

**STELLING MINNIS PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON 24 MAY 2023 HELD AT 7.30PM  
IN STELLING MINNIS VILLAGE HALL**

**Present:** Parish Cllr John Haffenden (Vice Chairman)  
Parish Cllr Nick Smith  
Parish Cllr Garry Watts  
Parish Cllr Ann Day  
Parish Cllr Sally Morley-Smith  
KCC Cllr Susan Carey

Gail Hubbard, Clerk to the Council  
Guest speaker Steve Moores  
There were 3 members of the public present.

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Hubble(holiday), FHDC Cllrs Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee and Cllr Elaine Martin (FHDC meeting). Cllr Haffenden welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD 25 MAY 2022**

The minutes from the meeting in 2022 were proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Day and so it was AGREED that the minutes be accepted. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

**3. VICE CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT**

Cllr Haffenden gave his report that is summarised below;

**18 Planning applications** in the last year, 12 of which have been granted, 1 withdrawn and the rest awaiting decision from FHDC.

**Queens Platinum Jubilee** - plaque and celebrations May 2022 – parish council contributed towards this event. Also thanks to MADL (making a difference locally) for a grant of £1000 towards the plaque and event. (secured through Stelling Minnis Stores)

**Refurbishment of the BT kiosk** on the Minnis has begun/to be continued  
Cllr Smith has spent a lot of time on this, seeking quotes. Work should start again soon now the weather is better.

**Parish Survey/questionnaire**

Went out to all properties in the parish in August 2022, with a SAE to return to the clerk. 227 posted out. 69 received back so 30% return

**Extra ordinary meetings – 2 in the last year**

An extra meeting held on June 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss Neighbourhood planning and CIL expenditure projects. Also on 4<sup>th</sup> October an extra meeting to consider candidates for co-option

**Councillors**

Pamela Carr stood down from the Council in May 2022

We co-opted Elizabeth Philips onto the Council in September 2022

All councillors stood down after their 4 year term – 6 stood for election on 4<sup>th</sup> May

Welcome to new Cllr Sally Morley-Smith

Currently have 1 vacancy – application forms available on the website or from the clerk.

**Defib**

PC enabled the provision of a second defib at the Village hall by purchasing a new cabinet and battery and having it installed.

**Grant to Village hall**

We made a grant to the VH for the projector project for the cinema club of £3683.22 out of our CIL monies.

**Kings coronation** activities May 2023- parish council contributed towards this event with funding.

**4. PARISH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022-23**

The Clerk read out her report as follows:

This is my report on the Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, which were presented to the Councillors and approved at the Statutory Annual Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

The accounts have been audited by our Internal Auditor Lee Jones and the exemption certificate is ready to be sent off to Mazars LLP, who have now taken over the contract for all of the Kent parishes auditing. Last year we were required an external audit but this year we are back to the normal status of exempt (receipt of the CIL monies pushed us over the limit last year)

The gross income for the year was £10,111.16, this was made up from the precept amount of £7,432, £1679.66 of VAT reclaimed and £1000 worth of grant from MADL (Make a Difference Locally) via Stelling Minnis Stores for the Queens Jubilee.

The gross expenditure for the year was £13,843.55, with the main areas of expenditure being the Queens Jubilee plaque, the enabling of the defibrillator at the village hall and the grant to the village hall for the cinema club (which has come out of the CIL funds). The balance at year end stands at a fairly healthy £30,911.37.

From this balance, we have monies set aside in our Ear Marked reserves; these are £19,750.63 of CIL monies, £580 laptop replacement, £50 towards replacement defib pads/battery & £64.58 left in the flagpole/Queens Jubilee pot.

The precept for this current year 2023-24 of £7,959 was set at our January meeting with the figures then passed to Folkestone & Hythe DC to collect from the residents on our behalf. The amount paid by residents should have remained the same, with the Band D price being £26.35.

There are copies of the approved accounts available on the front table.

**5. KCC COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

**Cllr Susan Carey read out her report as follows;**

International events have had a major impact on us here in Kent with record arrivals from small boat crossings of the Channel, a record-breaking heat wave and major disruption to our local road network from problems with Cross Channel crossings for cars, coaches and HGVs. Above all last year's invasion of Ukraine has not only brought refugees here to Kent but has led to high levels of inflation particularly in energy costs.

