaging a payroll provider will ensure that all employer and employee contributions are kept up to date. The service charge is £25.00 per month.

Resolved: To engage MI Payroll and Bookkeeping Services to run the payroll.

/24-6 Procurement Training

It was noted that the rules for procurement are changing with the new Act.

Resolved: The Clerk to attend a KALC training course at a cost of £42.00.

/24-7 Budget 2025/2026

It was agreed that the Clerk should prepare a draft budget for 2025/2026 for approval at the next meeting.

/24-8 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget:

Cllr. Drury checked the invoices against the payment schedule and it was and it was **resolved** for Cllrs. Drury and Wheeler to authorise the payments online when Cllr. Wheeler has been added to the mandate. Cllr. Drury, as the Chair, initialled the payments list in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations.

Receipts: None to consider.

Payments :

Cheque/Transfer	Details	£
Transfer	Louise Goldsmith (Clerks Expenses)	87.20
Transfer	Louise Goldsmith (Clerks Salary plus backdated pay award)	970.29
Transfer	HMRC	534.37
Transfer	Barrie Croucher (Caretaker Services)	57.20
Transfer	Mint Fresh (Bus Stop Cleaning)	51.48
Transfer	MI Payroll (Payroll Services)	25.00
Transfer	KALC (Training Course)	84.00
DD	Google Cloud	78.18
DD	Hugo Fox (Website)	2.99
DD	Unity Trust (Monthly Charge)	5.40

Balances as at 11 November 2024

Unity Trust Current Account: £33,481.57

Unity Trust Savings Account: £16,120.83

Total: £49,602.40

162/24 Reports:

/24-1 Ward member:

Ward Members Alan Pickering advised Members that ABC is still moving into International House at the end of November or early December 2024 but will continue to use the meeting rooms at the current venue.

Ward Member Alan Pickering advised Members that he had attended the Planning Committee Meeting held on the 6 November 2024 and read out the speech he had given in support of planning proposal PA/2022/3073.

/24-2 Highways: In response to a number of comments on social media the Clerk has reported a number of hedges blocking the footpath on the A28.

/24-3 Marketing/projects: No update.

/24-4 KALC: There has been no meeting. The next meeting is due to be held on the 27 November 2024. It was agreed that a representative will be appointed to attend KALC meetings when more Members have been co-opted.

163/24 Information items:

/24-1 HHVEC Update:

Standing Orders were lowered to allow a member of the public to speak

The member of the public reported that HHVEC is working towards holding a boot fair on the recreation ground after the football and are considering ways to celebrate VE Day 80 on the 8 May 2025. The committee

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is planning to put the Christmas Tree up on the village green at the end of November and hold a Carol Service on the 30 November 2024.

The meeting resumed.

/24-2 ARCK Village Hall Files Retrieval

Following the closure of Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK), Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) are assisting with the distribution of Village Hall files from ACRK's office. It was noted that the Clerk has advised ACRE that the Parish Council would be willing to collect any files held for High Halden. The Clerk has been advised by ACRE that a date will be given to collect any files.

/24-3 Remembrance Service 10 November 2024

Cllr. Dury reported that it had been an honour to lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at the Remembrance Service held on the 9 November 2024.

/24-4 Consultation on Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority Meetings

The Clerk advised that the Government has launched a consultation in respect of the detail and practical implications of allowing remote and hybrid attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings in England. It was agreed that the Clerk should submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council stating that hybrid meetings would be preferable to ensure inclusivity.

164/24 Items for the next Parish Council meeting:

Parish Council Surgeries.

165/24 Date of the next meeting.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 9 December 2024 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall.

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 8.25pm

Signed:

Date:

Initials: