

BAPCHILD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held Wednesday 10th May 2023

The Annual Meeting of the Bapchild Parish Council was held at St Laurence Church, on Wednesday 10th May 2023 at 7.30 p.m.

1.0 Present: Cllr Liz Trott, Cllr Richard Bush, Cllr Carol Culver, Cllr Chris Clifton, Mrs Liz Cruise (Clerk)

Also Present : There were no residents present.

2.0 Apologies: Cllr Mik Larking, Cllr Matthew Julians, County Cllr Rich Lehmann and Borough Cllr West Downs, Monique Bonney.

Prior to commencement of the meeting, it was noted that very sadly Tony Smith had passed away on 21st April. Since being elected in 1979, Tony had been a long serving Parish Councillor, Vice-Chairman and Chairman until he stood down in 2011. Members expressed their appreciation of his years of service to the community as a Parish Councillor.

The Parish Council Election to be held 4th May 2023 was uncontested. Members signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Disclosable and Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interests forms were completed together with Return of Expenses forms.

Action: Clerk will return to Swale House once all forms have been completed.

3.0 Election of Chairman: It was proposed by Cllr Bush and seconded by Cllr Culver that Cllr Trott be re-elected Chairman for the ensuing year. Cllr Trott accepted. **Agreed unanimously.**

Election of Vice-Chairman: It was proposed by Cllr Trott and seconded by Cllr Culver that Cllr Bush be re-elected Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year. **Agreed unanimously.**

A discussion was held around the Casual Vacancy and the possibility of approaching residents who might be interested.

Action: Cllr Trott has contact details and will email resident.

4.0 Minutes of previous meeting – It was **agreed unanimously** to accept the minutes of the meeting held 14th March 2023 as a true record. Cllr Trott signed the minutes.

5.0 Matters Arising from previous Minutes:

5.1 Attenuation pond report update – The report is still awaited, and it was suggested we contact Cllr Bonney to enquire whether it has been received. A discussion was held about the area surrounding the attenuation pond. It was confirmed the docks had been treated around the basin but where the ground had been levelled some of the rubble and detritus had been left in the ground and it hadn't been cleared properly. Cllr Culver has video/photographs and will email through to the Clerk.

Sewage tankers have been reported by residents regularly removing foul water from drains close to the entrance to the development. Early in the planning stage Southern Water commented the public sewer had insufficient capacity for all the new homes.

Action: Clerk to forward photographs of pond area to Cllr Bonney as part of an email enquiry which includes other ongoing issues. Cllr Bush to email the developer concerning the foul drains.

5.2 Fox Hill landscaping/maintenance to cul-de-sac area – tree planting update. County Cllr Lehmann had provided a further update that the permissions had been done but required signing by the developer. The grassed area is full of weeds (as noted at the recent litter pick) and it should still be maintained by the developer until adopted by KCC. A discussion was held around exploring adding this grassed area (not the tree maintenance) to our grass cutting schedule, in the future, together with the grass verge further up Fox Hill.

6.0 Highway Matters

6.1 Bapchild HIP update – As a result of the updated HIP and whether a weight restriction could be applied in respect of HGV's using Panteny/School Lane and Church Street, KCC set up a Teams meeting held 9th May 2023 to discuss the options. KCC will look into the feasibility of a weight restriction. KCC also mentioned the Lorry Watch Scheme which involves monitoring lorry movements using an App. The cost of a Traffic Regulation Order would be £2850 plus the cost of installing the signs and posts and this would not be funded by KCC. A discussion was held, and it was agreed to wait for a response from KCC and then decide on any further action. It was noted even with a weight restriction being in place the Police might not enforce it. The suggestion was raised of exploring whether lorries using Panteny Lane could be observed remotely.

Also discussed relevant to the HIP was the ongoing parking issues and the safety of children crossing the road outside Bapchild School. KCC explained that School Keep clears cannot be used both sides of the road, but a single yellow line opposite the school is an option which will need a TRO and consultation. KCC will look into this in April 2024. They can also look at the feasibility of a SYL with a timeplate during drop off and pick up times. The cost for a TRO is £2850 plus the cost of the SYL, post and sign. This would not be funded by KCC. A discussion was held around the possibility of sourcing funding to help with this cost. The school does everything it can to encourage parents to walk their children to school, or park further away from the main school entrance and walk.

6.2 Ashtead Drive- drainage/flooding update. Further to recent issues with spring water pouring down from Rodmersham and mud being deposited at the bottom of Ashtead Drive this is now clear again. The Clerk had reported the blocked gullies in School Lane October 2022 and had been informed they were on schedule for cleaning within 3 months. As the gullies were still blocked, the Clerk reported them again after the recent downpours.

Action: Cllr Bush to email Aprille Hall at KCC about this ongoing issue.

8.30 pm – Cllr Trott paused the meeting at this point to open the Annual Assembly of Parishioners meeting.

8.33 pm – There being no residents in attendance, the Annual Assembly of Parishioners was closed. Cllr Trott re-convened the Annual Meeting.

7.0 Planning Matters

7.1 21/501334/OUT Provectus 95 Houses Fox Hill/School Lane Planning Application – no news or updates to report.

7.2.21/503906/EIOUT and 21/503914/EIOUT Highsted Park, revised plans. The latest document on the Planning Portal from National Highways – Holding Rec until the end of July.

8.0 Horse Chestnut trees update – the tree with the fungus has been cut back hard and we understand the work has now been completed.

9.0 Toll House new perimeter fence – we await a further update from the Enforcement Officer.

Action: When we write to Cllr Bonney reference the Attenuation Basin report (Item 5.1) add this item and an update on the Local Plan to the email and ask Cllr Bonney if she can attend our next meeting to update us on these items.