The County Council share of the council tax bill went up 5% last April but, like everyone else, we've had to deal with inflation of 10% in general but much higher for expenditure on some costs such as roads and building school places. Together with the continuing high demand for social care from an ageing population, we have had to make savings across all areas of our expenditure. When the figures are finalised for 2022/23 we expect that the overspend on our budget will be around £45m. Reserves are being used to help meet this but reserves can only be used once and in 2023/24 we need to make savings of £55m to balance expenditure with income.

There's been a warm response from people in Kent to the Ukrainian refugees. Since March 2022, 3207 Ukrainians have found a temporary home in Kent under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and 892 more are still on their way. KCC has worked with the district councils across Kent to support both the Ukrainians and their hosts and we have provided top up payments to hosts to encourage hosts to come forward/continue as the war goes on. There are around 600 Ukrainian children in our schools. Locally I've been involved in arrangements for school transport for some of these children.

KCC has also been helping Kent residents who are facing financial difficulties through our Helping Hands and Financial Hardship and Free School Meal programmes, support with energy and water bills, and financial advice. You can find out more on the KCC website under the 'Kent Together' banner or ring 03000 41 92 92. There's also help for those who need someone to talk to. 'Release the Pressure' has trained counsellors on 0800 107 0160 or text the word KENT to 85258. This service is available 24 hours a day seven days a week.

KCC was allowed to make one bid to the Government's Levelling Up fund and we chose a project to improve access to and in Dover port. We were successful in winning £45m for this project which is expected to be in place in the next two years. It won't solve all the problems with Cross Channel traffic but it is a significant step forward in tackling a problem that impacts the whole county and East Kent in particular.

Through all the challenges of the last year KCC's staff have been delivering over 300 services many of which go unnoticed but are nevertheless vital for our community. Looking ahead we know that the present way of funding social care means this part of our responsibility will eventually leave us with no funding for anything else. Together with Hampshire County Council we have written an open letter to the Government with our concerns. A new model of local government, more devolution of power and budgets from central Government, and closer working with the NHS offer a way to both cope with social care and offer the other services we all value.

I continue to have a special responsibility for Environment at KCC. This includes KCC's network of 19 Household Waste & Recycling Centres and the disposal of the kerbside waste collected by the district councils. A new Household Waste Recycling Centre was opened in Allington only last year and is an example of the sort of modern site needed for the future. As part of the savings KCC needs to make we are considering options for saving £1m by closing up to four of our smallest sites that do not have room to be expanded to a full range of recycling. Alternative options are to close three sites and reduce opening hours elsewhere. There is more than sufficient capacity at KCC's sites to

deal with present volumes of waste through the remaining 15 sites but the change would reduce the number of Kent residents within a 20 minute drive time from 96% to 94.2%. I expect the public consultation on options to start mid July.

We have made significant progress on reducing KCC's carbon emissions and our energy costs through more solar and replacing lights with LED. Our SolarTogether project uses collective buying power to help Kent households get a good price for solar panels. Round Three is open for registration for Kent residents to receive a no obligation quote. So far over 5,000 Kent households have registered their interest. KCC is also working with Connect Kerb and district councils across Kent on EV 600 which will see more than 600 Electric Vehicle charging points installed in council car parks. The charging points in Lyminge are part of this project and the charging points in Elham are part of KCC's parish charger scheme to install EV charging points in car parks at village halls and other community owned car parks.

In 2019 KCC pledged to plant 1.5 million extra trees in the county (our Plan Tree). So far we've established 160,004 trees with 48,073 trees planted between December 2022 and March 2023. KCC has been successful in winning grants not just for tree planting but also to increase our Plan Tree team which means we can make more bids and run more projects. A community orchard is being planted in Elham with trees supplied by Brogdale and we expect to plant many more trees in the year ahead.

I have supported the following projects in the North Downs West part of my division:

£500 to Stanford Parish Council towards a defibrillator

£650 to the Parents & Friends of Lyminge Primary School for a shed

£1,000 to Etchinghill Residents Association towards Platinum Jubilee events

£2,500 for the purchase of wildflower seeds to support Kent's Plan Bee

£692 to St Mary's church Sellindge for floor restoration

£500 to KCC Youth Services towards the Youth Club in Sellindge

Do please let me know of any suitable projects in our area as although Member Grants have been reduced as part of our budget savings I do still have some funding.

The last year has seen many challenges but Kent's residents, voluntary organisations, businesses and public sector have all shown great resilience. We will need this all the more in the year ahead.

