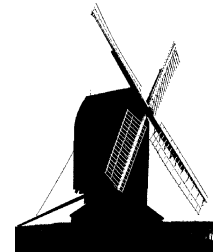


Rolvenden Parish Council



Minutes of a meeting of Rolvenden Parish Council held in Rolvenden Village Hall on Thursday 12 December 2024 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr S. Bryant (Chairman) for this meeting, Cllr. H. Back, Cllr. C. Balch, Cllr. E. Barham, Cllr. M. Geerts, Cllr M. Gilchrist,

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith, Parish Clerk

11 members of the public were also in attendance

Louise Goldsmith Parish Clerk
5 Artisan Road
Headcorn
Kent
TN27 9AZ

rolvendenclerk@gmail.com

Administration:

Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones.

1159. Intention to record the meeting

There were no intentions to record the meeting.

1160. Apologies for Absence:

An apology for absence was received from Ward Member Kate Walder and Cllrs. Green, Hinge and Walker and the reasons for absence were accepted

1161. Declarations of interest:

Cllr Bryant noted an interest in the War Memorial Trust.

Cllr. Barham asked to not be included in any discussions on the Neighbourhood Plan.

1162. Minutes of the meeting of the 21 November 2024

Resolved: That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 21 November 2024 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

1163. Borough Councillor's Report:

The Clerk paraphrased an email from Ward Member Kate Walder and advised that this would be recorded as an information item.

1164. Chairman's report:

Cllr. Bryant reported that the school is going to benefit from new classrooms which are to be funded by the Government. However, the school is holding a number of community events to raise much needed funds for internal fittings Cllr. Bryant reported that just over £7,000.00 was raised for the school at an Auction of Promises held in the village hall on the 29 November 2024, The Star has also held a fundraising event. Cllr. Bryant thanked everyone who assisted with erecting the Christmas Tree, to include Hole Park, for providing and installing the tree and local contractor, Tompsetts, who provided and installed the lights free of charge. Cllr. Bryant expressed his gratitude to all the local organisations and volunteers that help make Rolvenden a special place to live.

1165. Clerk's report:

The Clerk reported that ABC is now operational from International House and is open to the public from 9am to 4pm. Committee meetings and the CCTV surveillance system will continue to be based at the old offices for the foreseeable future.

1166. Open Session:

Comments were made about the need to reject or accept more cookies than before on the .gov.uk Parish Council website.

Two members of the public presented some maps to demonstrate the original position of the entrance to the public footpath AT41 from Tenterden Road and discussed their belief that the definitive route has been moved over time by up to 6m.

Concern was expressed about the standard of cleaning in the hall and in particular the kitchen.

Comments were made about the decisions made at the previous meeting.

1167. Planning:

a) **To consider any planning applications received prior to the meeting:** None to consider.

b) **To consider any approvals:** None to consider.

c) **To consider any refusals:** None to consider.

d) **Withdrawn:** None to consider.

Chairmans signature.....

e) **Planning Enforcement:**

Cllr. Barham reported that a residential caravan has been parked in the former club car park for many weeks.

8.15pm *Standing Orders were lowered to allow a member of the public to speak*

It was agreed that the Clerk should check with ABC that permission, as suggested by a member of public has been granted, is still valid for this caravan.

Concern was also expressed about the hoarding on the village shop announcing the new ownership which has been up for a few months and is deemed to be now unnecessary and out of keeping with the street scene. The Clerk will find out when it is to be removed.

8.17pm *2 members of the public left the meeting*

f) **Neighbourhood Plan:**

The Clerk reported that a virtual meeting was held with Alison Eardley, who is the retained planning consultation for KALC, on the 5 December 2024. Cllrs. Hinge, Geerts and the Clerk attended the meeting at which a detailed review of the current plan and policies was undertaken. Alison Eardley has subsequently submitted a proposal and has advised that many elements of the current plan are still sound and that just a small scale review is required. The Clerk reminded Members that a Government Grant of up to £10,000.00 is available via Locality to support any financial cost associated with reviewing the plan. However, any funds received would need to be spent by the end of March 2025. It is not yet understood if the grant (and Technical Support) will continue into the new financial year post March 2025. The Clerk advised it would not be possible to undertake a full scale review of the plan before the end of the financial year. Alison Eardley has suggested that certain aspects could be completed by the end of March 2025 to include the community engagement, meeting with ABC and the mapping and evidence gathering and that she would be available to professionally support this work. It was noted that the Clerk has contacted Tony Fullwood, the planning consultant who assisted the Parish Council with the current plan. The Clerk advised that Tony Fullwood would not be available to support any review until June 2026. Members discussed the uncertainty of the Locality Grant Funding continuing after the end of the financial year and noted that the Parish Council does not have sufficient funding in either the proposed budget or reserves to support the total required expenditure. It was agreed that it would be better to commence the review now and apply for the grant funding while it is still available even if the process is not completed before the end of the financial year accepting that Tony Fullwood could not assist with the project given this timescale. It was noted that Alison Eardley has quoted £9,150.00 (excluding VAT) to provide professional support for a full review of the current plan. The Clerk advised that a steering group could meet early January 2025 to agree the terms of reference and agree a project plan with the community engagement stage commencing by the end of January 2025.