10. To Consider: Bapchild Parish Council Risk Assessment 2023 – Clerk to report

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had emailed to all members the updated Risk Assessment document which was **approved unanimously** by all members.

11. To Consider: Bapchild Parish Council Statement of Internal Controls 2023

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had emailed the updated Statement of Internal Controls 2023 which was **approved unanimously** by all members.

12. Review of Internal Audit 2022 - 2023 - Prior to the meeting the Clerk had emailed to all members the **Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/2023** for year ending 31st March 2023 for consideration and approval.

12.1. To Consider: The Annual Governance Statement Return 2022/2023

Certificate of Exemption- Members considered the criteria for submitting the Exemption Certificate had been met and this therefore was **approved by all unanimously**. The Exemption Certificate (signed and dated by Cllr Trott and the Clerk) will be emailed to Mazars LLP by the Clerk.

Annual Internal Audit Report: - The Clerk reported she had met with the Auditor, Mr Lionel Robbins on 13th April 2023 and Mr Robbins had reported that no significant internal control issues were identified. The Audit report from Mr Robbins had been circulated to members prior to the meeting by email. The Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Annual Governance & Accountability Return dates will be from Monday 5th June 2023 – Friday 14th July (the date for display of the Notice will be 2nd June 2023). Members considered and **approved the Annual Audit Report unanimously** and conveyed thanks to Mr Robbins and to the Clerk for her work in completing everything.

12.2 To Consider: The Annual Accounting Statements for 2022/2023 were considered by all members and **agreed unanimously**.

Action: The Clerk to ensure the correct end of year procedure is followed in respect of publishing the Audit requirements on the Bapchild.info Website and displaying the correct information on the Village Noticeboard, plus email proof of publication to Mr Robbins (Auditor).

A discussion was held about asking KALC for advice on the audit exemption limit of £25,000 and their view on it being increased in line with additional costs.

Action: Clerk to email KALC.

13.0 Bank reconciliation – monthly reports for April, May (balance to date) – the Clerk had previously circulated the monthly bank reports for members to consider. The April monthly report was approved unanimously by all members and signed by the Chairman. Members **approved unanimously** the May report and balance to date figure, also signed by the Chairman.

| <u>13.1</u> | <u>Cheques/online payments already made:</u> | <u>Details</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
|-------------|--|--|---------------|
| 13.1.1 | 13/04/2023 | Maintenance Contract Streetlights 1 (of 4) | 370.55 |
| 13.1.2 | 17/04/2023 | EDF 1 st -31 st March 2023 | 83.74 |
| 13.1.3 | 28/04/2023 | Clerk Salary April | 417.88 |

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| 13.2 | <u>Cheques/online payments due:</u> | | |
| 13.2.1 | 15/05/2023 | EDF 1 st -30 th April 2023 | Awaiting Invoice |
| 13.2.2 | 28/05/2023 | Clerk Salary May | 417.88 |
| 13.2.3 | End of May | Zurich Annual Insurance renewal due | 397.84 |
| 13.2.4 | April 2023 | Reimburse Clerk McAfee/Microsoft Subs. | 134.98 |
| 13.2.5 | Inv dated 01/04/2023 | KALC/NALC annual subscription due | 472.48 |
| 13.2.6 | Inv dated 23/04/2023 | Lionel Robbins Annual Audit Fee | 90.00 |
| 13.2.7 | Inv dated 27/04/2023 | McCabe Ford Williams Accountancy/payroll | 343.20 |
| 13.3 | <u>Income/Received Due:-</u> | | |
| 13.3.1 | 28/04/2023 | Precept & Lighting Grant 1 (of 2) SBC | 7432.50 |
| 13.3.2 | Invoice sent April | Bapchild Churchyard Grass Cutting | 796.99 |

Members **approved unanimously** donating £25.00 towards electricity costs to St Laurence Church for enabling the Parish Council to hold the two meetings this evening due to the Antony Room being unavailable following the flood damage.

14.0 Renewal of Zurich Annual Insurance Policy – Prior to the annual meeting the Clerk had emailed to all members the details. The Clerk had also completed an online quote for smaller Parish Councils with an income/expenditure of under £25,000 which could have resulted in a further saving, but on checking the level of cover provided, we would not receive the same level of cover we currently have which includes street furniture (the 29 Parish-owned lighting columns). Therefore, we need the same policy as we currently hold and there was an increase of £22.91 since last year at a total of £397.84 which was **approved unanimously** by members for renewal.

Members also **approved unanimously** payment of items as listed and tabled above.

15. KALC/NALC subscription – This is an increase of £7.98 since last year at a total of £472.48 and was **approved unanimously** by members.

16. Reimburse Clerk for annual McAfee and Microsoft Office subscriptions a total of £134.98. This is for the Parish Council owned laptop computer. This was **approved unanimously** by members.

17.0 Any Other Business

17.1 – The walkway (rear boundary of Bapchild School) was discussed again. This is an ongoing issue with overgrown trees blocking the lighting column lantern and overhanging the PROW. The last email from the Chair of Governors mentioned a tree report was imminent and the growth around the lighting column was going to be monitored.

Action: Clerk to Contact the Chair of Governors again for an update.

17.2 The PROW has been reported opposite the garage (The Street) as the stinging nettles are obstructing the footway. They are only cut by KCC twice a year (as with other PROW within the village). We have been informed KCC are not allowed to use sprays to control the growth.

18.0 Date of next meeting – Tuesday 19th September 2023

There being no further business, Cllr Trott thanked everyone for attending and declared the annual meeting closed at 9.17p.m.

Signed:

Date