

POSTLING PARISH COUNCIL

postlingpc@aol.co.uk | www.postlingpc.co.uk

Minutes of Postling Parish Council meeting held at Postling Village Hall on Tuesday 26 September 2023 at 6.30pm

1. To record attendance and apologies for absence

Attending: Chairman Frank Hobbs, Cllrs Helen Calderbank, Christine Hobbs, Rob Lye, John Patrick, Daniel Shaddick, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, County Cllr Susan Carey, District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee.
Apologies: Cllr Charlie Wilkins, District Cllr Elaine Martin.

The Chairman welcomed new councillor, Rob Lye, who was co-opted to the parish council on 1 August, and thanked Charlie Wilkins who is relocating after a long service on the parish council. Charlie's attention to detail and sense of humour will be missed, and councillors wish him well in his new home.

2. **It was resolved** unanimously to accept the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023 and the co-option meeting held on 1 August.
3. There were no members' declarations of interest on Agenda items.
4. Public Participation session, not required
5. There were no matters arising not included on the Agenda.
6. Planning Applications received since last meeting, circulated to Councillors for comments, outcomes of those deliberations, and to consider any applications received since this agenda was published:
 - a. **23/0202/CM Postling Court Farm**
Potential planning breach.
The Senior Planning & Enforcement Officer has visited the property and discussed the matters of concern with the owner. They have written to the owner advising them to either cease the equine use or make a planning application for it, and will continue to monitor this.
 - b. **23/0580/FH Pent Farm, Pilgrims Way CT21 4EY**
Photovoltaic solar array, ancillary infrastructure, and landscaping.
A public meeting was held on Tuesday 30 May at 6.30pm at Postling Village Hall to hear residents' views on this application.
PPC Objection. Awaiting FHDC decision.
 - c.. **19/1258/FH Postling Lodge, Farthing Common CT18 8DQ**
Retrospective planning permission for a grounds maintenance building and entrance gate accessed from Loughborough Lane at Postling Lodge
PPC Objection. Awaiting FHDC decision. (Cllr Hollingsbee to enquire)
 - d. Other planning matters:
- FHDC is exploring the possibility of a solar park on land adjoining Otterpool Park.
7. Highways
 - a. Pot holes marked on Cuckoo Lane: these have been marked again.
 - b. Sandling Road: Badgers have eroded the bank, Cllr Carey to enquire if badger tunnel will be built.

Chairman Frank Hobbs

Parish Clerk/RFO Clare Hamilton | 14a Elmstead Place, Folkestone CT20 1QU | 01303 257321 / 07890 248601

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8. Finance

a. Balance of account at 26 September 2023: £6,347.25.

b. Payments and Receipts since last meeting:

Payments

C Hamilton	Salary June July	395.89
HSBC	bank charges June	8.00
HSBC	bank charges July	8.00
HSBC	bank charges August	8.00

Receipts

HMRC	VAT reclaim	84.02
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c. Expenditure due before next meeting:

C Hamilton	Salary Aug Sept	395.89
C Hamilton	Travel exp July & Sept meetings	14.40
HSBC	Bank charges Sept Oct	16.00
HugoFox	Website hosting per month	11.99 vat £1.99

It was resolved to approve expenditure. Proposed Cllr Christine Hobbs, seconded Cllr Dan Shadwick, all in favour, approved by the Chairman.

d. Further research into bank charges

Other banks also charge fees for business accounts and it was decided to remain with HSBC.

(Metro Bank do not charge fees if account stays above £6000, Barclays charge £8.50 per month after first year)

9. Reports from District and County Councillors: see Appendix.

10. Website

Our website hosts, HugoFox, have provided free hosting since 2020 and have recently given notice that they are introducing charges from 4 October. With the basic Bronze package at £9.99+vat per month the only change is we will lose the Planning Tracker tab on the website.

Annual website costs from 4 October 2023 will be £134+vat (hosting and annual domain name renewal).

It was resolved to accept the introduction of charges and to set up a monthly Direct Debit.

11. Otterpool Park Working Group

A voluntary secretary has now been appointed with no salary.

Ideas for a parish 'wish list' for items from Otterpool Section 106 funds were discussed, solar panels and a battery for the village hall were suggested, plus possible renewed play equipment at rear of village hall.

12. For Information

- Budget and Precept setting for 2024/25 at next meeting
- Next meeting: 6.30 pm on 28 November.

Meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signed..... Cllr Frank Hobbs, Chairman, 28 November 2023

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Appendix Reports from District and County Councillors

District Councillor Elaine Martin

Please accept my apologies for not attending your Parish Council meeting tonight. It has clashed with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of which I am a member.

Stagecoach has implemented a set of wide ranging and savage cuts to local bus services across the district. These cuts in services have caused a great deal of stress and disruption for people in the district. Please check the Stagecoach website (<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables>) for up-to-date timetables. Stagecoach is now considering if they can reinstate the part of the number 10 route to Lymnpe which has currently been stopped. Nothing has been agreed as yet.

F&HDC have recently launched a Green Business Grant Scheme to help smaller businesses become more energy efficient. Grants of up to £10,000 are available. Details of how to apply are on the Folkestone Works website (<https://folkestone.works/green-business-grant-scheme/>).