Resolved: The Clerk to apply for grant funding from Locality and subject to this appoint Alison Eardley to assist the steering group with the review of the plan. To set up a steering group meeting.

1168. Website Domain and Email addresses

The Clerk advised that the website is now a [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) domain. Hugo Fox hope to offer .gov.uk email accounts within a few weeks.

1169. Parish Matters

a) **KALC Community Awards 2025**

The Clerk advised Members that the KALC Community Awards Scheme has been in existence for several years and is to acknowledge and give recognition to a resident/group of who has/have made a significant contribution to the community over a period of years. The winner will receive a certificate signed by the Chairman of Kent County Council/Mayor of Medway, the High Sheriff of Kent and the KALC Chairman. The Clerk advised that the award is normally presented at the Annual Parish Meeting which has to be held in April. The nomination needs to be submitted to KALC by the 7 February 2025.

Resolved: To adopt the KALC Community Awards 2025 Scheme and for the Clerk to post a request for nominations from parishioners on social media, the website and noticeboards. Members to consider and agree a nomination at the next meeting.

b) **Warm Hub:**

Cllr. Bryant reported that The Star continues to host warm hub events

c) **Community Warden**

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 Clerk advised that a community warden, likely to be Joanna Vos the current community warden, will remain allocated to Rolvenden which is one of a few parishes that will benefit from the service. The Clerk will ask the community warden to attend a Parish Council meeting to meet Members.

d) **Neighbourhood Watch/Kent Police Update**

Standing Orders were lowered to allow Sian Reeves, Rolvenden Neighbourhood Watch, to speak.

Sian Reeves advised that copies of the ABS survey (anti-social behaviour) survey are available both online and in the shop and church for residents to collect and post back in the same place in a sealed container until the end of December 2024. All the surveys will then be sent to Kent Police for analysis. Sian Reeves reported that there has recently been less incidents but to keep reporting any concerns.

Cllr. Barham reported that a suspicious vehicle has been seen patrolling the parish at night on a regular basis and that this has been reported to Kent Police.

The meeting reconvened.

1170. HIGHWAYS/PROW

a) **Highways Improvement Plan**

Priority 1 Maytham Road, Rolvenden Layne: KCC is revisiting the design and cost of installing gateways on Maytham Road where the 30mph speed restriction comes into force. The Clerk reported that KCC has suggested that they can probably fund one or both gateways.

Priority 2 Hastings Road, Rolvenden: KCC has agreed to carry out both pedestrian and traffic surveys in Spring 2025 to ascertain both the need and feasibility of installing a crossing outside the school.

Priority 3: Speeding Traffic, Hastings Road, Tenterden Road: The Clerk advised that Members will be considering whether to budget for a SID scheme.

Priority 4: Sparkeswood Avenue: The Clerk has now received the 30mph toolkit which contains bin stickers and posters to give out to residents to educate motorists.

b) **Reported Faults**

The Clerk has reported a number of potholes around the village.

c) **New Faults**

Pothole at entrance to Monypenny

Parking on the pavements in Sparkewood – the Clerk to advise the Beat Officer.

Tenterden Road – issues with the drains/culverts and water on the road.

Byeway north of Cherry Garden Farm is impassible.

d) **Consultation on the proposed diversion of public footpath AT41**

Members reconsidered an application to divert part of Public Footpath AT41 which KCC has advised is necessary to enable the approved development, planning reference 21/01826/AS, to take place because the development will result in the current footpath becoming unavailable for public use. Members discussed both the current and proposed route and the maps provided by two members of the public and agreed that the start point on Tenterden Road is acceptable as it is still proposed to maintain a footpath across this area. The Definitive Map team at KCC has advised that the majority of the new path through the site will be unsurfaced but will have a hard surface where it crosses the access road and will be demarcated where it crosses. The legal responsibility of maintaining the footpath will remain with KCC.

Resolved: To accept the proposed diversion of the footpath but request that a Type 1 aggregate surface is applied so that users can determine the new route.

1171. Policies

- a) To approve an Equality and Diversity Policy.

Resolved: To adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy.