## **6. FHDC DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

**Cllr Susan Carey read out the report from herself and Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee as follows;**

This past year has seen some extraordinary challenges for us all with a Cost of Living Crisis triggered by the invasion of Ukraine last February and the subsequent rise in energy costs. Your District Council has been active co-ordinating support from local organisations and Jenny convened a Cost Of Living summit on 20 September. The District Council has also distributed energy grants and other support from central government. It continues to run a hardship scheme for those facing financial difficulty in

paying council tax and the Community Hubs set up by Jenny during lockdown in Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh have been key in reaching those in need across the district. Warm spaces were also set up across the district to enable people to have somewhere to go to be warm and have company.

Many people in our district took part in the Homes for Ukraine scheme and your District Council has co-ordinated support for these refugees as well as those arriving under the Afghanistan scheme.

On the Environment front we've seen carbon emissions and cost savings of around 5% from Veolia the company that collects kerbside waste. New initiatives to collect textiles and coffee pods are planned for the year ahead. We have also worked with KCC and Connected Kerb to install 103 Electric Vehicle Charging points in council car parks so that people can top up whilst shopping locally. We've also taken part in KCC's SolarTogether scheme which uses collective buying to get a good price for individual householders on solar panels and batteries. Our parks have retained their Green Flag status and we are seeking to manage our green spaces to help pollinators with some areas being allowed to go wild and use of weedkiller minimised.

We were successful in our £19.8m Levelling Up bid to the Government for a project to transform the bus station in Folkestone to a green park and the buses to use the neighbouring streets. The aim is to improve both bus and pedestrian access to the town and links with the District Council's plans to turn Folca (the former Debenhams) into a medical centre, council services and more. The scheme should be delivered by 2025.

35,000 residents have now signed up for My Account that enables them to access information about services such as waste collection and planning. Your District Council continues to move access to services online which is available 24/7 and reduces costs.

The District Council funded the participation of the Red Arrows in the Folkestone Air Show in August and made a commitment to do the same in 2023.

As part of her role as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Services Jenny has been the District Council's Armed Forces Champion. The District Council has retained its Gold status for Armed Forces an assessment that covers how the council deals with serving and retired military personnel and their families.

Among the housing projects the District Council has been advancing are new homes and employment land at Biggins Wood and the former gas works site at Ship Street, both in Folkestone. A programme of retrofitting council houses to improve their energy efficiency has started with grant funding of £2.6m won from the Government. New council homes have also been built with plans for more – there are currently over 1,500 eligible households on the housing waiting list. New developments are required to provide a proportion of their homes for affordable housing and this continues to be the largest provision of new social housing. Higher interest rates and energy costs have led to the planned Leisure Centre at Princes Parade being paused. Plans for Otterpool Park Garden Town progressed with outline planning permission granted for the first 1,000 homes.

Your District Council has also been working with Damian Collins MP and KCC to secure new nuclear at Dungeness. The site is suitable for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

which would provide both energy security and jobs for our district. We hope the new council will recommit to this aim.

Jenny and Susan have continued to offer advice and help to residents across a range of issues and we have been in regular attendance at parish council meetings to listen to local views and answer questions. They have provided reports to the parish councils and local newsletters and supported local events. They have allocated their ward grants to:

£600 Lyminge Scouts for a new website

£480 Stanford Parish Council for First Aid training

£1,100. Stelling Minnis Village Hall for equipment for the new Film Club

£2,000 Sellindge District Playing Field for new flooring

£1,000 St Marys church Sellindge for floor renovation

£820 Academy FM Folkestone for a project with Stowting School

At the May elections Susan stood down from District Council after 24 years of service but continues as your County Councillor. Jenny has been re-elected to the District Council and has been elected Leader of the Conservative Group.

Looking back over the last four years of the council there have been many challenges including lockdown, the billeting of asylum seekers at Napier Barracks and local hotels, the continuing war in Ukraine and its effect on inflation. Your District Council has been at the forefront of efforts to help residents, businesses and the charities. Now a new council will take forward this legacy and takes over with our finances in good order and the opportunity to create a new community at Otterpool Park which will provide the homes and jobs we need for the future. Let's all wish it the best in delivering its responsibilities.

**The Clerk read out an introduction from Cllr Elaine Martin as follows;**

I am hugely honoured to be elected by the people of North Downs West to represent them.

Local people have put their trust in me to seek improvements with an emphasis on the environment and the community, I will do my utmost to repay them.

I have lived in Hythe since 2007, I have two married sons and four grandchildren. I originally trained as a midwife but, having taken a degree as a mature student, I worked for the last 20 years of my career in computer information systems, mainly for large organisations.

I joined the Green Party to help protect and defend our precious environment for future generations. I am a community orientated person, volunteering for both local and national charities.