In the next couple of weeks there will be an opportunity to apply for a grant from the Rural England Prosperity Fund. F&HDC were awarded £570k grant to be used between 2023 and 2025. When the details are confirmed, on what the grant can be used for and how to apply, they will be placed on the Folkestone Works website (<https://folkestone.works/>).

Folkestone and Hythe District Councillors who represent the North Downs wards recently held a meeting which all Parish Councils were notified about. We discussed the issues specific to the rural communities and how the District Council can best support them. A number of topics were covered and we are hoping to arrange a forum to explore these important issues further.

For information, the quarterly Joint Parish Council meetings held with the District Council take place online and the next meeting is on 16th November. The meeting can be viewed via the live stream on YouTube: bit.ly/YouTubeMeetings

The review of the Otterpool Park project is continuing. The Governance report has been received and the recommendations are being implemented. The report is being presented to this evening's Overview & Scrutiny meeting. The Financial report has been received and the recommendations are being discussed. The third element, Management Review, is ongoing.

The planning application relating to the Pentland Homes Broad Street development, 23/0410/FH, is being considered at the Planning Committee on the 3rd October.

F&HDC are predicting a £4.5million deficit for next year, inherited from the previous administration, and there is likely to be a reduction in services to save money. Consultations are ongoing, all front-line services and statutory services will be fully protected. I'll provide further updates when available.

Contact: Elaine.Martin@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

District Councillor Jenny Hollingsbee

Planning – I have received a number of enquiries on planning issues throughout the Ward recently and have visited a number of sites. If you have an issue with a planning application please do contact me. I understand that the Pentland Planning Application will be heard by the Planning & Licensing Committee on 3 October and it has been recommended for approval by Officers.

Waste service - A report by East Kent Audit Partnership has identified that some aspects of the District's street cleansing service need to improve, particularly in relation to town centres and busier areas of the district. This has resulted in a number of improvements being recommended in a report being considered by the Audit & Governance Committee.

Budget – because of some extraordinary circumstances, the budget for 2023/24 is projected to be £4.5 million in deficit. This is because of interest rate rises, inflation and other unforeseen expenses arising from other projects not progressing. However, there were approximately £1m savings accumulated by the previous Administration from 2022/2023 and also a refund of £500,000 VAT which currently have been allocated to reserves and can be used to reduce the projected deficit for 2023/24.

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Otterpool Park – On 8 September, I joined the Design Team for Phase 1b (Barrow Hill Sellindge) on a tour of the area surrounding the site and pointed out some of the characteristics and issues for the Villages. I joined the morning session of the Planning Day on 9 September.

Network Rail Ticket Office Closures – I have received a number of emails and letters from residents about the proposed ticket office closures. In my response to the consultation I included all the points raised with me by individuals and encouraged them also to respond to the consultation.

Do sign up to 'My Community Voice' - a messaging service that helps Kent and Medway residents, businesses, and community groups to keep in touch with their local policing teams. The service sends updates about your local area directly from the police officers themselves: it allows you to reply to the alerts sent to you, share information and tell Officers about the issues affecting you.

Contact jenny.hollingsbee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk Mobile 07887918458

Member for Elham Valley, Susan Carey

There's been much recent media attention about councils facing bankruptcy. Birmingham Council faces large liabilities because of not paying equal pay over a number of years and other councils are in trouble because of failed property deals. This is not the case with KCC which dealt with equal pay many years ago and which has not bought property for investment. However, all councils that have responsibility for social care have seen rising demand and rising costs. Here in Kent, we face a potential overspend this financial year in social care and in transport costs for children with Special Educational Needs. Work is already under way to bring the budget back into balance and there's a special meeting on 05 October to review progress and set out in more detail what needs to be done to make the necessary savings. Difficult as this will be, we are confident it can be done.

A unique challenge faced by KCC is the situation with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) arriving in small boats from France. (UASC are under 18-year-olds travelling on their own). It's been ruled by the courts that KCC must accept responsibility for all UASC arriving in Kent and that these young people must receive the same care that a young person already in Kent would receive. The numbers involved are far beyond the resources of any single council and the National Transfer Scheme, which shares UASC to other councils, remains voluntary and slow. KCC's Children's Services were judged as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted but can't cope with the scale of the problem we face. We expect the Government to meet the extra costs involved but KCC alone cannot deal with what is both a national and international problem.

KCC is also involved with schemes for refugees who arrive legally in this country. Homes for Ukraine has been one of the most successful of these and it's been good to see so many people in Kent open their homes this way. There are also schemes for Syrians, Afghans, and those fleeing Hong Kong. These schemes all receive Government funding, but they add to our costs for services such as school places, school transport and social care.

Despite all the above, there continues to be good work being done across KCC in social care, preparation for keeping roads open over winter, our award-winning country parks, a growing network of EV charging points and more. KCC has also won funding from Government for more tree planting and if you know of suitable sites in the parish, do let me know. There's also a new round of Solar Together just started. Solar Together is a group buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. Nearly 1,400 homeowners have accepted their offer from the most recent auction (lowest price wins) with installations now under way. Solar Together is open to Kent residents, small businesses, and community organisations. See www.kent.gov.uk and search for 'Solar Together'.

Susan Carey, Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council.
KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment
Email susan.carey@kent.gov.uk

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