1172. Finances

a) **Grounds Maintenance Contract 2025-2028**

The Clerk reported that the tender documents have been posted on Contracts Finder with a deadline of midday on Wednesday 18 December 2024. The Clerk will ensure that the tenders are opened in accordance with the Financial Regulations and will prepare a report for the meeting due to be held in January 2025.

b) **Draft Budget 2025-2026**

Members considered and commented on a draft budget prepared and circulated by the Clerk. The Clerk will amend the draft budget and recirculate for a full discussion and approval at the next meeting.

c) **Draft Precept Requirements 2025-2026**

It was noted that the Clerk is proposing to increase the precept to £41,000.00 which represents an increase of 21% which in real terms is an increase of £9.94 per annum for a Band D property. The Clerk explained that reserves have been depleted due to an increase in unbudgeted expenditure in the current financial year. The precept requirement will be discussed and approved at the next meeting.

d) **To receive the accounts**

The accounts dated the 12 December 2024 were noted.

e) **To receive the bank reconciliation as at 12 December 2024**

In the absence of a second signatory to the bank account being present at the meeting the bank reconciliation was not signed.

f) **To receive a list of payments for approval**

Cllr. Bryant checked the invoices against the payment schedule, (appended to the minutes), and it was **resolved** for Cllrs. Green and Balch to authorise the payments online. The authorised schedule was initialled immediately below the last item by the Chair in accordance with the financial regulations.

1173. External Meetings

- a) **Thoburn Trustees Meeting:** A meeting was held on the 11 December 2024. The Clerk advised that Trustee meetings are not public meetings. The Clerk has advised the current grazing tenant that the Trustees are unable to offer any further extension of tenure after the 31 December 2025. The tenant has responded to advise that they can be flexible and would be happy to continue to rent the land beyond the 31 December 2025 if this is an option. The Clerk reported that three land management companies were approached to provide a proposal for the preparation of a management plan to include providing advice on the availability of appropriate grant funding, the future management of the land and a public consultation exercise. ABC has advised the Clerk that the proposed project would fit the restriction of spend from the S106 Agreement, (capital expenditure for informal green spaces from application 13/00755/AS, Halden Fields) and have invited the Parish Council to submit an application to draw down the funding. The Clerk advised that the Trustees have now agreed to instruct CLM to carry out the baseline surveys and public consultation and to prepare a management plan. The Trust is not currently registered with the Charity Commission because it does not meet their minimum annual income threshold of £5,000.00 so the generation of more income remains an important factor.
- b) **Rolvenden Village Hall:** The Clerk reported that the Committee is exploring options to update the heating system and are looking to introduce cleaning schedules.
- c) **KALC Area Committee:** It was noted that the Clerk has circulated a copy of the minutes of the Area Committee Meeting held on the 27 November 2024. It was noted that the AGM was held on the 30 November 2024.

9.23pm 5 members of the public left the meeting

1174. Items for the next meeting

Covenants for the former club car park.
Annual Litter Pick.

1175. Correspondence/Consultations

CEO Briefing: Hoads Wood. The Clerk reminded Members that a huge amount of waste was illegally dumped in Hoads Wood and that the Environment Agency has been leading on investigations into bringing the culprits to justice, and also on plans to remove the waste. The Environment Agency has now appointed a contractor who will clear the site. Work will need to be carefully planned as there are several matters to take account of before the physical clearance can commence. The contractor was due to attend a public meeting, hosted by Bethersden Parish Council, on Friday 22 November 2024 where they were expected to provide further detail on plans and timescales.

CEO Briefing: International House Move: See minute reference 1165.

1176. Any Confidential Items: None

1177. Date of the next meeting: Thursday 16 January 2025 at 7.30pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.29pm

Signed: Date:

BACS Payments for Approval December 2024

Reference	Payee	Invoice	Description of Transaction	Gross
52/24	Maureen Brooks		Litter Picking	150.00
53/24	Louise Goldsmith		Expenses	75.50
54/24	Forvis Mazars	2448956	Limited Assurance Review	378.00
55/24	KALC	10143873479	Training	60.00
56/24	M I Payroll		Payroll Services	25.00
56/24	Viking		Stationary	61.07
DD	Unity Trust		Monthly Charge	6.00
DD	Hugo Fox		Website	11.99
DD	HMRC		Clerks Tax and NI	369.36
SO	Louise Goldsmith		Salary	1045.15
		Sub total		2182.07

Receipts December 2024

Date	Amount
None	

Bank Reconciliation as at 12 December 2024

Opening balance	£ 81,535.03
add receipts	£ 62,129.01
	£ 143,664.04
less payments	£ 114,264.23
Balance	<u>£ 29,399.81</u>