Thank you for your kind invitation to your Annual Meeting. Unfortunately, I am unable to be with you because it is the District Council's first meeting and AGM which I am required to attend. I look forward to meeting you at future Parish Council meetings.

## **7. REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

Reports had been received from St Mary Stelling Church and Hardres and Stelling News.

**CLlr Day read out the report from St Mary Stelling as follows;**

It has been a difficult year for the parish as we do not have a priest to cover our parish and Upper Hardres. We would thank the visiting priests who have made our services so interesting.

The Church Electoral Roll. There are 14 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, of whom 5 are not resident within the parish.

A safeguarding co-ordinator is appointed by the PCC in accordance with Diocesan child protection guidelines, and everyone involved with children's and young people's work has completed the appropriate DBS check as required.

One member of the PCC, Pamela Burgess, sits on the deanery synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structure of the church.

Access to the Church is available at all reasonable times to accommodate the Church family, local community, visitors and walkers. This has been done in accordance with the Covid rules.

*Pastoral Care*

In our small rural community people do look out for and support each other, and so many church members are often naturally involved in visiting, providing transport, supplying meals, and caring for children. A number of members are also involved in local clubs and children's groups such as pre-school, volunteers in the Church primary school.. In this wide variety of ways pastoral care is offered informally to a large number of villagers of all ages. We have been able to continue to hold afternoon teas once a month for the older members of the community as a social event. This is a joint project with Upper Hardres.

Baptisms, weddings and funerals are inevitably part of our ministry and provide good pastoral contact with those who often have no other contact with the

**The Clerk read out the report from Hardres and Stelling News as follows;**

Firstly, a big thank you to all who have written articles for inclusion in the Villages Community Magazine for without you there would not be a magazine. I know that many readers look forward to the regular contributions and the occasional letters from readers.

Contributions regularly include community news from County, District/City, and Parish Councils together with the two Parish Churches and a message from the Parish Priest; as well as those from SM Primary School Headteacher's, Bossingham Pre-School, History Group, Gardening Society, Johns Haffenden's Farmers notebook, Minnis Managers, thoughts from Steve Hardman, a brief weather report as well as information on the mobile library dates and tea & natter afternoon. With occasional articles from other clubs, societies and individuals these all go to make what I hope is an interesting and informative Community Magazine with something for everybody. Steve Hardman decided it was time to hand the quiz reigns over to a new quizmaster in December 2022 – could that be you?

The magazine was entered again into the National Parish Magazine of the Year competition and gained 11th place out of 450 entries in the A5 category for 2022.

The Children's front cover art competition has not been run since 2019 because of Covid restrictions. The art group provided superb art work for the December 2022 and January 2023 magazines – thank you Jenny Morgan and Jenny Maxted.

A big thank you to Bruce & Margaret Crawford and their band of delivery agents for getting the magazine to you; to Ann Day for handling the finances and selling all the advertising spaces, not forgetting Xinyang and Sijia at Stelling Minnis Stores for willingly continuing to allow some readers to collect their magazine from the shop. Advertising spaces remain at 23 pages to allow for the increasing demands of the regular contributors and a limitation on magazine size placed by the printer of a total of 64 pages because of machinery capacity.

Any photos for the front cover should to be in Portrait format, please.

### **Nick Smith – Editor**

Cllr Haffenden remarked how lucky we were to have such a well-received magazine in the parish, many thanks to Nick as editor for all his work. Cllr Carey echoed this view and thanked everyone who contributes towards the magazine.

## **8. RESIDENTS QUESTIONS**

It was asked if the bench on the Minnis could perhaps be repositioned and better maintained. Cllr Haffenden explained that this bench was not owned by SMPC and had been placed in the Minnis in memory of a previous resident. It was thought that it would be acceptable to extend the PC's strimming to include around the bench to make it more useable.

The formal meeting closed at 8.15pm. Cllr Haffenden thanked everyone for attending and handed over the Steve Moores.

## **9. GUEST SPEAKER – DEFIBRILLATOR DEMONSTRATION**

Steve Moores then gave a brief demonstration of how the defibrillator that is sited at the village hall works (all the models are all very similar).

Steve checks both defibrillators situated in the parish and updates the records on The Circuit (SECAMB database for defibs). This is the database the call handlers use when you dial 999, they are then able to tell you where the nearest Defib is and supply the necessary is a pin code needed to open the cabinet.

There is a hope that a further hands-on training session will be arranged later on this year for anyone else interested in being more familiar with a defibrillator.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....

***Please note these minutes will remain draft until the next APM.***